

CLOSE UP CIVIL DISCOURSE CREDENTIAL

EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM



In collaboration with the **Stanford University Deliberative Democracy Lab (DDL)** and **Mastery Transcript Consortium (MTC)**, Close Up is developing a **Civil Discourse Credential** for high school students that focuses on competencies across three domains: (1) Digital Citizenship and Media Literacy; (2) Communicating Across Difference; and (3) Analyzing Social and Political Issues.



Based on Close Up's 50+ years of experience of working with young people, this credential guides students through a series of exercises, activities, and experiences to develop **highly needed durable skills** such as analytical thinking, media literacy, and the ability to productively engage with multiple perspectives. Within each domain, there is a set of competencies and corresponding rubrics that outline learner progressions (moving from emerging to mastery) and supporting curriculum and assessments to guide and assess students' development as they build mastery.

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WHAT IS THE EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION PILOT PROGRAM?

The pilot program will engage a cohort of educators who are eager to implement the curriculum in their schools and create a next generation of young people with the skills and attitudes necessary for a deliberative democracy. Educators who participate will be the first to implement the curriculum in schools and have a chance to provide feedback to help shape the credential.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF EDUCATORS WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE PILOT PROGRAM?

- **Professional Development Institute:** Pilot educators will participate in a two-day summer institute (July 30-31) where they will (1) attend a series of PD workshops to better understand, model, and practice the Civil Discourse Credential lessons and activities; (2) analyze and discuss the rubrics and competencies to build a shared language and a deeper understanding of how student mastery is defined; (3) learn how to use the MTC platform; and (4) build relationships with fellow pilot educators.
- **Civil Discourse Credential Implementation:** Participants must implement the Civil Discourse Credential in one or multiple classrooms during the 2025-26 school year. Close Up will provide all curriculum materials and access to the MTC platform.
- **Monthly Cohort Sessions:** Each month, Close Up will run a synchronous online session during which instructional coaches and curriculum designers will provide additional support and gather informal feedback from participating educators.
- **Formal Feedback:** At the conclusion of the pilot program year, Close Up will seek written feedback from the cohort of pilot educators about the curriculum, rubrics, and competencies to inform the final version of the credential before it is shared with schools and districts nationwide.

WHAT IS THE MTC PLATFORM? WHY ARE WE USING IT FOR THE CIVIL DISCOURSE CREDENTIAL?

We believe promoting deliberative discourse in classrooms nationwide is essential and that MTC offers the best platform to practice, document, and assess mastery of these durable civil discourse skills. The MTC platform provides a more meaningful assessment of students' abilities, moving beyond traditional grading systems. By focusing on mastery and evidence of learning, the Civil Discourse Credential will offer colleges and employers a deeper understanding of a student's capabilities and allow each student's unique strengths, abilities, interests, and histories to be fostered, understood, and celebrated.

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ABOUT THE CLOSE UP FOUNDATION

Close Up is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, civic education organization that informs, inspires, and empowers young people to become active citizens. Since 1971, we have partnered with school districts nationwide to serve more than one million students and educators through experiential learning programs in our nation's capital and in local communities, professional development, and curriculum design and consulting. Our goal is to connect what students learn in class to the real world around them and help them articulate their own views, listen to those of others, and engage with people of different backgrounds with tolerance and understanding. To learn more, visit www.CloseUp.org.

ABOUT THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY LAB

The Deliberative Democracy Lab at Stanford University is devoted to research about democracy and public opinion obtained through Deliberative Polling®. The method of Deliberative Polling has been used in over 50 countries around the world through over 150 projects, at varying levels of government and society. To learn more, visit <https://deliberation.stanford.edu/>.

ABOUT MASTERY TRANSCRIPT CONSORTIUM

Mastery Transcript Consortium®, an ETS company, is a national and global nonprofit membership organization that helps make mastery learning—or competency-based education—available to all learners. Because this approach does not generate traditional metrics, we co-create uniquely flexible and scalable learning records to solve the challenge of credentialing. MTC accelerates equitable access to and widespread implementation of mastery learning models, empowering students to showcase competencies and share evidence of their learning. To learn more, visit mastery.org.