



EDCU 9990 Physical Environments for Learning

Transcript title:

Details

- **Prerequisite:** Attend face-to-face workshop OR complete on-demand workshop led by The Catalyst Approach
- **Credit:** One (1) graduate-level professional development credit* (1.5 quarter credits) through University of Massachusetts Global. Upon successful completion of courses, the participant will receive graduate-level professional development credit. These credits are not part of a degree program but instead are primarily used for professional advancement such as salary increment steps and recertification. Students should seek approval of appropriate district or college officials before enrolling in these courses to satisfy any degree, state credential, or local school district requirements. This credit may be applied toward a degree program at the discretion of the accepting institution.
- **Cost:** \$120.00
- **Dates:** We can accommodate individual requests to submit registrations at any time. Course requirements and payment must be confirmed prior to receiving a transcript.

Registration and payment

- Register and pay online at www.thecatalystapproach.com

Course Description

This class will help participants systematically think about their learning environments and make marked changes that will positively impact student learning and behavior by creating even calmer spaces that are easier to navigate.

Learning Outcomes

1. Evaluate their own learning environments and identify areas to make changes
2. Demonstrate understanding of the content from the course through design changes
3. Summarize and explain their design changes
4. Organize documentation of their design changes

Our classroom environment impacts instruction, behavior, time and our well-being (both students *and* teachers) and is the biggest non-verbal in the classroom. Many leading teachers refer to the classroom environment as the 2nd or 3rd teacher. Teacher [Loris Malaguzzi](#) (founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach) writes of environments that speak and ones that are silent. An environment that speaks, sees and reflects the child as an active and productive person. An environment that is silent seems void of life with no real sense of who plays there. When a classroom environment is carefully planned, it can inspire children.

Classrooms that are beautiful, free of clutter, have natural light, and order support children in engaging thoughtfully. Lisa Hill, licensed family therapist and former school based mental health therapist through Washburn Child Guidance Center in Minneapolis confirms that physical environments that are enhanced with lamps, rugs and other items that bring warmth and comfort into classrooms especially support students who have experienced trauma, PTSD, and suffer from attachment and/or anxiety disorders.

Participants will implement the new ideas from the class to assist them in prioritizing and defining learning spaces, reducing visual noise, and organizing teaching and learning materials to save time and energy.

Assignment Description

*While clock hours are available to all interested participants, there is no graduate credit available for simply participating in the face-to-face workshop. The workshop is a prerequisite to this coursework.

Updated: 3/24/25

Part 1: Environment & Educational Philosophy Essay

Write a 3-page paper illustrating the ways your classroom environment can support your educational philosophy to create an even more positive impact on your students.

Page 1 should describe your educational philosophy.

Pages 2 and 3 should describe connections between the key principals of design you learned in the workshop and used in your class to design an optimal physical learning environment with your educational philosophy. The description should highlight the following categories and how those categories impacted your design decisions. To organize the essay, you may use these categories as headings:

- o Priorities for teaching and learning (i.e. classroom library, large group gathering space, small group area, etc.)
- o Decreasing visual noise/physical clutter
- o Organizational style (i.e. predictable vs. flexible)
- o Entrance and Traffic flow

Part 2: Before and After Photos

1. Prior to making any changes to your classroom environment, take photos of the following areas:
 - Wide angle that shows each of the 4 main walls (4 photos)
 - Instructional areas (large group, small group, etc.)
 - Teacher's desk area
 - Student materials storage (mailboxes, book boxes, manipulatives, textbooks, etc.)
 - Classroom library (if applicable)
 - Other areas where you want to make improvements
2. Implement the principles and guidelines from the Classroom Environment training and corresponding resource packet by making improvements to the room. Take photos of the same areas as above.
3. Use the attached template (or create your own) to organize the photos and explain the improvements made to each area.
4. Write a brief description of the impact the change will have (or did have, depending on timing) on your teaching and/or your students' learning.

Assignment Submission

Submit completed coursework via the form on the Catalyst website.

Grading and Transcript

While the quality of writing is more important than the length of the writing- be sure to write a minimum of one paragraph for each concept. For a letter grade of an A, include at least 8 before and after photos with descriptions. For a letter grade of a B, include at least 6 before and after photos with descriptions. Descriptions should be 1-3 sentences each.

Any assignments that are not high enough quality (depth of writing, etc.) will be returned to the student for revising.

For an official transcript, visit: <https://www.umassglobal.edu/current-students/office-of-the-registrar/transcript-requests>

Bibliography

Ceppi, G. & Zini, M. (1998). *Children, Spaces, Relations: Metaproject for an Environment for Young Children*. Reggio Children.

Edwards, C. (1993). *The hundred languages of children: The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education*. Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Jensen, E. (2009). *Teaching with poverty in mind: What being poor does to kids brains and what schools can do about it*. ASCD.

Stremmel, A. J., & Hill, L. T. (2002). *Teaching and learning: Collaborative exploration of the Reggio Emilia approach*. Prentice Hall.

Thornton, L., & Brunton, P. (2010). *Bringing the Reggio approach to your early years practice*. Routledge.

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Classroom Makeover Documentation

Before Photo	After Photo	Description of Improvements

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