

**MT. DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
COURSE OF STUDY**

COURSE TITLE:	Contemporary Issues in Education: An English 11 Course for Future Educators
COURSE NUMBER:	(Aeries)
CBEDS NUMBER:	(Aeries)
DEPARTMENT:	English (“b”)
LENGTH OF COURSE:	Year
CREDITS PER SEMESTER:	5
GRADE LEVEL(S):	11
REQUIRED OR ELECTIVE:	Elective; Takes the place of English III
PREREQUISITES:	Must be a student in an Education pathway; At least one year of college-preparatory English

BOARD OF EDUCATION ADOPTION: (Date of Action Meeting)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Contemporary Issues in Education is a college preparatory eleventh grade English course integrated with the Education pathway standards of the Education, Child Development, and Family Services sector, which allows students to see where the skills of English intersect with the elements of education. Students conduct research, closely read and analyze complex texts, evaluate instructional methodology and philosophy, and create a portfolio of reflections, activities, and compositions that, when synthesized, serve as the foundation for three capstone projects. Students will present a standards-based lesson plan, research a contemporary issue in education, and participate in a mock job interview, all of which prepare them for further education and career opportunities in the field of Education, Child Development, and Family Services.

COURSE PURPOSE: Contemporary Issues in Education is a college preparatory 11th grade English course integrated with the Education pathway standards of the Education, Child Development, and Family Services Industry sector, allowing students to see where the skills of English intersect with the elements of education.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Unit 1 - Demographics: Who Are We?

In this introductory unit, students will define their community in terms of socio-economic status, religious influences, cultural and racial differences, gender roles, and societal and familial expectations. This definition of community will be used to develop an understanding of how instruction is shaped and differentiated in order to meet the needs of specific educational communities. To formulate this definition, students will discuss important factors that lead to educational achievement, and research established data, including researching school accountability report cards, to understand the various factors that shape a community. Ultimately, students will research statistical data to compile and present a report that calls attention to the needs in their own community, and recommend they will recommend strategies that differentiate instruction as a means to narrow the achievement gap in diverse classrooms. All major works from this unit will be placed in a portfolio that will be compiled over the course of the school year and be submitted as part of the capstone project in unit six.

Unit 2 - Where Have We Been?

In this unit, students will develop and present a prototype for a new school district. In order to create a focused vision, students will write a mission statement for their new district that communicates the purpose for the organization. Over the course of the unit, students will answer the questions: What has education been like in the past? What is education like now? What should education look like in the future? Students will research various organizational structures of education (home, private, charter, public, parochial, online, etc.), and explore the ideas of experts like Sir Ken Robinson, Daniel Pink, and Steve Jobs to gain an expanded perspective. Ultimately, students will write a reflective essay that answers the question: why teach?

All major works from this unit will be placed in a portfolio that will be compiled over the course of the school year and be submitted as part of the capstone project in unit six.

Unit 3 - Understanding Today's Classroom

Students will integrate and evaluate multiple sources in order to comprehend and respond to issues present in a contemporary classroom. Examples may include the need for ELD and SPED services in the mainstream classroom, meeting the needs of socioeconomically disadvantaged students, teen pregnancy, attendance, etc. Students will refer to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession (CSTPs) and utilize this information in order to evaluate teaching practices as seen in text and film. Synthesizing information from a panel of experts and independent research, students will write a reflective essay which outlines his or her career goals and aspirations along with practical requirements and justification for their career path.

All major works from this unit will be placed in a portfolio that will be compiled over the course of the school year and be submitted as part of the capstone project in unit six.

Unit 4 - Ready to Teach

In this unit, students will explore various classroom management models, including student behavior, time management, differentiation, and lesson delivery. Students will read and analyze selected texts that discuss current educational issues, media clips that explore educational issues and theory, and instructional videos to understand the various styles and concerns of classroom management. Utilizing the information gleaned from reviewing the various models, students will create a classroom observation checklist that will be used as an observation tool to view the classroom management practices of teachers on and/or off campus. Students will think critically about their observations to correlate them with the models studied in class to gain a deeper understanding of successful classroom strategies. Using their observations and research, students will write an informative essay on their observations. Based on their findings, students will develop and present a classroom management plan to the class.

All major works from this unit will be placed in a portfolio that will be compiled over the course of the school year and be submitted as part of the capstone project in unit six.

Unit 5 - Ready to Learn

In this unit students will comprehend how learning styles and learner diversity affect the learning environment in twenty-first century classrooms, understanding how teachers shape learning activities or both whole group and individual instruction. Students will complete web-based learning style inventories to understand how learning styles influence a student's understanding of academic content. Students will become familiar with current formative and summative assessment technology, exploring how these computer and web-based tools address learner diversity in a contemporary classroom. Using their understanding of learning modalities, students will create innovative assessments that take into consideration the learning styles of class participants. In order to better understand the needs of diverse learners and special student populations, students will read a novel or nonfiction work in which the protagonist has special needs, and prepare a short

presentation to facilitate whole class discussion of the literacy instruction and learning needs for these populations.

Finally, students will research and apply one of the various learning styles in a simulated classroom activity, making accommodations for students with learning needs. All major works from this unit will be placed in a portfolio that will be compiled over the course of the school year and be submitted as part of the capstone project in unit six.

Unit 6 – Capstone

Demonstrating twenty-first century skills, students will compile a portfolio showcasing their communication, written, critical thinking, and collaborative skills as related to their career pathway. Students will analyze Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and develop a standards-based lesson plan to include in their portfolio. Using the portfolio as evidence, students will participate in a mock interview in which they will demonstrate their knowledge of education and the contemporary issues that affect it. In addition, students will apply critical thinking skills to produce a research project, identifying one specific contemporary issue in education and analyzing its cause, effect, and any possible solutions.

KEY ASSIGNMENTS:

Unit 1 - Key Assignments

1. **Demographics Explanatory Essay:** Who are we? Students will write an explanatory essay that examines the student's demographic information, cultural expectations, and how this information shapes who the student is. Prior to writing, whole class instruction will cover definitions of relevant terms, including socio-economic status, religious influences, cultural and racial differences, gender roles, societal and familial expectations, and factors that influence how our community shapes each one of us. Students will develop the topic thoroughly by examining statistical information about their community, such as racial makeup, average income, population, average home value, median age, male to female ratio, etc., concrete details about their community's employment opportunities and social climate, and other pertinent information to support their analysis.
2. **Socratic Seminar:** Students will gather and compile demographic information about an educational community in preparation for a Socratic seminar. Students will form small groups, each researching a different school district within the state, recording demographic information and trends. Students will then hypothesize about how changes in demographics force changes in curriculum and instruction and present their findings and suppositions to the class. Students will compile their information digitally, possibly using Google Sheets or other digital methods. The instructor will facilitate a whole class discussion, identifying student populations that have specific educational needs and possible factors that influence shifts in demographics. Students will then participate in a Socratic seminar, examining how demographic shifts and changes in societal attitudes lead to changes in how we educate students. Examples of other possible issues for discussion include: impact of immigrant communities; equal access to quality education; LGBT issues and rights; special education inclusion; meeting the needs of non-native speakers; poverty's impact on education; and accommodations for handicapped students.
3. **Achievement Gap Analytical Report:** In small groups, students will collaborate to compile and present a research-based report that defines the achievement gap in American schools and recommends strategies that differentiate instruction as a means to narrow the achievement gap in diverse classrooms. Students should address issues encountered by some or all of the following student groups: EL, SPED, high achieving, ethnically diverse, and varied socio-economic background students. Each group will research a specific student population, with each group member contributing significantly to the collaborative report. Students should read several articles that define the achievement gap and explain the reasons for it, with educational approaches that could serve to narrow it. Suggested articles include

Unit 2 - Key Assignments

1. **Double Entry Journal:** In order to develop an awareness of the need for various types of educational structures, students will maintain a running journal in which they analyze and make inferences about the educational needs of key characters in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, citing strong, relevant evidence. This journal will develop the students’ perspectives on the need for educational reform in a contemporary classroom.
2. **Educational History Reflective Essay:** To build a foundational understanding of the American education model, students will conduct brief research exploring the contributions of ancient civilizations on the American model. Students will be divided into groups to research significant events in American educational history, starting at 1647 to today. Groups will be divided strategically by time periods: 1647-1850, 1851-1895, 1896-1953, 1954-1993, and 1994-present day. After researching these five eras, students will create an electronic timeline with a shared document, citing sources used to build their allocated section. Individually, students will write a reflective essay of 1-2 events they learned about during class discussion and expand on the impact of those events on modern education.
3. **Educational Models Research Composition:** To broaden their perspectives on how an education model can be customized in the future, students will research various models of education, including home, private, charter, parochial, public, vocational, and online schools, identifying the merits and drawbacks of each model. Students will engage complex texts and multimedia presentations from visionaries like Sir Ken Robinson, Daniel Pink, and Steve Jobs, summarize each author’s central ideas, think critically about what they have learned, and make choices about what innovations they would include and exclude from their prototype. Students will create a comparison chart to organize their impressions and write an essay that explains which changes they chose to incorporate in their prototype and why.
4. **Character Analysis Essay:** Students will write an essay in which they propose a customized educational plan for the Ewell children and Scout from the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. They will support their recommendations using valid reasons and evidence from the novel, non-fiction text, research from assignment three, and multimedia resources.
5. **Build a School District Model:** Students will utilize demographic information from their community to develop and present a prototype of an alternative school district. This prototype will be communicated orally and in writing, using charts and other visual aids. They will consider socio-economic status, religious influences, cultural and racial differences, gender roles, and societal and familial expectations as they customize their plan. Possible areas of consideration while building the prototype may include class offerings, the school schedule, special programs, the use of a voucher system, etc. Students must justify their choices through valid reasoning and relevant evidence. They will anticipate and address the counterclaims and concerns of their audience.
6. **Why Teach? Reflective Essay:** Reflecting on the learning in Unit 2, students will write a reflective composition answering the question: Why teach?

Unit 3 - Key Assignments

1. **Journal:** In order to develop the ability to teach reflectively, students will read and analyze key events in *Teacher Man: A Memoir*, by Frank McCourt, maintaining a double-entry journal in which they draw conclusions regarding common struggles and successes present in a challenging contemporary classroom.
2. **Letter:** Over the course of the novel, *Teacher Man*, by Frank McCourt, students will assess a problematic situation and utilize administrative protocol to compose a letter of reprimand regarding the main character’s teaching performance. Students will develop and ask clarifying questions of a guest speaker, such as administration or Human Resources representative, in order to gain background information regarding disciplinary procedures for certificated personnel.

3. **Film Evaluation:** To develop strong teaching skills as measured by a standard CSTP rubric, students will create a mock evaluation in which they analyze and evaluate a variety of teaching styles and abilities by viewing two or more films, such as *Dangerous Minds*, *Dead Poet's Society*, *The Class*, *Freedom Writers*, *Stand and Deliver*, *Mr. Holland's Opus*. Students will justify their evaluations using a rubric aligned to the CSTPs.
4. **Teacher Man Argumentative essay:** Students will read and discuss articles on this issue of teacher tenure in order to make an informed decision about the fate of the protagonist in their essay. Students will cite evidence from the CSTPs and additional articles on effective teaching practices in preparation to write an essay in which they argue the decision to support or deny teacher tenure for Frank McCourt, protagonist in the novel *Teacher Man*.
5. **Professional Reflection:** To build career readiness, students will research a chosen profession and write a reflective essay in which they cite requirements and justify their choice. To better inform their decision, students will develop questions and interview a panel of educational experts, such as a paraprofessional, primary and secondary teachers, school counselor, educational administrator, early childhood educator, and college professor.

Unit 4 - Key Assignments

1. **Personal Narrative:** Students will compose a personal narrative that recalls a specific classroom experience (problem, success, or observation) that influenced their attitude/ideas about classroom management, education in general, and the type of teacher they would or would not like to be themselves. Referencing this experience will provide context for the next assignment.
2. **Classroom Observation Checklist:** In order to compare and contrast various classroom management styles, students will create a classroom observation checklist based on selected text readings that discuss current issues (e.g., racial disparities in discipline, differentiation, restorative justice, gender treatment, class size), media clips (e.g., TED talks, Edutopia videos), instructional videos (e.g., The Teaching Channel), and research-based management models, including Madeleine Hunter, the Wongs, Marzano, etc. In small groups, students will synthesize their research findings and create a classroom management checklist to use when they observe various teachers on their campus.
3. **Classroom Management Informative Essay:** Students will select 3-4 teachers on campus, or off-campus, if possible, observe one class period of each, and record their observations of the classroom management strategies they see. They will share their findings in their groups and create a comparison chart based on their findings. The students will then collaborate on an informative essay that presents and expands upon their individual classroom visits, noting specific management strategies and comparing their observed effectiveness. The use of technology, namely Google docs, would enhance the collaboration process and promote accountability of all group members. Students should include teacher practices, assignments, discipline, time management, etc.
4. **Classroom Management Plan:** In groups, students will utilize their research, observations and personal experiences to develop a classroom management plan and present it to the class via a multimedia project. The plan will include their management philosophy/ideas, behavior management principles, classroom rules and procedures, and classroom layout/design.

Unit 5 - Key Assignments

1. **Assessment Modification Explanatory Essay:** In order to understand a classroom of students and meet their learning needs and preferences, students will discover how they themselves process information and respond to instruction. To achieve this goal, students will complete several different research-based learning inventories, in print and/or online. Students will analyze how their personal learning styles have been evident in their academic experiences. Compositions should contain anecdotal evidence accompanied by personal reflection.
2. **Classifying and Evaluating Assessment Using Web-based Videos.** In order to understand the different uses and goals of formative and summative assessments, students will view several Teaching Channel videos that demonstrate assessment practices. To complement the visual demonstrations and to provide depth of understanding, students will also read teacher-chosen

articles/textbook selections that address teaching theory and pedagogy. In an observation journal, students will determine and document which learning styles are addressed in each video assessment, and evaluate each for teacher practices, student participant responses, effectiveness, and ease of use, incorporating their understanding from their academic readings. Their journals will provide a basis for the following assignment, which requires knowledge of assessment practices.

- 3. Novel/Nonfiction Text Project:** In the course of reading a teacher-selected, whole-group text, students in collaborative groups will create a collection of formative assessments for the text. All assessments should reflect diverse teaching methodologies with an attention to learning styles and students with special needs. To better understand school procedures for supporting students with special needs, the instructor may choose to invite a resource teacher to speak about the IEP/SST/ELD processes. Upon completion of the assessments, students will select several of the assessments and modify them to meet special needs requirements. Finally, students will compose an explanatory essay that explains how each of their assessments has been modified for a special needs group or learning modality.
- 4. Core-Content Activity Plan:** Armed with information gained thus far in the unit, each student will create an original core-content activity that targets a specific grade, subject, learning style(s), and learning need(s). In a written activity plan, students will define the activity's objective, identify the targeted learning style, and the expected activity outcome. Each student will present their activity to the class, with a short whole class discussion at the completion of each activity. Students will revise their lessons, incorporating classmates' and the instructor's feedback, for their portfolios.

Unit 6 - Key Assignments

- 1. Sample Lesson plan:** After deconstructing a variety of CCSS, students will create a standards-based lesson plan, focusing on one primary standard. The lesson plan will be placed in their final portfolio. Students will use domain-specific vocabulary and precise language, organize their ideas in a sequential manner, clearly communicate the lesson objective, include formative and summative assessments, and incorporate differentiation.
- 2. Contemporary Issue Research Project:** Students will select one specific contemporary issue in education and research, in depth, the causes, effects, possible outcomes and solutions. Students will need to use evidence from both literary and informational texts to support their research and to produce writing that is coherent and organized. In addition, students will present a multimedia presentation to the class. Student presentations should model their knowledge of speaking and listening skills: using digital media to express information, using formal English, supporting their argument with evidence, and a clear organization that listeners are able to follow.
- 3. Interview:** In order to prepare for their mock interview, students will practice interview skills with their peers in class by participating in a range of conversations with a variety of partners. Students will practice expressing their ideas in a clear and persuasive manner. They will pose and respond to questions that probe reasoning and evidence. For their final project, students will present their portfolio, which will include the artifacts from the year: (1) demographics explanatory essay; (2) achievement gap analytical report; (3) educational history reflective essay; (4) educational models research composition; (5) *To Kill a Mockingbird* analysis essay; (6) Why teach? reflective composition; (7) film evaluation; (8) Teacher Man argumentative essay; (9) professional reflection; (10) classroom management informative essay; (11) classroom management plan; (12) assessment modification explanatory essay; (13) core content activity plan; (14) sample lesson plan; and (15) contemporary issue research project. Students will also participate in an interview, answering on-demand questions that one might encounter in a real-life interview. Students will be required to use all speaking and listening

skills, and come to the interview prepared to draw on evidence from the texts and other research conducted during the year.

INSTRUCTIONS METHODS and/or STRATEGIES:

1. Project Based Learning
2. Guided Inquiry Projects
3. Modeling
4. Direct Instruction
5. Research

ASSESSMENTS INCLUDING METHODS and/or TOOLS

1. Project Based Learning, graded by rubric
2. Cumulative unit presentations
3. Unit exams
4. Essays
5. Portfolios

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

Suggested Primary Texts

- Draper, Sharon. *Out of My Mind*. New York: Atheneum Books, 2012. Print.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Back Bay Books, 2011. Print.
- Gruwell, Erin. *The Freedom Writers Diary*. New York: Broadway Books, 1999. Print.
- Kato, Sharleen. *Teaching*. Tinley Park, IL: Goodheart-Willcox Company, 2016. Print.
- Jobs, Steve. "How to Live Before You Die" TED Talks . TED Conferences LLC, Jun 2005. Web. 16 Mar 2016.
- Lee, Harper. *To Kill A Mockingbird*. 1960. NY: Grand Central Publishing, 1988. Print.
- Lemov, Doug. *Teach Like a Champion*. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 2010. Print.
- McCourt, Frank. *Teacher Man: A Memoir*. New York: Scribner, 2005. Print.
- Murdoch, Rupert. "The Steve Jobs Model for Education Reform." *The Wall Street Journal Online*. Dow Jones & Company, Inc., 15 October 2011. Web. 16 Mar 2016.
- von Zastrow, Claus. "'Carrots and Sticks are So Last Century': A Conversation with Author Dan Pink." *Learning First Alliance* . Learning First Alliance, 3 Jan 2010. Web. 16 Mar 2016.
- Ridley, Amanda. *The Smartest Kids in the World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014. Print.
- Robison, John Elder. *Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2008. Print.
- Robinson, Sir Ken. "Do Schools Kill Creativity?" TED Talks . TED Conferences LLC, Feb 2006. Web. 16 Mar 2016.
- Salter, Chuck. "Every Child is an Artist." *Fast Company*. Mansueto Ventures LLC, 5 Aug 2013. Web. 16 Mar 2016.
- Rose, Jennie. "Dan Pink: How Teachers Can Sell Love of Learning to Students." *MindShift*. KQED Inc., 18 Jan 2013. Web. 16 Mar 2016.
- Ryan, Kevin, James Cooper and Cheryl Bolick. *Those Who Can, Teach*. Belmont, *Submitting a Course for Board Approval – SASS Dept June 2016*

CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 2015.
Shusterman, Neal. *Challenger Deep*. New York: HarperCollins, 2015. Print.
Wong, Harry, and Rosemary Wong. *The First Days of School: How to be an Effective Teacher*. Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong Publishers, 2001.

Supplemental Materials

Teaching Videos:

<https://www.teachingchannel.org/>
<http://www.edutopia.org/>

Learning Styles:

<https://sites.google.com/site/avidwq/introduction>
<http://www.educationplanner.org/students/self-assessments/learning-styles-quiz.shtml>

Multiple Intelligences:

<http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-research>
<http://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-assessment>

California Schools Demographics:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/>

California Compulsory Education Laws:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/lis/ai/sb/>

California Common Core State Standards:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/finalelaccsstandards.pdf>
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/ccssmathstandardaug2013.pdf>

California Standards for Teaching Practices (CSTPs):

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/standards/CSTP-2009.pdf>

The Achievement Gap:




<http://www.nea.org/home/20380.htm>
<http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/achievement-gap/>

For Honors Distinction:

CORRESPONDING NON-HONORS COURSE: English III

DIFFERENCES in HONORS/NON-HONORS COURSES: This course integrates Education CTE Standards into the English Language Arts curriculum.

Committee Members:

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