

Building Partnerships in Education
STL 428/528

Instructor:

Email:

Phone:

Office:

Office hours:

Required Texts:

Diffily, D. (2004). *Teachers and Families Working Together*. Boston: Pearson.

Friend, M. & Cook, L. (2006). *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals*. 5th ed. Boston: Pearson.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2003). *The Essential Conversation: What Parents and Teachers Can Learn From Each Other*. New York: Ballentine.

Optional Text:

Johnson, D. H. (2006). *Reaching Out: Interpersonal, Effectiveness and Self Actualization*. Boston: Pearson.

Course Description :

This course will focus on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for building relationships in the field of education. Understanding issues faced by contemporary families and their relationship to schools will be studied. Barriers, strategies, communication, consultation and cross-cultural sensitivity are covered. The teacher's role in building effective relationships with families and other professionals is emphasized.

BOT Standards

The following Board of Teaching Standards are assessed in this course: 8710.2000 Standards of Effective Practice 6C, 6D, 6F, 6H, 9B, 10G, 10H, 10I, 10J, 10K. 8710.3000 Early Childhood Education J1, J2, J3, J4, J5 and 8710. Sped Core D(A) 2, 3, 4.

MSUM students will be able to:

Course Objectives

1. Demonstrate an understanding of today's families and the pressures that result from a rapidly changing world. Understand family systems theory and learn about a variety of families including issues related to exceptionalities.

2. Learn about a variety of protective and risk factors that children encounter within the context of family, school and community including poverty, domestic violence, abuse and neglect, children with special needs and being from an underrepresented ethnic background and/or social class. Demonstrate familiarity with community resources available to families facing these challenges.
3. Understand various models of parent involvement and develop resources to enhance parent involvement in school settings.
4. Develop specific interpersonal communication skills including getting to know others, communicating effectively, resolving conflicts constructively, and facilitating small groups.
5. Become aware of basic legalities related to educational relationships.
6. Understand team concepts/models in service delivery.
7. Understand consultation and collaboration models in service delivery.
8. Demonstrate an ability to use effective communication skills with parents and other professionals when attempting to build working-collaborative relationships.

Assignments:

1. Parent/Family Study. Identify a family who has a child with a disability, is from a different ethnic background or has experienced difficulties in their lives. Please check with the instructor about the family you want to interview. Explore the situation of this family and its relationships with the community and school. Arrange an opportunity to listen to their story in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of a) their family situation and b) their perspectives on their strengths and needs. Typically, you will spend at least a couple hours visiting with this family. You will be provided with a conversation guide to assist you in discovering this family's story. You will synthesize this information into a 4-6 page report with a 1-2 page reflection of what you have learned during the process (a total of 5-8 pages). You will be responsible for sharing your discoveries with the class but must keep the family anonymous. Due Sep 23. (20 %)
2. Communications Analysis of Personal Communication Skills. For this project, you will complete a variety of communication skill assessments and reflections. You will describe your current communication skills and style (with supporting evidence from assessments and reflections). You will establish goals for improving communication skills necessary for building partnerships in education and develop an improvement plan to be carried out for the duration of the semester. A final reflection will address improvements made as well as continuing efforts. Assessment Reflections Due Oct 15, Goals and Improvement Plan Due Oct 22, Final Reflection due Dec 1. (20 %)
3. Group Facilitation Project. This project requires participation in two group process experiences (at least one must be a team meeting). After the first experience, describe and analyze the process that occurred (including the roles and communication styles of each participant) and provide reflection on the effectiveness of the experience and your recommendations on how the process could have been improved. The second experience must be facilitated by you. Preparation for and facilitation of this experience will be described, analyzed and reflected upon. A final reflection on group processes and your own abilities to facilitate groups will be due on Nov 10. (20 %)
4. Mini-research project. The assignment should lead to an increased understanding of necessary skills and dispositions for building partnerships in education among teachers, schools and parents. November 24 (15%)
(Early Childhood Standard E2, E3, G2)

Assignment Description: This project should be designed to explore the influence of cultural or contextual factors on the relationship between students, parents, teachers and schools. To that end, please decide on something that influences this relationship that you would like to know more about. (Some ideas might include poverty, chronic illness, violence, drug/alcohol abuse, any number of ethnic backgrounds and/or religions, special circumstances faced by a community, bullying, or anything else you have an interest in with approval of the instructor.) Once you've decided what you would like to find out, then determine how you will gather input from appropriate sources (i.e. school administration, parent, community members and teachers). You will also need to turn to the professional literature.

Your completed projects should clarify what you wanted to find out and why it is important, how you went about finding out what you wanted to know, and what you found out. Finally, describe the implications that this issue has on building partnerships in education.

These projects can be worked upon in groups of up to three students. Your completed project can be submitted as a paper, or a power point, or some other format of your choosing with prior approval of the instructor.

The project will be graded holistically based on the following criteria:

- Project is inquiry-based, clearly described and appropriately connected to objectives of course.
 - Evidence of gathered input from appropriate entities (parents, teachers, school admin...)
 - Evidence of appropriate outside resources/texts
 - Findings clearly described
 - Implications clearly described
 - Appropriate writing (grammar, spelling, completeness) and appearance
5. Community Resources Annotations: Each student will identify and investigate at least 3 community resources that provide support to families and children. The community resources will be briefly described including contact and location information, services provided and other relevant information. These annotation will be combined with others in from the class to create a Community Resources File for each student. (5%)
6. On-line and In-Class activities including but not limited to quick writes on assigned readings, quizzes, reflections and reaction papers. In-class activities that are missed because of non-attendance cannot be made up. (20%)

Final Grade:

Grades will be based on the total number of points earned in the class from a total of 400 points (**no curve**). The grading scale will be as follows:

90%-100%
80%-89%
70%-79%
60%-69%
59% or below

Course Policies

Class attendance: Class attendance is strongly encouraged. Along with the lecture, information for exams and assignments will be given in class, so accumulated absences will surely affect one's grade. Students who miss class are responsible for obtaining course notes, data, and other missed materials from a classmate.

Special Accommodations: Students with disabilities who believe they may need an accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact Greg Toutges, Coordinator of Disability Services at 299-5859 V/TTY, CMU 222 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Office hours: Students should feel free to come by to discuss classroom topics or for clarification of or feedback on assignments. The instructor can also be reached by phone or email, and appointments can be scheduled outside office hours. It is best to seek help on assignments and class material as early as possible.

Maintaining academic honesty: *Plagiarizing, inadequately citing, or cheating on exams or assignments will not be tolerated!*

****Plagiarism is copying someone else's work or something they have said and using it as your own. This may be copying something word for word or copying someone else's ideas without citing their name.**

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE EDUCATION UNIT

MSUM candidates are professionals who are knowledgeable, reflective, humanistic, and creative.

Knowledgeable: MSUM candidates display competence in their subject matter, built upon a strong grounding in liberal studies. MSUM candidates understand the principles of learning, assessment and technology. They understand and apply legal and ethical considerations in all aspects of their work. MSUM candidates are able to integrate theory and practice, and view learning as an active process. MSUM candidates demonstrate the ability to model connections between philosophical foundations and best practices in the field. As life-long learners, MSUM candidates engage in research and complex thinking. They design opportunities for others to seek knowledge and to understand themselves as members of the world community.

Reflective: MSUM candidates engage in thoughtful analysis of the meaning and significance of their actions, decisions, and results with regard to their work in order to assess progress in meeting this guiding principle. It is through this reflective process that instruction is improved, new ideas are implemented, ineffective methodologies are abandoned, and learning outcomes for students are enhanced. MSUM candidates are skilled at analyzing their teaching from a variety of perspectives and identifying connections between teaching strategies and student learning. In addition, candidates utilize a variety of techniques to question their procedures and consider alternatives for instruction and student growth. MSUM candidates are able to recognize learning, motivational, and developmental variables in their instructional practice and relate those dimensions to their teaching practices. Finally, MSUM candidates bring a questioning spirit to received wisdom and conventional practice when needed.

Humanistic: MSUM candidates value the personal worth of each individual. This is based on a belief in people's potential and their innate ability to develop to their fullest. MSUM candidates' actions are grounded in knowledge of different cultural and ethnic groups within the world community, and in knowledge of the influence of culture and history, ethnicity, language, gender and socio-economics on one's life. This knowledge base informs candidates' decision-making as they create environments that promote freedom, compassion, and success for all learners. MSUM candidates are fair-minded in their interactions with others, as well as sensitive to and accepting of individual differences. Further, MSUM candidates have an understanding of aesthetics and the diversity that is part of the human experience and will incorporate this knowledge into their work. MSUM candidates recognize and accommodate a variety of linguistic and nonlinguistic interpersonal skills in their

actions with others. MSUM candidates foster resiliency in the students with whom they work, and model these qualities in their own work.

Creative: MSUM candidates understand the powerful resources of the arts and sciences, and use their knowledge of these areas to bring the best of their imaginative and creative acts into the classroom. MSUM candidates recognize the important role creativity plays in the design of instruction and classroom environment. They will, for themselves and for their students, meet new situations with resourcefulness, excitement and curiosity, with an investigative attitude, and with the ability to pose, seek and design solutions to problems. MSUM candidates are cognizant of the aesthetic elements of the world and draw on that knowledge to make curricular decisions designed to help students not only learn about aesthetics, but to also learn how to think about the world at large.

Course Schedule (tentative):

WK	Unit	Topic	Assignments Due	Standards
1	Intro Families	Introductions, Course Overview, Family Systems Theories		EC J3 Sped D(A)2
2	Families	Family Matters Video, Family Study and Conversation Guide, Getting to Know Families	Lightfoot Intro-Ch 3 Diffley Ch 2	EC J1, J2
3	Families	Parent Involvement— Why and How?	Lightfoot Ch 4-5 Diffley Ch 1, 3, 4, 5	
4	Families	Parent-Teacher Conferences—Formal and Informal	Lightfoot Ch 6-7 Diffley Ch 7	StEP 10I, 10K EC J4 Sped D(A)4
5	Families	Culture and Context Sharing Family Studies	Parent/Family Study	Sped D(A)3
6	Families Communication	Methods for Effective Partnering with Families	Diffley Ch 6, 8	StEP 10K
7	Communication	Communication Skills Self Assessment and Goal Setting , Problem Solving	Friend Ch 8, online links, Friend Ch 2	StEP 6C, 6D, 6F, 9B
8	Communication	Using Statements and Asking Questions Working with other Professionals Group Process	Friend Ch 9, 10 Communication Self-Assessment	StEP 6H
9	Communication	Working with other Professionals: Meetings and Teaming, Consultation Role-Plays of Team Meetings Teaming Case Study	Friend Ch 3, 4, 5 Communication Goals/Improvement Plan	StEP 10G
10	Communication	Consultation, Co-Teaching and Paraprofessionals Working with Para’s Case study	Friend Ch 5, 6	StEP 10H
11	Communication	Conflict Management	Friend Ch 11	

			Gonzales-Mena Intro- Ch 4	
12	Contexts	Diversity Poverty, Violence (Bullying , Harrassment, Abuse), Mandated Reporting Mini-Research Findings Shared	Gonzales-Mena Ch 5-7 Diffley-Ch 9, 10 Group Facilitation	StEP 10B, 10C
13	Contexts	Mental Health, Physical Health, Disabilities Mini-Research Findings Shared	Online Links	StEP 10B
14	Contexts	Legislation Mini-Research Findings Shared	Mini-Research Project Due	StEP 10B
15	Community Resources	Community Partners	Resource Annotations	StEP 10J EC J5 Sped D(A)4
16	Wrap Up		Communication Final Reflection	StEP 6C, 6D, 6F, 9B