# Master in Teaching 2015-2017 Terry Ford, Sherry Walton, Phyllis Esposito, Erica Hernandez-Scott

# It’s about ALL kids: Creating and enacting opportunities to learn https://sites.evergreen.edu/mit17/

H. Richard Milner IV provided a useful framework that assists educators in creating and implementing equitable learning opportunities that help all students engage in learning. In his book, *Start Where You Are, But Don’t Stay There,* Milner (2015) stated, “The framework covers five interconnected areas that I believe are critical in helping educators bridge and shed light on opportunity gaps: (1) rejection of color blindness; (2) ability and skill to understand, work through, and transcend cultural conflicts; (3) ability to understand how meritocracy operates; (4) ability to recognize and shift low expectations and deficit mind-sets; and (5) rejection of context-neutral mind-sets and practices” (p.13-14).

In this program, we will use Milner’s framework to actively seek to expand and refine our knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions in service to our future students, and as Milner said, “in service *with* the community.” This work is challenging, frequently scary, messy, and contradictory, but, ultimately, a gift to our own development and to our ability to engage effectively with students.

# Master in Teaching 2014-2016 Jon Davies, Sonja Wiedenhaupt http://blogs.evergreen.edu/mit2016/

**Teaching is Political: Inquiries into Learning, Equity, Community, and Social Justice**

A program named *Teaching is Political: Inquiries into Learning, Equity, Community, and Social Justice* offers a number of provocative possibilities to explore. The word political derives from polity, which means the management of public or civic affairs. Teachers are public servants who carry out the directives of the state. In a state-administered teacher preparation program, the state grants teacher licensure and local public school districts grant teacher employment opportunities.

However, political is also about naming and addressing power: Who has it? Who doesn’t? and Why? In political organizations the distribution of power is never equal and rarely shared. Public schools and classrooms as political organizations are sites of unequal power relations that mirror the unequal power relations in society. Teachers are agents of the state who both wield power over others and are subject to those who wield power over them.

In light of these explicit political mandates from the state and the complexity of power, it is important to maintain an inquiry stance to explore the nature of learning, equity, community and social justice. An inquiry stance keeps the focus on formulating powerful questions and on reflection in order to develop ongoing opportunities to learn.

Our aim in the Masters in Teaching Program is the development of broadly educated, competent practitioners who are able to engage in critical and collaborative inquiry. The program aspires to build upon the capacity of emerging practitioners who are grounded in theory and practice and who can approach the demands of teaching for a culturally, socially, and politically diverse society. Through understanding place as a social construction of the lived realities of the students you will serve, you can begin to recognize and incorporate the community assets into your classrooms to support student learning.

We begin the inquiry by attending to students and their communities, examining how people learn, and by considering ideas on the purposes of education. How someone teaches is informed by what they believe, consciously or unconsciously, about the nature and process of learning. You will examine, inform and refine your understanding of how people learn. Ultimately the goal is for you to be able to use the principles of learning as tools to inform how you structure, critique and adapt learning opportunities for the students in front of you.

Assignments will entail a range of activities including reading, interviews, collaboration, classroom observations and practice with students. They are specifically designed to help you to explore, reflect on, inform and ultimately demonstrate your understandings and skills. Throughout the quarter you will be expected to use opportunities to self-assess, set goals for and use opportunities to refine your understanding – in other words to engage in the practice of critical reflection and professional development.