



Communicating with Parents & Families

Brandman University: EDAU 9774 – 3 Semester Hours

Thank you for registering for this course. Included are the following important documents:

1. Course Syllabus
2. Course Materials
3. Assignment Plan – Assignments to turn in & Grading Rubric
4. Course Hourly Breakdown
5. Participant Evaluation Form

Assignment Deadline: This course is a rolling course throughout the year, which means it does not have a specific deadline. However, you must submit all completed assignments by 6 months after the registration date with Credits for Teachers. Please allow 4 weeks from the date assignments are submitted for the grade to be added to your transcript.

Registering with Brandman University: Please register with the university prior to starting your coursework. *Students must register for the course through Brandman prior to the end of the semester in which they are enrolled with Credits for Teachers.* To register, visit their [website here](#). If you are registering with Brandman for the first time, create an account. If you are a returning student, enter your login information.

Upon Completion of the Course:

1. Please submit all completed assignments in PDF format in one email to grades@creditsforteachers.com.
2. Complete a Course Evaluation (2 minutes) by clicking the link below - Course Evaluation Form

Communicating with Parents & Families - Syllabus

EDAU 9774

3 credits

Course Description: This course offers a variety of strategies to help educators communicate with and build positive relationships with parents and families of students being taught. Using these strategies makes communicating with students' families more feasible and less overwhelming. By establishing valuable, consistent communication with students' families, this course shows educators that they can help improve their students' success and increase their own enjoyment of teaching at the same time.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will learn strategies to communicate with and build relationships with parents and families of their own students.
- Students will be able to apply strategies to communicate better with parents and families of their own students and build better relationships with those families.
- Students will be able to use communication and relationships with families to work together as a team to improve their own students' learning.
- Students will develop skills to reflect on & improve their own teaching practices.

Course Materials:

- Readings:
 - (Required) "5: Go the extra mile for families (but don't take forever to get there)" and the first part of "6: Learn to say 'no' without guilt and make your 'yes' really count" from the book *Unshakeable: 20 ways to enjoy teaching every day...no matter what* by Angela Watson.
 - (Required) "Chapter 31: Keeping Parents Informed – Choosing a system to update parents on behavior and academics" from the book *The Cornerstone: Classroom Management That Makes Teaching More Effective, Efficient, and Enjoyable* by Angela Powell.
 - (Additional) "Chapter 30: Creative Family Outreach – Building a rapport and empowering parents to support learning" from the book *The Cornerstone: Classroom Management That Makes Teaching More Effective, Efficient, and Enjoyable* by Angela Powell.
- Videos:
 - Making Positive Phone Calls Home
 - Student-Led Conferences: Empowerment and Ownership
- Content Implementation: (You will choose one of the following options.)
 - OPTION 1: Implementation Plan, Implementation Plan Template, & Implementation Plan Template-Modified
 - OPTION 2: Hour Log Template & Hour Log Example

*NOTE: The example is meant to act as a reference for what different entries could look like in the hour log assignment. Although this example relates to the *Growth Mindset* course, the outline and example entries can still be used as a model for what to include in the hour log assignment.

- Course Evaluation Form

Assignments:

1. Read the packet including “5: Go the extra mile for families (but don’t take forever to get there)” and the first part of “6: Learn to say ‘no’ without guilt and make your ‘yes’ really count” from the book *Unshakeable: 20 ways to enjoy teaching every day...no matter what* by Angela Watson.

Then watch the following video: Making Positive Phone Calls Home

2. At the beginning of the reading, Angela Watson describes the importance of building relationships with the families of your students and the importance of getting them on your side as the teacher. In at least 1 page, reflect on this philosophy. Do you agree or disagree and why? Describe a good relationship you have had in the past with a family and describe a time when a parent or family was upset with you. How did both situations feel? Do you think it had an impact on how you taught those respective students and any further communication you had with their parents or family?
3. Read the packet entitled “Chapter 31: Keeping Parents Informed – Choosing a system to update parents on behavior and academics” from the book *The Cornerstone: Classroom Management That Makes Teaching More Effective, Efficient, and Enjoyable* by Angela Powell.
*NOTE: The first part of Chapter 31 provides strategies on sending home student reports to parents, both behavioral and academic. If this is something you do not need help implementing at this time, feel free to skip it. *The required part to read from this chapter is “Successful Parent Conferences.”*

Then watch the following video: Student-Led Conferences: Empowerment and Ownership

4. In at least 2 pages, explain your feelings and reactions to “student-led” parent-teacher conferences as described in the reading and the video. Then, describe how you currently run your parent-teacher conferences. Do you already hold “student-led” conferences? If so, explain what you do and the general outcome of these conferences. If not, how do you feel about changing the way you hold conferences to make them more “student-led?” Make a plan for your next set of parent-teacher conferences to make them more “student-led” and briefly describe it.
5. Content Implementation: **You only have to complete one of the following options.**
OPTION 1: This section typically applies to in class (or within the school day) implementation of strategies. For teachers that are in their summer break or do not have contact with students due to COVID-19, please refer to the Implementation plan for how to adjust this section accordingly. The Implementation Plan takes the place of the Hour Log, so you only have to do

one or the other. Links to the Implementation Plan assignment and templates can be found above in “Course Materials.”

Make sure to include the following in your 4 week plan. Use the strategies from the readings to help you with phone calls/emails home, parent-teacher conferences, impromptu conferences, upset or demanding families, uninvolved families, compromising with families and/or creating & sending home student reports. Use the strategies that will work best for you, your teaching style, and your population of families, but don't feel pressured to use all of them. There are many strategies offered – some are just about changing your mindset while others involve more preparation. Incorporate a minimum of 8 of the strategies provided. As a side note, some of the examples used in the readings are designed for a specific classroom environment. Please adapt the strategies mentioned to make them work best for you. Use the suggestions below mentioned in “OPTION 2” or use your own!

OPTION 2: Complete an hour log that logs the hours when you implement strategies from the course. Over the next few weeks, make an effort to communicate with your students' parents and families. Use the strategies from the readings to help you with phone calls/emails home, parent-teacher conferences, impromptu conferences, upset or demanding families, uninvolved families, compromising with families and/or creating & sending home student reports. Use the strategies that will work best for you, your teaching style, and your population of families, but don't feel pressured to use all of them. There are many strategies offered – some are just about changing your mindset while others involve more preparation. Incorporate a minimum of 8 of the strategies provided.

As a side note, some of the examples used in the readings are designed for a specific classroom environment. Please adapt the strategies mentioned to make them work best for you. Use the suggestions below or use your own!

- **Calling Home-Beginning of the Year:** Try your best to communicate home to all of your families. If you are on a team at the middle school level, try dividing it up and giving each person on your team 30 families to call. If you are not on a team, use email instead. Create a group with all of your families' emails and then “bcc” them with one email. (This is also nice for later in the year when you want to communicate an announcement to all families in a quick, easy way.)
- **Calling Home-Later in the Year:** If it is currently not the beginning of the school year, it would still be worth it to try and contact all of your families to do a quick check in. You can still divide up the list of students, and give each person on your team 30 families to call. Or, if calling everyone seems unrealistic, make a list of 30 students to receive a positive phone call home, and make a few calls each day.

- **Alternative to Hosting a “Family Festivity”:** Go to an extra-curricular event for one or more of your students such as a sporting event, concert, musical or play. If you see some of your students’ families, say hi, go sit with them, speak to them afterwards, or connect with them on some level to show your interest in their child.
- **Communicating Positive Behavior:** If it is unrealistic to mail notes, do “positive phone calls home” instead. Choose 1-3 students each day and call their families to relay some positive feedback about their child. Try to make this a priority for your “toughest” students too.
- **Student-Led Conferencing:** To help you start a “student-led” parent-teacher conference, make a list of your top 5 or so expectations you have for all of your students. Then have the student self-assess on those expectations. Ask them why they ranked themselves accordingly for each one. From there, you can have students easily make goals for themselves for the rest of the year by listing specific actions they can commit to doing to improve on the expectations above. You can even turn it into a contract for everyone to sign: student, teacher, & parent/guardian.
- ***Alternative to Forms/Notes:** Anytime the readings refer to using a form or a note to send home for parent communication, use a phone call instead. Phone calls can go a long way! As a last resort, use email, but remember that phone calls are always preferred and encouraged.
- ***Alternative to “Home-School Folder”:** If you already use a “Homework Folder” as part of your systems and routines, use this for parent communication as well. Have students write a reminder in their planners to show their parents/family the document(s) in their homework folder.

(*Strategies from additional reading in “Course Materials”)

Spend a minimum of 60 hours (about 2 weeks) implementing the strategies from the course and log the 60 hours. Possible options to use for logging hours include but are not limited to:

- Planning lessons
- Teaching lessons
- Reflections on practice
- Research of course topics (This could include the additional reading(s) listed above in the “Course Materials.”)
- Planning with colleagues

For each day, briefly explain what you accomplished, the lesson you taught (if applicable), the strategies from the course utilized, and their effectiveness on students’ learning. Make sure to include dates, the total hours spent each day or for each entry, and the total hours spent overall. Links to an Hour Log template and example can be found above in “Course Materials.”

*NOTE: You will expand and elaborate on the strategies used and how it all went in your Final Reflection assignment. The hour log is meant to serve as a brief description of recorded evidence that 60 hours of course content implementation were completed.

Additionally, use this log as an opportunity to reflect on the successes of implementing various strategies and what modifications can be made to improve the success of these strategies in subsequent lessons.

6. Final Reflection: **You only have to complete one of the following options.**
- OPTION 1:** If you completed the course during the summer or during COVID-19 closures and completed the Implementation Plan, follow the guidelines below.
- a. Write a minimum two-page paper explaining how you plan to implement the strategies from the course. Make sure to answer the following questions in your reflection.
 - i. What strategies do you plan to implement, and what will they look like and/or sound like in your classroom and/or outside of class time? What will you be doing as the teacher? What will students be doing (if applicable)? What will the parents or families be doing?
 - ii. What impact do you hope to see from using these strategies on your teaching, on student learning, and on your relationships with your students' families?
 - iii. How is this way of communicating with parents and families different from how you did it in the past?
 - iv. What do you plan to do to support the effectiveness of the methods and strategies?
 - v. What modifications do you plan to make on any of the strategies and why? (If you are not planning on making any modifications, feel free to skip this question.)
 - vi. What challenges do you foresee arising from using any of these strategies?

OPTION 2: If you completed the course during the school year and completed the Hour Log assignment, follow the guidelines below.

- a. After consistently implementing a minimum of 8 communicating with parents & families strategies in your lessons/school days for 2 weeks (60 hours), reflect on the effectiveness of using these strategies on your teaching and student learning.
- b. Write a minimum two-page paper explaining the impact of using the communicating with parents & families strategies on your teaching and on student learning. Make sure to answer the following questions in your reflection.

- i. What strategies did you implement, and what did they look like and/or sound like? What were you doing as the teacher? What were students doing (if applicable)? What were the parents or families doing?
- ii. Were the methods and strategies successful and did you notice a difference compared to when you communicated with parents and families in the past? Did you notice a positive impact on student learning?
- iii. What did you do to support the effectiveness of the methods and strategies used? Did you modify any of the strategies to help meet your needs or the needs of your students? If so, describe the modifications and explain the reasoning behind them.
- iv. What was challenging or didn't work as well as you would have hoped?
- v. How would you modify any part of what you implemented to make it more effective in the future?

Communicating with Parents & Families - Assignment Plan, Evaluation & Grading

Reading Reflection (Written Response Rubric)	X/15pts
Student-Led Conferences Reflection (Written Response Rubric)	X/15pts
*Hour Log Assignment OR Implementation Plan	-----
Final Reflection on Communicating w/ Families (Final Reflection Rubric)	X/40 pts
Final Grade	X/70 pts

(*The assignment is required but is not graded)

Final Grade Scale

- 63-70 - A
- 56-62 - B
- 49-55 - C
- 42-48 - D
- 41 & Below - F

Written Response Rubric (Used for Reading Reflection & Student-Led Conferences Reflection):

Grade	Description
A (14-15)	Student answers all questions thoroughly with detail. The responses are well thought out and in depth and show understanding of communicating with parents and families. The examples given are detailed to the point that it is very clear what the outcome will look like in and/or out of the classroom.
B (12-13)	Student answers all questions. Examples of new strategies are explained. More detail could have been given in one or more of the responses.
C (11)	Some questions are complete while others are not. Student may have left out examples or just failed to answer all parts of the question. Communicating with parents and families strategies are mentioned but full understanding is missing.
D (9-10)	Student has attempted to answer all questions but answers are incomplete. Not all parts of the questions are addressed and/or the strategies mentioned do not reflect communicating with parents and families.
F (0-8)	Answers are incomplete with a one or two sentence answer. There is no elaboration. Strategies are missing or do not reflect communicating with parents and families.

Final Reflection Rubric:

Grade	Description
A (36-40)	Student has implemented 8 or more strategies from the course geared towards communicating with parents and families within multiple lessons and/or time outside of class time. Student has explained in detail how each strategy was incorporated. If anything was modified, an explanation of how and why strategies were modified is included. Lastly, student has answered all of the reflection questions.
B (32-35)	Student has implemented 6 or 7 strategies from the course geared towards communicating with parents and families within multiple lessons and/or time outside of class time. Student has explained how each strategy was incorporated. If anything was modified, an explanation of how and why strategies were modified is included. Lastly, student has answered all of the reflection questions.
C (28-31)	<p>Student has implemented 4 or 5 strategies from the course geared towards communicating with parents and families within multiple lessons and/or time outside of class time. Student has explained how each strategy was incorporated. If anything was modified, an explanation of how and why strategies were modified is included. Lastly, student has answered the majority of the reflection questions, but some questions are not addressed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <p>Student has completed the requirements listed to receive a “B”. However, the explanation of the strategies is incomplete and it is unclear how the strategies were implemented. Lastly, student has answered the majority of the reflection questions, but some questions are not addressed.</p>
D (24-27)	Student has implemented 2 or 3 strategies from the course geared towards communicating with parents and families within multiple lessons and/or time outside of class time. Student has somewhat explained how the strategies were incorporated. However, the explanation is incomplete, and it is unclear how the strategies were implemented. If anything was modified, an explanation of how and why things were modified is incomplete. Student has answered some of the reflection questions, but some questions are not addressed.
F (0-23)	Student has implemented a total of 1 strategy from the course geared towards communicating with parents and families within 1 lesson or time outside of class time. There is some explanation about how the strategy was incorporated but very little. If anything was modified, there is no explanation of how or why things were modified. Student has answered some of the reflection questions but responses are very incomplete, or none of the questions have been answered.

Communicating with Parents & Families - Suggested Hourly Breakdown

Course Readings, Videos & Additional Materials	5
Planning strategies into lessons	10
Practicing (or planning) strategies/techniques in the classroom	*20
Reflecting on lessons and effectiveness of strategies	5
Brainstorming, researching and writing all assignments	5
Total Hours	45

*Note: When utilizing the Hour Log option, the 20 course hours listed equates to 60 hours of course content implementation.

Upon Completion of the Course:

1. Please submit all assignments in PDF format to grades@creditsforteachers.com.
2. Complete a Course Evaluation (2 minutes) by using the link below - Course Evaluation Form

Bibliography

Edutopia, director. *Student-Led Conferences: Empowerment and Ownership*. YouTube, YouTube, 26 Aug. 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_WBSInDc2E.

FlamboyantFoundation, director. *Making Positive Phone Calls Home*. YouTube, YouTube, 18 Nov. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=UikIaBdxedg.

Powell, Angela. *The Cornerstone: Classroom Management That Makes Teaching More Effective, Efficient, and Enjoyable*. Due Season Press, 2009.

Watson, Angela. *Unshakeable: 20 Ways to Enjoy Teaching Every Day ... No Matter What*. Due Season Press and Educational Services, 2015.

Credits for Teachers Policies

Graduate-level professional development credits are not part of a degree program. These courses can be used for professional development, salary advancement, and recertification. Students should seek approval of appropriate district or college officials before enrolling in these courses to satisfy any degree, state credential, or local school district requirements. This credit may be applied toward a degree program at the discretion of the accepting institution. Courses are rolling throughout the year, which means it does not have a specific deadline to submit completed assignments. You must submit

coursework by 6 months after the registration date with Credits for Teachers. Students have up to 30 days after the purchase of a course to request a refund.

Thank You!

