

Standard Ten: Collaboration, Ethics, and Relationships


Knowledge and Growth

Through my education classes at the University of Minnesota, Morris, as well as my experience at XXXXXXXX, I have learned the importance of collaboration, ethics, and relationships in regard to student learning. Students do not come into the classroom without a frame of reference in which they view and perceive their experiences. Because of this, teachers need to understand that they will be teaching a diverse group of learners, all of whom are dealing with different issues at different times. Understanding and being sensitive to these factors, as well as attempting to build external relationships with students' families is important in order to enhance student learning.

As secondary level teachers, we need to realize that our students are dealing with countless issues outside of school that may inhibit their ability to learn. For example, high school students may be struggling with drug or alcohol use; the intensity of peer pressure as well as a need for belonging may only exacerbate this matter. Understanding that these students may enter the classroom with a focus other than learning is imperative for a teacher to reach their students. Also, being aware of the resources available to students for such issues is significant. A teacher is frequently in close contact with their students and is certainly in a position to refer them to more qualified and specialized professionals. However, in order to do so, the teacher must first be alert to the various matters that their students may be dealing with.

Similarly, a teacher must be attentive to their students' home lives and how they may affect mental and emotional stability, and thus learning. During my practicum at XXXXXXXX, one of my students was quite emotional, due vastly to the difficulties she was having at home. The student's mother was in and out of jail on a regular basis, and therefore was not home to care for her children. The girl's father was also frequently absent from the home. In such a case, a teacher needs to realize a student may not bring complete focus and motivation into the classroom as they are dealing with heavy issues in their home life. A teacher must then be sensitive to the student's needs and make specific accommodations for them in order to help them succeed.


Being sensitive to the outside factors that may affect a student's ability to learn is important for a secondary teacher. However, in order to make helpful accommodations for students and ensure that they remain on track, it is important for a teacher to collaborate and cooperate with students' families. Building a strong relationship with a student's family is important for a variety of reasons. First, it allows the teacher and parents or guardian to collaborate when a student may need help. These relationships also help to create a strong and secure support system for the student, as well as build positive relationships between families and the school system. However, in developing relationships with a student's family, a teacher must consider numerous issues. For example, if a teacher is dealing with a Latino/a student, they may want to build rapport with not only the student's parents, but also their extended family as well. Latino cultures

tend to value an extended family model, and a teacher uld need to consider this in order to create a positive relationship with the family.


Along with a student's family, it is also important for teachers to work with one another in regard to a specific student. For example, the student at XXXXXX that was having issues at home was also frequently absent because of that. To help that student catch up and complete missing assignments, my cooperating teacher conversed with the student's other teachers and created a plan that would allow her to stay with her classmates. By doing this, the student's best interest was kept in mind, and she was able to continue her education at a moderate pace. If my cooperating teacher did not coordinate with other teachers, the student may not have been given the chance to succeed.

Evidence

As my first piece of evidence, I chose to include a letter written by a teacher to her students' parents at the beginning of a new research unit. I used this letter as an example of positive parent/teacher interaction during a peer teaching lesson I did for my English methods class at UMM. This piece of evidence proves that I am aware of the importance of maintaining positive interaction with parents, and I understand it can take many forms, this informative letter being one of them. Creating and maintaining positive relationships with students' parents or guardians is vital for teachers, and this letter shows I understand that.

As my second piece of evidence, I chose to include an article entitled "Seeking Help for a Struggling Reader: 7 Steps for Teachers" that I received in my English methods class. The reason I chose to include this piece is because it cites contacting the family, tapping into specialists and resources, and using other outside resources as some of the steps. Although this is a specific piece of evidence as it applies to struggling readers, the idea that a student can be helped through collaboration and positive relationships is clear. This piece shows I am aware  of the benefits of collaboration and relationships in order to help students succeed.

Goals

My first goal in this regard is to contact students' parents throughout my ten weeks of student teaching. It is important for the parents and guardians to understand what their students are going through and what is happening in the classroom. It is also important for them to know when things are going well for their students just as much as it is to know when they may be struggling. My goal then is to contact one section's parents at least twice throughout my student teaching to build a positive relationship with them. 

My second goal during student teaching is to learn more about the developmental and societal issues teens may deal with today. To do this I will research online some of the potential struggles of today's teens and actively reflect on how this applies to the students

in my classroom. I am specifically working with seventh grade students for my student teaching, and for that reason I will specifically research issues that younger adolescents may deal with. 