




# Making Meaning Through Educational “Highs” and “Lows”

## Expert Learning In Action

30 continuing education hours

Final Project Optional: 3 Graduate Credits + 15 Cont. Ed. Hours\*

Course Designer	Bio
 <p>Zach Smith <a href="#">@zsmithteach</a></p>	<p>Zach Smith was born and raised in Fresno, California. Growing up with siblings with disabilities and siblings from Ethiopia, Zach saw first hand the impact of exclusionary and non-culturally responsive instructional practices. After graduating from Fresno State, he began his career as a special education teacher. He worked for eleven years in a small rural district named Sanger Unified. In his last three years with Sanger, he moved outside the classroom to co-lead the implementation of UDL for all teachers in the district. Zach has extensive knowledge in UDL; presenting, coaching, planning, and building organizational capacity around this initiative. In the fall of 2019, Zach started a new chapter in his professional journey as a student in Harvard’s Doctorate of Education Leadership program. Zach lives with his wife and best friend Dorothy, as well as their four daughters, Grace (10), Amy (8), Isabella (6), and Sydney(3). Zach is a passionate advocate for the power of inclusion to revolutionize the way teachers teach and as paramount for closing opportunity gaps and creating classrooms inclusive of students farthest away from justice.</p>

## Course Description

The hope for this course is that it feels different - more reflective, empowering, and simple. A time to breathe, reflect, and cast vision for your professional hopes for the next season of instruction (and on). A time to tap into your professional identity as an expert learner.

This course came to life when education was neck deep in one of the most disruptive periods of our modern human history. A time when educators were being forced to change their practices in the most drastic ways. Gone were the days where we could reuse the teaching materials from last year, gone were the days where we could ignore educational technology and gone were the times

where we could remain fixed in inflexible teaching and learning. In the midst of all this change, we were left with two questions,

- How are we going to give ourselves space for a collective breath and learning after this time of extreme turbulence and adaptive thinking? and,
- Why isn't collective reflection built into our everyday seasons of teaching and learning?

This course is meant to address these two questions. The hope is that educators across the globe take time to stop, breathe, reflect, and cast a vision for the future of their teaching and learning practices. With the myriad of challenges education currently faces, this degree of expert learning will be required to meet these challenges as we create sustainable ways to recharge, reflect, and set collective vision for a more inclusive and equitable future.

## Course Goals

### Overall Goal for the Course

Educators would grow in their ability to be expert learners who learn their “highs” and “lows” in education.

Important benchmarks showing progress toward this course goal:

- Educators feel rested and reflective as evidenced by their own perception of where they are emotionally, physically and intellectually in their work.
- Educators will have a sense of gratitude and clear examples of professional growth gained from the highs and lows of the previous season of teaching and learning.
- Educators develop clear, actionable, and personalized goals for the areas they'd like to grow in the coming season of teaching and learning they are about to engage in.

## Course Accessibility

The aim of this course is to be “100% universally designed”. The author defines a “100% universally designed” based on three criteria. First the course to the maximum extent possible utilizes the framework of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as the primary lens for building and delivering course content. Second, the course provides feedback channels for participants within the course to give input on ways the course could be made better. Third, the course designers make changes based on this feedback.

So what this means:

- *If you are not engaged by the course materials, we want to hear about it.*

- *If you do not understand the course content, we want to know about it.*
- *If you do not yet have a means that works for you to express your understanding, we want your ideas for other options.*

## Course Texts


None! – Just enjoy the materials in each module.


## Course Quizzes & Discussion Boards

Each module, minus module 8, will come with a quiz. This quiz draws out your learning for the “why” behind the non-negotiables of each module that you would also apply to your discussion board post (should you choose to do one). The quizzes are also a way for us to asynchronously monitor your learning. In order to show the necessary level of learning for the course, quizzes need to score at 80% or higher.

The discussion board posts are totally optional for the course and will not be graded. You can either choose to post them or choose to keep your learning to yourself for your own reflection and growth – totally up to you based on your goals for the course as an expert learner 😊. **We trust you.** Whether you choose to post your ideas outwardly or keep them for your own journey, please do consider perusing the posts of those who came before you and choose to put their ideas on the discussion board.

## Course Outline

Module	Topics
	<p><b>Module 1: Rest and Reflect.... yes that is it... Rest and Reflect</b></p> <p><b>Objective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators will take time within their busy schedule to do the things that fill them with rest, reflection, and energy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I want daydreaming people...</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities relax your soul?</li> </ul> <p><b>Activity</b></p> <p>Choose an activity below to rest and recharge.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Non-negotiables - Show your understand of the power of rest, relaxation, and recharging by taking time to practice this important discipline in real life</li> </ul> <p><u>Expression Options</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Talk to a loved one about their day over a warm beverage.</li> <li>● Go for a walk and let your mind wander</li> <li>● Find space for deep thoughts <u>or</u> no thoughts at all</li> <li>● Draw a picture</li> <li>● Explore a piece of fiction literature, holy book, or set of poems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Invitation - Consider going way from educationally based stuff there will be time for that later 😊</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Take a nap during the day</li> <li>● Exercise or practice yoga</li> <li>● Pet an animal</li> <li>● Hold a sleeping baby</li> <li>● Tell someone you love them and why</li> <li>● DREAM UP Stuff and tell us about it!</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Module 2: Expert Learners</b></p> <p><b>Objective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educators will develop their own personalized definition for what it means to be an expert learner.</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is an expert learner?</li> </ul> <p><b>Activity</b></p> <p>Choose an activity below to describe characteristics of an expert learner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Non-negotiables - Describe 4 to 5 characteristics of expert learners from the course materials</li> </ul> <p><u>Expression Options</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create a infographic outlining the characteristics of an expert learner</li> <li>● Create a poem written describing an expert learner</li> <li>● Make a video sharing what it means to be an expert learner</li> <li>● Create a storyboard that shares how an expert learner their characteristics to a sticky challenge they are facing</li> <li>● DREAM UP something new to share the characteristics of an expert learner</li> </ul>

# 3

## Module 3: Reflect on a Previous Season of Teaching and Learning (Part 1)

### Objective

- Educators will reflect on what they have learned from the highs of the previous season in education.

### Essential Question

- What did you learn from the educational highs of this year?

### Activity

Share specific learnings you had from successes of the previous teaching season.

- Non-negotiables - Understand the power of celebrating positive experiences of reflection by sharing 2 to 3 explicit measurable changes to your practice as a result of a success you experienced

### Expression Options

- Tell a story - You're the main character, two events that happened to you this year where you learned something specific, exciting, and new based on a success you experienced.
- Tell a story - You're not the main character, tell us about a success experienced by someone proximal to you in education (student, principal, teacher), and what you learned from witnessing this success.
  - Options for Story Expression:
    - Write it
    - Create a comic strip
    - Create an auto clip
    - Create a video or screencast
    - DREAM UP some new way to tell your story

# 4

## Module 4: Reflect on a Previous Season of Teaching and Learning (Part 2)

### Objective

- Educators will reflect on what they have learned from the lows of the previous season in education.


### Essential Question

- What did you learn from the educational lows of this year?

### Activities

Share specific learnings you had from a mistake, failure, or challenge.

- Non-negotiables - Understand the power of learning from challenging experiences of reflection by sharing 2 to 3 explicit

	<p>measurable changes to your practice as a result of a challenge you experienced OR witnessed</p> <p><u>Expression Options</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tell a story - You're the main character, two events that happened to you this year where you learned something specific, exciting, and new based on a challenge you experienced.</li> <li>● Tell a story - You're not the main character, tell us about a challenge experienced by someone proximal to you in education (student, principal, teacher), and what you learned from witnessing them work through this challenge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Options for Story Expression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Write it</li> <li>▪ Create a comic strip</li> <li>▪ Create an audio clip</li> <li>▪ Create a video or screencast</li> <li>▪ DREAM UP some new way to tell your story</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p><b>Module 5: Goal Setting</b></p> <p><b>Objective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Educators will set scary and audacious goals for themselves in areas they'd like to professionally grow!</li> </ul> <p><b>Essential Question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Based on your experiences in previous seasons of teaching, student communities you'd like to better reach, and your professional interests, what new mindsets, skills, and strategies do you hope to gather during this next season of teaching, learning, and leadership?</li> </ul> <p><b>Activities</b></p> <p>Share specific goals you have for yourself or you've set within your community for the coming teaching season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Non-negotiables - Show your understanding of the power of goal-setting by sharing the specific actions you'd like to see changed in the coming educational season.</li> </ul> <p><u>Expression Options</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A written statement describe your learning goal(s)</li> <li>● A video describing your learning goal(s)</li> <li>● Create an audio clip describing your learning goal(s)</li> <li>● A slide deck laying out your learning goal(s)</li> <li>● DREAM UP some new way to express your goal(s) for the coming season</li> </ul>

# 6

## Module 6: Communities and Collectives

### Objective

- Educators will find a community either directly connected to their learning goal(s) or willing to come alongside them regardless of what they'd hope to accomplish professionally.

### Essential Question

- Who are the community of expert learners you're tying yourself to?

### Activities

Find a community of folks who can be a helpful support and/or guide as you work on your learning goal(s) for this next season.

- Non-negotiables - Show your understanding of the importance of living and working in community by naming people or communities you're going to continue to be a part of and/or join and the specific ways you are going to engage with this community for the coming teaching season.

### Expression Options

- Join a virtual community sharing how you are entering the community being vulnerable about what you are working on.
- Share the names of the folks you are working with at your school, district or educational agency and how you plan on sharing your goal(s) with them.
- Share the name of a professional educational organization you are joining and include how community building works within this community.
- Create a book club, share the book you'll be reading through and how it connects to your learning goal(s)
- DREAM UP your own way to connect with a community and share what you're working on with those around you

# 7

## Module 7: Progress Monitoring and Advice to Your Future Self

### Objective

- Educators will spend time engaged in the activities they started with in module 1, with the added element of gathering strategies for monitoring their growth in their goals during the coming season of teaching and learning.

### Essential Question

- How will you monitor your progress toward your professional goals?

### Activities

Engage in activities you know provide you rest and recharge as you reflect on how you will monitor progress in your goal.

- Non-negotiables - Show your understanding of the power of positive/assets based beliefs, values, and visualization by brainstorming ways you'll monitor progress for this goal.

### Expression Options

- Sit down with someone who is a little further ahead than you in their professional journey, share your plan with them and get their advice on ways to monitor your progress
- Write your future self a letter (or email) giving advice for the journey - Seal the letter or prescribe the email date
- Sit down with a student (either current or former), share your goals with them and gather any advice they have for you in your journey and ways to monitor your progress
- Share your full learnings and goal(s) from this course with your professional community and gather their feedback/advice for how you might measure your progress
- DREAM UP your own way measure your ongoing progress of your goal



## Module 8: Mapping your Learning

### Objective

- Educators will summarize lessons learned from previous seasons of teaching and learning, their professional learning goal(s) for their future, and the strategies they are employing in their next season of teaching and learning to help get them there.

### Essential Question

- What have you learned from where you've been and what do you hope to learn from where you are going?

### Activities

Create a description summarizing what you have learned about yourself and where you'd like to grow professionally.

- Non-negotiables - Share what you learned from the previous season of being in education, share your goals for the coming season of education, and share your strategies for achieving your goal(s).

### Expression Options



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Create a journey map that outlines where you've been and where you're going</li><li>● Write a paper describing the 3 key elements above</li><li>● Create a video describing your journey in this course</li><li>● Create an infographic outlining your plan</li><li>● DREAM UP another way to show your learning</li></ul> |
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## Graduate Credits

You have the option to receive 3 continuing education graduate credits with the course. Register for the course + graduate credits or add on the graduate credit section at any time. Upon successful completion of the course and graduate final project, you will receive 3 accredited continuing education graduate credits from your choice of one of our university partners ([University of Massachusetts Global](#) or [Teachers College of San Joaquin](#)) and a completion certificate for 15 additional continuing education hours (in addition to the 30 hours you received for the course).

## Final Project

The final project is required for students taking the course for graduate professional development units but all are welcome to participate. It is a great opportunity to self-reflect and to implement the course learnings. Share your final project with colleagues or classmates. You will not receive feedback or a grade from the course instructor unless you signed up for the final project.

### **Goal**

Summarize lessons learned from previous seasons of teaching and learning, your professional learning goal(s) for the future, and the strategies you are employing in the future season(s) of teaching and learning to help get you there.

### ***Goal Unpacked***

This is your space to share what you've learned from previous educational experiences and where you would like to grow moving forward in your career. Please know this is for you and your professional community. So often we are never given the gift of deep breaths, long pauses, and meaningful reflection. This is your moment! Grab hold of it!

## The Rubric

Your final product will be evaluated using the rubric below. Mastery must be met on all four standards to complete the course. Worry not - you are welcome to resubmit as many times as it takes to be successful.

Criteria	Expectations	Max Points
Remembering Where You've Been	This expression has clear connections (3 to 4) to explicit experiences from your previous season in education. Not only can I visualize these experiences, I can know how they represent professional "highs" and "lows" within your career. These are authentic, explicit, and clearly defined!	10 pts
You Goal(s) for the Next Season	You're explicit with your goal(s)! I can see not only the values and beliefs they represent but also the explicit new actions you will be taking. You will clearly be able to tell if you are making progress or have met them!	10 pts
Your Strategies for Success	You have explicitly laid out the moves you are making to meet your goal(s). I can see ways you are monitoring progress at different time intervals, connecting with your community, and engaging in reflection and course correction (if needed).	10 pts
Bibliography	You have 7 to 10 sources from inside the course and outside the course to reinforce your planning.	5 pts

**Total Points - 35 pts**