

COURSE SYLLABUS

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

Presenters: Clifton Taulbert

Hours: 30

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

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

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

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 with PowerPoint presentations (teacher workshops and additional resources)
- Reflection questions (open-ended questions at intervals throughout the videos where educators 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)

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.

Passing Requirements:

In order to complete the requirements of the course, the participant must complete all course work. We do not award partial credit.

- Quizzes 40% of total grade
- Reflection Questions 60% of total grade

KDS Self-Assessment Rubric:

	Distinguished	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Quizzes	100% Correct	80% Correct	60% Correct	0-40% Correct
Reflection Questions	Participant provides rich detail from the content of the course in his or her responses Participant makes his or her responses to the questions personally meaningful	Participant includes appropriate content from the course in his or her responses Participant makes thoughtful comments in direct response to the questions	Participant includes some content from the course, usually appropriate, in his or her responses Participant answers the questions directly, not always fully	Participant includes no content from the course in his or her responses Participant does not address the questions posed