In designing a staff development workshop over building classroom communities rich in relational capacity, it is important to set the stage for learning by purposefully and thoughtfully aligning the outcomes, assessments and activities presented in the training.

The nature of relational capacity as a course of learning is a combination of theoretical thinking and practical application. Ideally designed to assist elective teachers in building significant learning communities, relational capacity strategies have proven to aid in the production of student success in core content subjects as well.

The type of student who benefits the most from classrooms high in relational capacity are traditionally from low socio-economic backgrounds falling in the academic middle and are usually a first generation college goer. Students are often shy and reluctant about sharing their feelings and collaborating in a group setting but as their trust builds, so does their confidence. One can expect, about mid-way through the course, a tight-knit community of learners to form with a shared vision of success in a global society.

Moving students through the four stages of relational capacity should be done with care. Teachers must be tuned into students’ needs and plan activities that are thoughtful and purposeful for the current stage of learning. The goal of the teacher is to assist students through all four stages of relational capacity reaching a point where learning becomes completely student driven with the teacher serving merely as a guide. The teacher must be very familiar with the four stages of relational capacity as each class chemistry will not follow the stages in a linear path. Adapting activities at the last minute according to the daily needs of the students is expected. For relational capacity to take root and grow, teachers must be strong in making connections with students. Teachers should model, model, model positive behaviors for students while providing stability, honesty, loyalty and love.

In formulating significant learning goals, my hope is that a year from completion of this staff development workshop, teachers will regularly implement with fidelity relational capacity strategies throughout their curriculum because the benefits of creating a highly engaged, collaborative community of learners yields better results in achievement and produces life-long advantages.

That being said, my Big Hairy Audacious Goal for this course is to create positive classroom cultures by integrating relational capacity into school wide curriculum. The foundation of relational capacity is built around developing a high degree of trust and level of safety between members of a group. In understanding the purpose of relational capacity in community building, it is important for the learner to reflect and connect strategies to real world situations. Critical, creative and practical thinking skills along with communication, conflict resolution and leadership skills are all vital to student success when managing complex projects in and out of school.

When integrating relational capacity strategies, one major connection to make is believing building community is your strongest ally when delivering content. Another crucial connection for students to make is membership in a thriving learning community empowers one to own their thinking and learning. It is equally important for students to understand themselves as well as others. Accepting how individual differences benefit the entire community helps students to embrace diversity and use challenges that occur with differing opinions as opportunities to deepen one’s own thinking and broaden learning.

In adopting relational capacity strategies as a way of life, students build confidence, self-advocacy skills and above all the leadership skills necessary to lead themselves and others into a world filled with endless opportunities for success.

The Big Hairy Audacious Goal for this course is to create positive classroom cultures by integrating relational capacity into school wide curriculum.

Chart Legend: **(S+)** designates scaffolding, **(C)** collaboration and **(TI)** technology integration opportunities

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| **Learning Goals** | **Learning Activities** | **Assessment Activities** |
| The learner will create welcoming, exciting high-energy classroom environments where students feel a sense of ownership in their learning. | Review and discuss foundations and stages of Relational CapacityName Tents **(S+, C)**Class Mission Statement **(C, TI)**Social Contracts **(C, TI)**Mingle Bingo **(TI, S+, C)** | Pre-Assessment Quiz for Teachers rating their current level of relational capacity support.Training participants will Reflect and Connect the Stage 1 Relational Capacity activities to use with purpose in their own classrooms. |
| The learner will build a culture of safety, honesty and mutual trust through the use of leveled relational capacity strategies. | Question Beach Ball **(TI, S+)**Making Words With Friends **(S+, C)**Philosophical Chairs **(TI, S+, C)** | Discuss and DebriefTraining participants will Reflect and Connect the Stage 2 Relational Capacity activities to use with purpose in their own classrooms. |
| The learner will engage students in constructing and monitoring high expectations and norms for the classroom through thoughtful and purposeful inquiry and problem solving.   | Magic Carpet Ride **(S+)**Maze **(C)**Fishbowl Speeches **(TI, S+)**Who Is Telling The Truth? **(TI, S+, C)** | Discuss and DebriefTraining participants will Reflect and Connect the Stage 3 Relational Capacity activities to use with purpose in their own classrooms. |
| The learner will explain how student differences benefit the classroom community by developing self-directing and self-advocating students who understand the power of multiple perspectives and their relation to the real world.   | Pencils of Density **(S+, C)**Sum of All Skittles **(C)**My Friends **(TI)** | Discuss and DebriefTraining participants will Reflect and Connect the Stage 4 Relational Capacity activities to use with purpose in their own classrooms. |
| The learner will develop students’ abilities to utilize collaborative structures during blended and project based learning platforms.   | Construct a Technology Toolbox by integrating technology into the activities by coding lessons with a **(TI)**Identify areas for Collaboration by designating lessons with a **(C)**Increase Scaffolding into the activities by coding lessons with a **(+S)**  | Training participants will revisit all activities and discuss ways to integrate technology, identify collaboration and increase scaffolding into each lesson. Make and Take Tech Toolbox |
| The learner will model effective questioning techniques that guide student use of critical thinking skills necessary for success in a global society.   | Socratic Seminar **(TI, S+, C)** | Relational Capacity activities have now completely shifted to 100% student centered with little teacher guidance. Post-Assessment Quiz for Teachers rating their current level of relational capacity support. |

Bendall, P., Bollhoefer, A., & Koilpillai, V. (2015). *AVID Critical Thinking and Engagement: A Schoolwide Approach*. San Diego: AVID Press.