COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: Character Education, Part I: Community and Cultural Change

Presenters: Clifton Taulbert

Credits: 3 Graduate Credits

Course Overview

In this dynamic 10 unit course, Clifton Taulbert presents the historical and modern concepts that support the role of "character" within a K-12 learning environment. He begins with a thorough examination of the tremendous culture shifts that have taken place in American society, and their negative impact on the educational process.

The 21st century American school has tremendous challenges in confronting anti-social behaviors that disrupt a safe and healthy learning environment for students and teachers. Mr. Taulbert presents evidence of the absolute necessity of incorporating character education as a foundational asset in our schools.

Using the works of great teachers like Plato, Cicero, and Aristotle, Taulbert explores the history of the development of character as essential to a civilized society. He discusses the impact that their ideas have had on educational philosophy even in modern times.

Then he turns to modern thinkers – educators and leaders who have studied the condition of our schools, and the resulting problems in the community, the corporate world, and in society. Featured in this discussion are the works of such prominent writers as Dr. Marvin Berkowitz, Thomas Lickona and John W. Gardner.

As the course concludes, Taulbert identifies the role that "character" plays in the learning process and the warning signs of "at risk" students. He summarizes the major themes of the theorists he has presented and stresses the importance of engaging parents and community members in promoting the character of their children and supporting moral and character development in schools.

Presenters' Bios

Clifton Taulbert, a Pulitzer nominated author for *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored* (1989) and the president and founder of the Building Community Institute, speaks worldwide on the critical issue of building community. His books *Eight Habits of the Heart* and *Eight Habits of the Heart for Educators* advance the theory that "unselfish leadership...ensures student success." Before he became an author (including of the *Little Cliff* children's series) and professional speaker, Taulbert worked in the banking industry. After a stint as a sergeant in the US Air Force, Taulbert earned his B.A. at Oral Roberts University, and earned continuing professional education credits (toward an MBA) from Southwest Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University. Recipient of the 17th annual National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Image Award for literature, Taulbert was one of the first African American writers to win the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Award for nonfiction, and was named by *Time* magazine one of America's outstanding black entrepreneurs.

Objectives

After completing this course, educators will know:

- The changes that student populations demonstrate in the classroom due to cultural shifts in the US
- The shifting role of educators in an environment where the role of parents and families are changing
- The ideas and works of leading thinkers in the field of character education
- The impact of social change on student behavior and academic performance
- The value of incorporating character education programs in our schools

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, educators will apply the following skills:

- Identify "at risk" students in their classroom and school
- Make use of resources available at the state and federal level for character education

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Unit 1: Character: An Initiative with Far-Reaching Consequences

In this introductory unit, Clifton L. Talbert, president of the Building Community Institute, addresses the state of America's youth and the role that character and citizenship education play in our classrooms.

Along with educator Linda Hamm, Mr. Talbot presents the problems that exist on our school campuses and their correlation to the rapid growth of prisons and youth facilities in the United States.

In increasing numbers, our youth are trapped in drug culture and are raised in broken homes where discipline and expectations for success are non-existent.

In this unit, educators are exposed to media and news stories about drugs and violence and their devastating effects on students in our classrooms and communities.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will recognize:

- The effects of an unstable homes, neighborhoods, and learning environments on students' ability to achieve in school
- The warning signs of "at risk" students
- The importance of positive adult role models for students
- The role that alternative education plays in providing a different educational environment for "at risk" kids

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Create a plan of action to increase parent and community involvement
- Incorporate character education into core curriculum

Unit 2: Why the Character Focus? The Cultural Shift - A Society in Change

This unit sets the stage for the entire course by offering participants an in-depth look at behavior dynamics in action, and their implications for schools.

Mr. Taulbert investigates the behavior dynamics present within communities and in homes, and that find their way into the classroom.

Participants are introduced to supporting data about cultural changes within the family structure and parenting methodologies as well as the critical role that educators play in responding to a rapidly changing society.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The impact of parenting on student performance
- The critical role that character plays in preparing children for productive citizenship
- The causes and effects of changes in American society that directly influence student success
- The elements of good character that students must learn in order for teachers to create a "classroom community" that benefits all participants

Unit 3: The Cultural Shift: Impact upon the Classroom

In this unit, participants are introduced to character development data, and the presenter discusses the impact of cultural shifts and changes in our society that affect students, classrooms, and teachers.

A variety of challenges that educators face are explored, and participants look at ways to use the concept of "character" to create caring relationships among students.

The presenter identifies ways to reduce peer cruelty, bullying, and excessive negativity in the classroom.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The character traits necessary for the well-being of the individual, school, community, and society
- The need for character development in schools
- Historical models of programs that have been successful in introducing character education to the classroom

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will demonstrate the following skills:

- Implement strategies for demonstrating these character traits individually, in schools, community, and society

Unit 4: Voices of Character: Professionals I Know

Unit Four continues examining the research surrounding the value of character education.

The unit focuses on the changing role of educators and the need for them to understand how to address behavior issues in the classroom based on the research of character experts.

This unit also discusses the need to build adult teams in schools and communities to implement and sustain a "character" focus that takes into consideration the federal, state, and local curriculum mandates being placed upon 21st century educators.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Behaviors that determine when students demonstrate character traits
- A variety of roads leading to a moral community in the classroom
- The educator's role in fostering the character of students
- Historical models of programs that have been successful in introducing character education to the classroom
- The contributions of major theorists and practitioners in the field of character education

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Assess students' behavior to determine how they can demonstrate character traits
- Assess when courage is required to demonstrate character traits
- Discover avenues to create a moral community in the classroom
- Identify your role in the process of fostering the character of students

Unit 5: The Role of the Teacher in the Midst of Change

This unit focuses on the changing role of educators, and the need to build character education into the curriculum beyond the mandates placed on teachers from local, state, and federal sources. Participants review the research conducted by character education experts, and they are introduced to assessment tools and effective instructional strategies currently used in schools.

The role of teachers and their influence on students will be explored as well as the role that parents play in character development.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The value of incorporating character development into mandated curriculum
- The critical role that parent-teacher partnerships play in implementing successful character development for students

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Assess character traits that are demonstrated by students, staff, and school organizations
- Develop and implement classroom activities that promote character development

Unit 6: From 8th Century Cicero to 21st Century Lickona: The Character Journey

This unit is designed to provide both a historical and a modern perspective on character, behavior, and principles. Participants are introduced to the theories of historical thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, Heraclitus, and Cicero, and compare them to the modern voices of Dr. Tom Lickona, Dr. Marvin Berkowitz, Dr. Kevin Ryan, and others.

These professionals have dedicated their careers to providing the research data that support the need to make "character" education a central part of the teaching/learning process. The Greek philosopher Cicero said, "Within the character of the citizens lies the welfare of the republic." Today's youth are indeed the future citizen-trustees of our society.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- Guidelines for studying controversial issues
- The need for moral disciplining of students

- The importance of building a school-wide character education program

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Design ways to develop character through conflict and problem solving
- Identify strategies for establishing discipline without humiliation
- Communicate to students the importance of classroom relationships

Unit 7: The Role of the "Affective" Dimension of the Learning Process

This unit refers back to the data and the prior discussions of the "affective dimension" and the increasing negative social behavior (bullying) in schools. Character-based programs are evolving in schools and communities, and this process will be examined. Participants are given guidelines for building a classroom, school, and community, making character the main focus. The unit also reveals how "service learning" programs can be used to build character.

Participants are introduced to resources from nationally recognized organizations and experts that can be used for implementing "character education" in grades K-12.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know how to:

- Explore ways to engage parents in promoting the character of their children
- Create community involvement to support moral development in schools
- Find ways to build a school-wide character education program

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Implement strategies for parent involvement in the classroom
- Design an outline for a character education program in their school
- Identify strategies to develop character through conflict resolution and problem solving

Unit 8: Character Education on Campus

This unit is designed to increase public discourse about character education on campuses.

The unit emphasizes the significance of feeling connected in the school, community, and home. It investigates ways to incorporate and develop character in schools at all levels.

The unit discusses the concept of "purpose" in education and evaluates the collaborative efforts of increasing character education in the classroom. These efforts require the input of parents, teachers, students, and the community.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will understand the importance of:

- Promoting positive character traits in our schools
- Finding and instituting successfully tested character education programs for their schools
- Modeling effective decision-making throughout the educational process
- Promoting good citizenship in all activities

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Embed components of character education into core curriculum for K-12
- Actively involve families, businesses, and communities in partnership with schools in character education

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Unit 9: The Federal Government in Schools

During the last decade, student behavioral issues have risen to the forefront of national discussion. Academic experts point to the drop in test scores and loss of competitiveness believed to be caused by anti-social behaviors and activities, including drug use and incidents of violence.

Teaching and learning have been interrupted by these distractions and cited as among the reasons for the decline in American education.

This unit looks at how the federal government is partnering with local schools to reduce the rising tide of behavioral problems. Many of these initiatives are handled out of the United States Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug- Free Schools.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will understand:

- Ways to assess your behavior to determine how you can demonstrate positive character traits
- Your role in the process of fostering the character of students
- The role of federal and state agencies in supporting character education programs

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Implement the steps required to create opportunities for character education in your school
- Identify positive character traits that you can demonstrate daily in class

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Unit 10: The Power of Community - Building and Sustaining

In this unit participants are introduced to the concept of "community" and are given an opportunity to define and personalize their ideal teaching and learning community.

Here you will find references to prior research data on the "affective" dimension of the teaching and learning process. Through strategies of personal commitments beyond the requirements of math and mandates, these educators have been challenged to make community part of their teaching environment.

The works of noted writers, John W. Gardner and Parker Palmer are introduced. Each presents articulate support for "community building" as the path to introducing positive values in our schools.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, educators will know:

- The value of building positive relationships in the school environment
- The dynamic nature of community and the impact it has on student success and personal growth

Student Learning Outcomes

After completing this unit, educators will apply the following skills:

- Define and implement the elements of "community"
- Create strategies for increasing parent and community involvement in classrooms

Methods of Instruction

- Videos (presentations consisting of lecture, interviews, and classroom footage)
- Readings
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the video presentations where participants are asked to reflect on the course content, their own practice, and their intentions for their practice)
- Quizzes (selected-response quizzes to assess understanding of the video presentations)
- Discussion forum (prompts after each unit that engage participants in online dialogue with their cohorts)
- Midterm (a project intended to get teachers to begin to develop their practice by putting to work in the classroom what they have learned)
- Final (a project that enables educators to reflect on their practice and assess their students' work through the lens of what they have learned)

Plagiarism Policy

KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as one's own and includes failing to cite sources for others' ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult plagiarism.org.

Percentage of Course Credit

- Reflection questions   25%
- Quizzes   15%
- Midterm   25%
- Final   35%

In order to complete the requirements of the course, the participant must complete all course work (e.g., reflections, quizzes, and any midterm and/or final), including watching all videos and participating in all discussion forums. We do not award partial credit.

Grading Policy

A: 3.4 – 4.0
B: 2.7 – 3.3
C: 2.0 – 2.6
F: >2.0

Reflection/Quiz Rubric

Activity	Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
Quizzes	90-100%	80-89%	70-79%	69% or below
Reflection Question	Participant has provided rich detail and supporting examples from the course content. Participant has made responses to prompts personally meaningful and relevant to his or her teaching practice.	Participant has included appropriate content from the course content. Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts.	Participant has included little that indicates consideration and comprehension of course content. Participant has answered most questions directly but some too briefly.	Participant has included little to no content indicating consideration and comprehension of course content. Participant has not addressed the specific questions posed. Participant has not responded to all reflection questions. Participant has copied from the course transcript without synthesis or analysis.

Midterm

Incorporate into a new or existing academic lesson plan—*of your own design*—elements of character education. Your goal is to have two simultaneous and carefully aligned learning goals: one academic and one character- or behavior-related.

Please do the following:
1. Present the existing academic lesson plan.
2. Add a relevant character- or behavior-related goal.
3. Modify the lesson plan as necessary to engage students in different context for learning, including independent work, small-group work, and whole-group work.
4. Modify the lesson plan as appropriate to engage students in an activity or activities to help them achieve the character- or behavior-related goal.
5. Modify how students will communicate what they have learned (e.g., through a written document, a presentation, performance, etc.)

Midterm Rubric

Step	Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
Add a relevant character- or behavior-related goal.	Participant has included a highly relevant, carefully aligned character- or behavior-related goal.	Participant has included a character- or behavior-related goal.	Participant has included a character- or behavior-related goal though its appropriateness and alignment are in question.	Participant has not included a character- or behavior-related goal.
Modify the lesson plan as necessary to engage students in different contexts for learning, including independent work, small-group work, and whole-group work.	Participant has modified the lesson plan to incorporate highly appropriate opportunities to learn independently, through authentic collaboration with small groups, and through whole-group activities. All activities help students aim to achieve the learning goals.	Participant has modified the lesson plan to incorporate opportunities to learn independently, through authentic collaboration with small groups, and through whole-group activities.	Participant has modified the lesson plan to incorporate 2 of these 3 contexts: • Independent learning • Small-group activities • Whole-group activities	Participant has modified the lesson plan to incorporate 0-1 of these 3 contexts: • Independent learning • Small-group activities • Whole-group activities
Modify the lesson plan as appropriate to engage students in an activity or activities to help them achieve the character- or behavior-related goal.	Participant has modified the lesson plan to engage students in an activity or activities specifically designed to achieve the character- or behavior-related goal. (These activities may be the same as those described in the previous step.)	Participant has attempted to modify the lesson plan to engage students in an activity or activities specifically designed to achieve the character- or behavior-related goal. The likelihood the activities' success is in question, however.	Participant has proposed a new activity, though it does not target the character- or behavior-related goal.	Participant has not proposed any new activities targeting the character- or behavior-related goal.

Modify how students will communicate what they have learned (e.g., through a written document, a presentation, performance, etc.).	Participant has detailed a modified final project especially appropriate to the learning objectives.	Participant has presented the basics of a final project appropriate to the learning objectives.	Participant has listed a modified final project.	Participant has not proposed a modified final project.
Formal issues	Participant has made no grammatical errors. Participant has organized paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas. Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure and made careful word choice.	Participant has made a few grammatical errors. Participant has organized most paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas. Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure though not always found the right word.	Participant has made some distracting grammatical errors. Participant has organized some paragraphs around main ideas but not others. Participant has written in a style that communicates his or her thoughts but with no marked eloquence and insufficient attention to word choice.	Participant has made multiple grammatical errors. Paragraphs are not organized around main ideas. Participant has written in a style that does not effectively communicate his or her thoughts.

Final

Revise the full lesson plan you developed for your midterm—keeping what still fits, discarding other pieces, and adding new pieces accordingly—to include an "affective" dimension (e.g., include positive behavior modeling, involving parents and community, personally reaching out to students, effectively communicating, and so on). Color-code and use the strike-through key on your revision to indicate what has been retained, discarded, and added. Provide a key to your coding.

Please do the following:
1. Indicate your revised objective(s).
2. Modify the lesson plan by incorporating activities with an "affective" dimension.
3. Modify how students will communicate what they have learned (e.g., through a written document, presentation, performance, etc.).
4. Construct a detailed rubric, with appropriate categories and descriptors, with which to assess their process and product.
5. Write a 2-3 paragraph final reflection explaining how this course will impact your teaching practice.

Final Rubric

Step	Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
Indicate your revised objective(s).	Participant has indicated appropriate, challenging, and concise revised objective(s).	Participant has revised his or her objective(s).	Participant has revised his or her objective(s), though they are insufficiently challenging and concise.	Participant has not revised his or her objective(s).
Modify the lesson plan by incorporating activities with an "affective" dimension.	Participant has incorporated highly appropriate, engaging, and challenging activities with a clear "affective" dimension.	Participant has incorporated activities with an "affective" dimension.	Participant has incorporated activities, though their "affective" dimension is in question.	Participant has not incorporated new activities.
Modify how students will communicate what they have learned (e.g., through a written document, presentation, performance, etc.).	Participant has modified students' products—and presented them in detail—to align with the revised objective(s).	Participant has modified students' products to align with the revised objective(s).	Participant has modified students' products, though their alignment with the revised objective(s) is in question.	Participant has not modified students' final products.
Construct a detailed rubric, with appropriate categories and descriptors, with which to assess students' process and product.	Participant has devised and presented a detailed rubric, with appropriate categories and descriptors, with which to assess students' process and product. The rubric clearly aligns with the learning objectives.	Participant has devised and presented a detailed rubric, with appropriate categories and descriptors, with which to assess students' process and product.	Participant has presented a checklist rather than a rubric.	Participant has not presented a rubric.
Write a 2-3 paragraph final reflection explaining how this course will impact your teaching practice.	Participant has written an articulate, carefully reasoned, and supported by examples 2-3 paragraphs reflecting	Participant has written a reflection explain how course content will affect his or her teaching practice.	Participant has reflected, in 1 paragraph, on how the course content will affect his or her teaching practice.	Participant has not reflected on how course content will affect his or her teaching practice.

	on how course content will affect his or her teaching practice.			
Formal issues	Participant has made no grammatical errors. Participant has organized paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas. Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure and made careful word choice.	Participant has made a few grammatical errors. Participant has organized most paragraphs around clearly articulated main ideas. Participant has written in an effective and eloquent style—i.e., has varied his or her sentence structure though not always found the right word.	Participant has made some distracting grammatical errors. Participant has organized some paragraphs around main ideas but not others. Participant has written in a style that communicates his or her thoughts but with no marked eloquence and insufficient attention to word choice.	Participant has made multiple grammatical errors. Paragraphs are not organized around main ideas. Participant has written in a style that does not effectively communicate his or her thoughts.