Communicating With Parents of Students With Special Needs

15 Clock Hours
Why should teachers take our courses?

A Focus on Student Success
Fostering student success in both academics and social-emotional growth is the main focus of all of our courses. Our courses are filled with strategies, techniques, and activities that are directly tied to improving student achievement in the classroom.

Classroom Applicable
We believe that professional development should be directly related to the classroom, so our courses are designed to include valuable resources for the classroom, innovative strategies and perspectives, and activities aimed at developing content teachers can use in the classroom immediately.

Authentic Assessments
As every subject and grade range has its own needs, we have designed our courses to include authentic assessments that mirror the type of work teachers do in the classroom. With case studies, active reading exercises, and time for developing student-facing activities, our courses provide consistent opportunities to express learning in an authentic manner.

Reflective Practice
A key component of all of our courses is time dedicated to reflective practice. Each course includes a journaling component, which prompts the teacher to connect the reading to their practice, experiences, student population, and school community.

Connection to Special Populations
While many professional development courses may tack on a section on special populations at the end, we believe that knowledge of special populations is integral to all subjects and grade ranges. The majority of our courses include direct strategies for working with exceptional students (special needs, English Language learners, at-risk students, and gifted and talented students).

Professional Learning Community
A dedicated online community space allows teachers to interact with course instructors and their peers, sharing resources, exploring new ideas, and connecting with other educators from across the country.
Communicating With Parents of Students With Special Needs

Course Description

Communication with families whose children have a 504 Plan or IEP involves more than just general updates on their children’s social and academic progress. Many families who have been navigating the special education bureaucracy have already had less-than-positive experiences with communication between home and school. Establishing a relationship of trust with these families early in the process ensures that communication remains open throughout the year as you demonstrate that you share the same goal as the family: the success of their child.

In this course, you will examine your current communication practices and how you can improve them to create a positive working relationship with your students’ families. You’ll develop methods for establishing and maintaining healthy communication so parents know you are on the same team and working toward the same goals. In addition, you’ll learn practical, stress-free strategies for tracking and logging all correspondences with parents to keep a transparent record of students’ progress on their individual learning goals.

Using the tools and techniques from this course, you will be able to cultivate a positive, caring relationship with your students’ families and effectively share their progress so you can work together toward their child’s success.

Connections to Practice

This course provides the following classroom connections:

- Strategies for communicating compassionately and effectively with parents of students with special needs.
- Strategies for maintaining consistent communication throughout the school year.
- Methods of maintaining accurate communication records.

Course Objectives

In this course, participants will:

- Assess your current method of parent communication.
- Analyze the unique communication considerations specific to families of students with special needs.
- Evaluate the importance of maintaining accurate communication records.
- Devise an effective method to log parent communication.
Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching Alignment

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation

1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

4a: Reflecting on Teaching

4b: Maintaining Accurate Records

4c: Communicating with Families

Course Engagement and Resources

To complete this course, you will have the opportunity to choose between two options for engagement. You may participate in each online module within the LMS (Moodle) by completing the readings, discussion forums, and activities. Or, if you prefer, you may download the activity packet(s) located within the course to complete on your own and submit to the assignment blocks throughout the course as directed.

The activities and engagement options for the course have been designed to align with guidelines and considerations of Universal Design for Learning. This course aims to:

- Provide the learner with multiple means of representation.
- Provide the learner with multiple means of action and expression.
- Provide the learner with multiple means of engagement.

As part of both course engagement options, your course facilitator will be available to you to answer questions and provide written feedback on your final project. Additionally, within the Moodle LMS, you will have access to a collection of community resources through which you will be able to further explore course concepts through collaboration with facilitators and peers.

Materials

- Online reading, viewing, and listening resources will be provided in each module.
Method of Evaluating Student’s Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Category</th>
<th>Assignment (Types)</th>
<th>Total Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Possible Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Self-reflection and goal setting, concept practice questions, and discussion forums</td>
<td>5 points</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note that to pass this course, you must receive a percentage of 80% or higher.*

Completion of all activities is required to receive credit.

Assessments

Self-Reflection and Goal Setting

This course will include a self-reflection and goal setting assignment in the first module, in which each learner will articulate what he or she hopes to learn and achieve by taking the course. Learners will be guided to reflect briefly upon their intentions for the course and to set one to two specific (SMART) goals for their learning.

Concept Practice

These automatically scored questions will appear in each module and will cover concepts discussed in the module. Immediate feedback will be provided for each question.

Discussions

Discussions will appear in each module and include questions about concepts that appear in the module.

Learners participating in the online engagement option will be expected to post one original response to the prompt and are highly encouraged to respond to two peers.

Learners participating in the course via the activity packet option are not required to participate in the online Moodle discussion forums but will complete the discussion for each module with an organized and comprehensive written response in the activity packet that corresponds with the module. Discussions will be evaluated on a pass–fail basis, per the following guidelines for completion:

- Participant satisfactorily shares thoughtful reflections and responds to colleagues in a respectful and engaging way.
- Participant provides an adequate level of detail in entries.
• Examples are satisfactorily helpful and informative and foster discussions or demonstrate substantial reflection.
• Participant’s responses are clear and well written and employ proper APA citation.

Final Project

The final project for each course will appear in the final module and include a prompt that aligns with each category (including the “evaluate” and “create” categories) of Bloom’s taxonomy, building on the concepts from each module.

Final projects will be designed for the learner to create an implementation plan that demonstrates application and understanding of concepts and skills learned through each module of the course.

The final project will be evaluated using the following rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Areas</th>
<th>Does Not Meet Expectations (1 points)</th>
<th>Partially Meets Expectations (3 points)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (4 points)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (5 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Course Content</td>
<td>Checkpoint relates incomplete or incorrect information about course concepts. The learner provides an unclear reflection upon how they will evaluate personal progress toward established course goals.</td>
<td>Checkpoint relates superficial information about course concepts. The learner provides a superficial reflection upon how they will evaluate personal progress toward established course goals.</td>
<td>Checkpoint relates clear information about course concepts. The learner provides a satisfactory reflection upon how they will evaluate personal progress toward established course goals.</td>
<td>Checkpoint relates detailed and thorough information about course concepts. The learner provides a detailed reflection upon how they will evaluate personal progress toward established course goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment of Student Outcomes</td>
<td>Checkpoint activity’s alignment to course learning outcomes is unclear or absent.</td>
<td>Checkpoint activity aligns with 1–2 course learning outcomes.</td>
<td>Checkpoint activity aligns with 2–3 course learning outcomes.</td>
<td>Checkpoint activity aligns with 3–5 course learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Course Outline

Module 1

Review the resources provided in Module 1, and complete the:

- Self-Reflection and Goal Setting Activity
- Introductory Forum
- Module 1 Content Lesson
- Module 1 Online Resources
- Module 1 Concept Practice
- Module 1 Discussion

Module 2

Review the resources provided in Module 2, and complete the:

- Module 2 Content Lesson
- Module 2 Online Resources
- Module 2 Concept Practice
- Module 2 Discussion
- Final Project

Technology Requirements

Please review the System Requirements for Moodle.

Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to complete this course, are encouraged to reach out to support@advancementcourses.com at the beginning of the course. We will make reasonable academic and accessibility accommodations to the course.

Academic Integrity

Honesty is an essential aspect of academic integrity. Individual students are responsible for doing their own work and submitting original assignments as per the course directions. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated.

Plagiarize: “To steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own without crediting the source; presenting as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1973, 870). This includes using information from the Internet without citing the website. Avoid plagiarism by appropriately acknowledging the source of the author’s words and ideas.
Cheating: Submitting or presenting an assignment as your own when it was written or created by someone else is not permissible in this class.

References

Anne Arundel County Public Schools. (2015, December 22). Student records and confidentiality [Video file].

CDC. (n.d.). Communicating with and about people with disabilities [PDF file].


LACOE/ETN. (2015, April 20). Special educators put parents in the picture [Video file].

Listen To Your Mother. (2014, July 9). Kristi Rieger Campbell reading “What it means to be a special needs mom” [Video file].


Tallman, M. (n.d.). Teachers, you must send this letter home on the first day of school! [Blog post].


Vanderbilt University. (n.d.). A guide to working with parents of children with special needs [PDF file].

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