

Heart in Education Program Menu



**HEART IN
EDUCATION**

Personal Growth for Teachers

Heart in Education Approach

“We teach who we are.” - Parker Palmer

Heart in Education is a training program for teachers that focuses on and supports their personal growth. As Parker Palmer writes, “Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the integrity and identity of the teacher.” The ability to build meaningful connections, awaken potential, and foster growth for our students hinges on the personal capacities of the teacher. Consequently, teachers benefit from professional development that encourages personal reflection and evolution. The more evolved and self-aware a person, the more effective and fulfilled a teacher they become.

Through our fresh and practical approach, teachers develop their capacities to inspire and connect with students as they improve their own well-being. We know from over 500 teachers using our approach and their self-reports, that outcomes include teachers feeling more inspired and renewed in their teaching, improved classroom management, greater compassion for themselves, their students, and their colleagues, lower stress, and more positive relationships with all constituents.

Heart in Education Program Menu

* Customized workshops available

Presence Over Productivity: Tools for Renewal and Inspiration That aren't Another “Add” — Many teachers report having more “to-do” than ever before with greater ranges of student needs. Being able to multitask and think ahead are critical, but being present with students and exuding our best is even more important. In this workshop, we will redefine self-care. Instead of learning mindfulness practices, that while helpful, can feel like another thing to do, teachers will explore fresh ways to think about renewal and learn restorative practices that benefit teacher and student, and can occur in the classroom, in the moment—no extra “to-dos” needed!

Tools to Unhook from Reactivity — In this workshop, participants will learn how to help students unhook from reactivity and take more accountability for themselves and their experiences. Beginning by first exploring how to develop these skills in ourselves as adults, teachers will reflect on a personal experience in which they have felt reactive and apply this moment to a framework. Within the framework, they will consider where there is a judgment or evaluation vs. observation, if there is a story

they are telling themselves about what's occurring and what else could be possible. What could be a more generous or empathetic perception of the moment when we see beyond what's happening as personal? Ultimately, participants will consider how others' behaviors are never really about us; when we learn to not take things personally, we have greater capacity to feel more positive and lead with empathy. Teachers will use case studies to explore how underneath any conflict are unmet needs. Take-aways include developing a needs literacy students (and adults) can use when challenges arise, and a framework that can be applied to de-escalate any moment.

Connect with Capacities Key to Teaching and Learning — teachers explore connecting to and expanding qualities central to their well-being—wonder, joy, awe, etc. and discover that commitment to embracing them can lead to more inspired, rejuvenated teaching, living, and optimal learning. Students themselves are the innate experts on these qualities, and can be the daily inspiration helping adults remember what they forget.

Redefining Classroom Management — teachers will explore how the most inspiring classrooms aren't about management—they're about community and connection. When we focus on how we create relationships with students and learn to see teacher and student on the same team, children develop their own advocacy. Takeaways include learning language that empowers students, extends students' thinking, and instills community by gaining student buy-in and working as a team.

Better Student Engagement through Joy — students that are effectively engaged and excited about their learning are less likely to be “disruptive;” children are looking for ways to make things fun—if it's not fun, they will come up with their own methods to make the moment playful. Teachers will learn and brainstorm a repertoire of activities, games, and creative ways of engagement to keep students' interest and attention, especially during transitions, and create a more positive classroom environment.

Develop Understanding of the Student — all behavior is a form of communication. Teachers will share the student behaviors they experience in the classroom and explore what the behaviors mean—what is the student communicating and what are the possible needs underneath each behavior? As teachers develop more understanding around students' behaviors, they develop greater empathy and can consider how to support the skills in which the student needs to evolve.

Develop Understanding of the Student, Part Two—Ways of Being Framework: in this workshop, teachers will gain insight about what Heart in Education names as “Ways of Being” in themselves and their students as a further means to consider our own makeup and behavioral patterns, the strengths and areas for growth associated with each way of being, and strategies to support development.

Knowing vs. Knowledge — Gaining knowledge—knowledge of academic programs, effective strategies, new ideas for lessons, etc.—is an important aspect of teaching. However, deepening teachers’ connection to their own inner knowing—the intuitive aspects of understanding students and others, sensing what a child really needs, making in the moment “gut” decisions, and accessing creative, inspired ideas—is vital to transformative teaching. In this workshop, teachers will reflect on where they are already using their own intuition throughout the day, and gain tools to deepen these less discussed but highly important skills.

The Art of Mentoring — Drawing from Elana Agular’s Introductory Course on Coaching, Marshall Roseberg’s “Compassionate Communication,” The Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching, and empathic listening practices, teachers will learn an approach to effectively listen, consider beliefs, behaviors, and ways of being affecting transformation, and how to guide the mentees to find their own wisdom to solve challenges. The approach shared in this workshop inspires both the mentee and the mentor to develop personally and awaken towards their own potential.

Speaker Bio: Erin Thorkilsen

Erin Thorkilsen is an educator of children and adults, presenter, and founder of Heart in Education. Currently, Erin serves as faculty at the University of Rhode Island in the Education Department. As a speaker with a focus on social emotional learning, mindfulness, and the relational aspects of parenting and teaching, she has been invited to present at the CAIS Learning Series, the Reflective Teacher Podcast, the WellBeing Network Podcast, Explain it to Me Like a Ten Year Old, and the Mindfulness in Education Conference in 2017 and 2018. Her foundation is 20 years as a classroom teacher and teacher and parent educator, including being awarded the “Goldenheim Award for Excellence in Teaching.” She has been teaching and coaching teachers in schools for ten years and is also a 20 year yoga and mindfulness instructor, leading yoga teacher trainings, workshops, and international retreats for adults.