

College of Education and Human Development
Department of Teaching and Learning
T&L 553 Collaborative Relationships: Home, School and Community
(3 credits)
Fall 2007

Instructor:

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Office hours: Tues. and Wed. 1-4 p.m.; other days by appointment

Required Reading:

Chalmers, L. and Olson, M. *Collaboration Handbook*. (1995). Moorhead, Minnesota: Practical Press.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2003) *The Essential Conversation: What parents and teachers learn from each other*. New York, New York: Random House Publishing.

Recommended Reading:

Friend, M. and Cook, L (2007) *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals*. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon

Course Description:

A course appropriate for anyone working with families to include general educators, special educators, paraprofessionals, related service personnel, administrators and outside agency personnel. In this course the student will develop a basic understanding of family systems theory and learn about the structure, characteristics and functioning of **all** types of families across the lifespan. Students will develop skills to promote collaborative partnerships when working with families from diverse cultures, families with children with special needs, and families that are experiencing difficulties. The student will develop consultative and collaborative skills, improve communication skills and develop supervisory skills. The student will explore school choices and issues related to schools such as teasing, bullying, and school violence.

Conceptual Framework:

The teacher education programs at UND are grounded on constructivist principles. Throughout programs, we support the development of teachers who are learners, active agents of learning and articulate visionaries.

Course Objectives:

Through class activities, discussions and assignments, students will:

- 1) Understand family systems theory and learn about the structure, characteristics, interactions and functions of all types of families to include children with disabilities, children from diverse cultural backgrounds and children who use English as a second language across the lifespan (INTASC #'s 1 and 3).
- 2) Explore protective and risk factors that children encounter within the context of the family, school, and community. These factors will include poverty, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, teasing, and bullying (INTASC #1).
- 3) Explore school choice and partnership (i.e. charter schools, magnet schools, home-schooling and online learning).
- 4) Demonstrate competence in determining family strengths, challenges, resources, priorities and concerns consistent with procedural due process as described in federal, state, and LEA policies and procedures (INTASC #5).
- 5) Demonstrate knowledge, understanding and evaluation of transitions that support families and children through the processes (INTASC #1).
- 6) Understand and describe in writing the nature of consultative, collaborative and team processes including stages and roles of participants who engage in these social interactions (INTASC #10).
- 7) Understand the team concepts/models in service delivery (multidisciplinary team, interdisciplinary team, transdisciplinary team, team problem solving, conflict resolution skills, communication, team building, roles, responsibilities, and processes) (INTASC #4).
- 8) Refine current and develop new effective communication, problem solving and conflict resolution skills (INTASC #4).
- 9) Understand and describe in writing the perspective of collaborative partners (i.e. parents, early intervention teachers, early childhood educators, regular education teachers, special educators, administrators, related support personnel, outside agency personnel)(INYASC #10).
- 10) Refine current and develop new effective supervisory skills with paraprofessionals, parent volunteers and community resources (INTASC #6).
- 11) Design and practice the development of collaboration skills as they apply to diverse learners particularly attending to ethnicity, culture, and gender issues (INTASC #3).
- 12) Access and apply the use of technology to search out current literature concerning collaboration research and the implications for school/program base applications (INTASC #9).

Course Requirements

1) Five reflections/assignments (50 points: 10 points each)

Five times throughout the course, you will be asked to reflect on a presentation, video, case study or reading material. These are in-class only reflections/assignments.

2) The Essential Conversation (30 points: 5 points for the list of points/questions and 25 points for the reflection paper)

You will work in pairs to discuss this book. Each pair will be responsible to lead the overall group in a discussion about one of the chapters. It is essential that everyone in the class has read the chapter being discussed. Each pair of students will develop a list of five points/questions from the assigned chapter to use as a guide for the group discussion. The instructor is to be given a copy of the list of points/questions prior to the class discussion. After all six chapters have been discussed, each one of you will write an individual 2-3 page double spaced reflection paper about the book. **Due: Oct. 16th**

3) Collaboration Plan (50 points)

You will develop a collaboration plan that includes goals, problem-solving strategies, conflict management strategies, timelines and forms that relate to the problem at hand. This might be for a school setting or an agency. Guidelines are provided in the Syllabus Addendum. **Due: Nov. 6th**

4) Listening to Families (70 points)

Identify a family who has a child with a disability, is from a different ethnic background or has experienced difficulties in their lives. The family you identify will be dependent on your area of interest and specialization. Please check with the instructor about the family you want to interview. Arrange an opportunity to listen to their family story (you may choose questions from a list the class has discussed). Remember this is just a guide to help you. You want to have a conversation with the family rather than an interview. It may be helpful to audiotape your conversation as you take notes. The purpose of this assignment is to gain a better understanding of the family situation and learn about their perspectives of their strengths, preferences and needs as a basis for providing personalized and relevant family support. Typically you will spend approximately 3-5 hours with your family. You will synthesize the information into a 4-6 page report that includes a 1-2 page reflection of what insights you have gained during the process. **Oral Reports Due Nov. 22nd or 27th; Written paper Due Dec. 4th.**

Grading

180-200=A 160-179=B 140-159=C 120-139=D Below 119=F

When the final grade is calculated, students falling within two percentage points of a letter grade will receive the higher grade if they have no more than one absence for the semester. See the Syllabus Addendum for policies relating to attendance, participation, late assignments, plagiarism, and disability support.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Aug. 21—Ice breaker, Introductions, Syllabus Review, Course Expectations and Policies

Topic: The Fundamentals of Collaboration Reading: Collaboration Handbook (CH)

Aug. 28—Topic: Interpersonal Communication Reading: CH
Using Statements
Asking Questions
(video/role plays)

Sept. 4—Topic: Interpersonal Problem Solving Reading: CH
(Case Studies/Role Plays)

Essential Conversation Discussions Begin—Ch. 1: Ghosts in the Classroom
DUE: Family Identified for “Listening to Families Assignment”

Sept. 11—Topic: Teams Reading: CH & handouts
Consultation
Co-Teaching (Video)

Essential Conversation Discussions—Ch. 2: Natural Enemies

Sept. 18—Paraeducators Reading: Handouts

Essential Conversation Discussions—Ch. 3: Truths the Hand Can Touch

Sept. 25—Topic: Difficult Interactions Reading: CH and handouts
(Powerpoint/Case Studies)

Essential Conversation Discussions—Ch. 4: Inequalities and Entitlements

Oct. 2—Topic: Practical Matters Reading: None
Essential Conversation Discussions—Ch. 5: Crossing the Line of Objectivity

Oct. 9—Topic: Family/Family Systems Reading: None

Essential Conversation Discussions—Ch. 6: Living Both Sides

Oct. 16--Topic: Perspectives and Issues Reading: Nonw
Speakers
Reflection paper on Essential Conversation Book Due!

Oct. 23—No class--Work on Collaboration Plan

Oct. 30—Topic: Families Affected by Difficult Circumstances (Finish Collaboration Plans)

Speakers

Nov. 6—No Class——**Collaboration Plans Due!** (Prepare for Presentation Families)
Open Topic Day

Nov. 13—Open Topic Day

Nov. 20—Presentations on Listening to Families

Nov. 27__Presentations on Listening to Families
Course Evaluation

Dec. 4__**Families Paper Due!**