

# PBS TeacherLine Course Syllabus

## Title

Connecting Family, Community and Schools (formerly INST160)

## Target Audience

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service teachers of grades K-12.

## Prerequisites

To successfully participate and complete the assignments in this course, the learner must:

- Have past experience using the classroom computer.
- Have past experience working with the Internet.
- Be familiar with taking an online course or have completed the PBS "Practice Learning Online with TeacherLine" course.
- Be familiar with elementary, middle school, or high school educational content.

## Course Description

When families, community, and school staff work together to support student learning, the results are powerful! Effective collaboration among these groups can yield results that mutually support each segment of the education community -- especially the students. In this course, learners will master strategies to increase family and community involvement in their schools. For the final assignment, learners will develop a partnership plan and a lesson or unit in which parents and community resources are fully integrated. They will also review the projects developed by two of their colleagues.

## Instructor/Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet.

## Credits

To be determined by college or university.

## Goals

In this course, participants will learn some of the key principles and basic issues involved in connecting family, community, and schools and how they can be applied in schools and communities. They will also learn tips and strategies that will help them to devise their own plans for connecting family, community and schools. Finally, they will apply what they've learned in their own classrooms.

At the end of this course, learners will:

- Understand the benefits connecting family, community and schools.
- Apply strategies to increase family and community involvement in schools by designing and implementing a partnership plan and integrating partnership activities into an existing unit.
- Understand the ways technology can enhance communication between family, community and school.



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- Learn specific elements of partnership programming that can improve student learning.
- Understand the Action Team for Partnership (ATP) model of partnership programming.

## Outline of Content and Assignments

After previewing the documents in the Course Information area, learners will proceed to Course Content to complete the following six sessions, working through each session in order. Throughout the sessions, learners are asked to articulate their ideas in various forms: they are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and experiences in their online journal; the discussions in the discussion forum are designed to allow learners to glean information from other learners' experiences. As a final project, learners create Partnership and Unit Plans, which integrate family and community resources.

This course is designed to address ISTE's *Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for All Teachers*. These standards define the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in educational settings.

This course specifically addresses the following ISTE NETS\*T:

### **I. Technology Operations and Concepts.**

Teachers demonstrate a sound understanding of technology operations and concepts. Teachers:

- A. Demonstrate introductory knowledge, skills, and understanding of concepts related to technology (as described in the ISTE National Education Technology Standards for Students).

### **II. Planning and Designing Learning Environments and Experiences.**

Teachers plan and design effective learning environments and experiences supported by technology. Teachers:

- C. Identify and locate technology resources and evaluate them for accuracy and suitability.

### **V. Productivity and Professional Practice.**

Teachers use technology to enhance their productivity and professional practice. Teachers:

- C. Apply technology to increase productivity.
- D. Use technology to communicate and collaborate with peers, parents, and the larger community in order to nurture student learning.

Visit [cnets.iste.org](http://cnets.iste.org) for a full list of the ISTE's *Educational Technology Standards and Performance Indicators for All Teachers* and more information about these standards.

## Session 1: Basic Concepts

What benefits do partnerships between family, community, and schools provide for students and families? What should be incorporated into partnership programming to ensure success? In this session, learners will consider these questions as they examine the basic concepts of connecting

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family, community, and schools. First, they will get ready to learn by introducing themselves to fellow learners in the discussion forum and by setting some goals and questions to guide their learning in this course.

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Define their professional goals and expectations for this course in their online journal.
- Explain previous knowledge about connecting family, community, and schools.
- Identify the benefits of connecting students' schoolwork to the world around them and explain how involving family and community can facilitate this connection.
- Analyze the strengths, weaknesses and impact on student achievement of family or community involvement programs.

Read

- "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement"
- "Diversity: In School, Family & Community Connections"

View video

- "Junior Achievement"

Complete activities

- Explore the Successful Partnerships interactive
- Review the following Web sites: "Cleveland Municipal School District's [Division of Family and Community Education \(FACE\)](#)"

Write in online journal

- Reflect on expectations for this course.
- Reflect on prior knowledge.
- Reflect on the following: "What are the benefits of connecting students' schoolwork to the world around them? How can involving family and community facilitate this connection?"

Participate in an online discussion

- Introduce themselves to other learners.
- Discuss family or community involvement programs.

### Session 2: Methods for Involving Family and Community Members

Partnerships between schools, families and community members can create powerful opportunities for student learning. Schools must be careful to structure and implement these partnerships in ways that acknowledge the unique character and individual needs of each of the stakeholders involved. In this session, learners will look at some specific ways they can involve families and the community in the education of their children.

By the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Create an interactive homework assignment based on the TIPS model.
- Analyze what family and community programs bring to both students and their schools.
- Evaluate how community resources reinforce and support learning that takes place in school.

Read

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- “Language Arts: Elementary School” and “Math: Middle School” homework assignments
- “Parental Involvement in Homework: A Review of Current Research and Its Implications for Teachers, After School Program Staff, and Parent Leaders”
- “Lessons Learned: Community Involvement” from the Making Schools Work Web site

### View videos

- "Family Math"
- "Survey: Part 1"
- "Survey: Part 2"
- "Hospital"

### Complete activities

- Review the “TIPS” Web Site.
- Review the following school Web sites: “Anoka-Hennepin Independent School District 11: Coon Rapids, Minnesota,” and “Naperville Community Unit School District 203, Illinois.”
- Review the following Web sites: “Right Question Project” and “The Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Industry.”

### Complete assignment

- Interactive Homework Assignment – learners will develop an interactive homework assignment using the two sample assignments and information from the reading to guide their work.

### Write in online journal

- Reflect on Web sites of school districts that have successfully implemented programs that involve families in schools and the benefits of family programs.

### Participate in online discussion

- Debate the following: “Involving the community gets in the way of the “real” work of school and creates unnecessary complications for teachers.”

### Session 3: Strategies for Family and Community Involvement

There are numerous ways to involve parents and community members in schools, from the homework assignments to family programs and community partnerships. Developing a successful family and community engagement program requires careful consideration and planning. In this session, participants will learn some specific strategies to use to strengthen family involvement in schools and increase communication among families, communities and schools.

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Analyze why some parents have negative perceptions about schools and propose ways for schools to overcome these barriers and increase parental involvement.
- Analyze what they can do in their school or district to improve communication among educators, families and communities.
- Create a flyer, memo or survey for parents that highlights opportunities for involvement and recruits volunteers.

### Read

- "Strengthening Family Involvement"
- “Family Literacy: A Review of Programs and Critical Perspectives”

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## Complete activity

- Review "[The High Plains Regional Technology in Education Consortium \(HPR\\*TEC\)](#)" Web site
- Review school Web sites (listed in Session 2,) noting ways they strengthen family involvement
- Explore the Printable for Parents Archive from PBS TeacherSource

## Complete assignment

- School-Home Communication Assignment – learners will create a flyer, memo or survey for parents highlighting opportunities for involvement and recruits volunteers.

## Participate in online discussion

- Discuss the following: "What factors contribute to the negative perceptions some parents have about schools? How can the school break these barriers to communication and replace them with positive perceptions?"

## Write in online journal

- Reflect on the following: "What can you do in your own school or district to improve communication among educators, families and communities? What technology tools can you use? What issues might arise?"

## Session 4: The Action Team for Partnership Model

Successful partnership programs employ a variety of strategies for connecting families, communities and schools. In this session, learners will examine one of the most successful implementation models, the Action Team for Partnership founded by Dr. Joyce Epstein.

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Assess the difficulty of implementing a model of family and community involvement in your school and determine strategies for overcoming those difficulties.
- Analyze their current practice to determine whether or not it employs any of the six types of ATP activities.

## Read

- "ATP Activity Types"
- "Parent and Community Involvement Strategies That Work"

## View video

- "School-wide Project"
- "Mentor"

## Complete activity

- Explore the ATP Activity Types Quiz Interactive

## Write in Online Journal

- Reflect on ATP activities.

## Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss ATP model steps.

## Session 5: Planning and Gaining Support for Your Program



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Adopting a school or district partnership plan takes time and effort, but the results are rewarding. Family and community engagement both strengthens home-school relationships and can also result in improved student learning outcomes. In this session, learners will consider the benefits of partnerships as they develop their own partnership plan.

By the end of the session, learners will be able to:

- Propose strategies for raising awareness of the need for a full partnership program in their school or district.
- Develop a partnership plan and lesson or unit in which parents and community members are fully integrated.
- Evaluate the benefits of implementing specific partnership activities with their students.

Read

- “The Effects of Comprehensive Parent Engagement on Student Learning Outcomes”

Complete assignments

- Final Project Draft: Partnership and Unit Plans – learners will develop a partnership plan for their class and a lesson or unit in which parents and community resources are fully integrated.

Write in online journal

- Reflect on benefits of partnership activities.

Participate in an online discussion

- Discuss strategies for raising awareness of the need for a school-wide or district-wide program for family and community involvement activities.

### Session 6: Developing Your Own Partnership Plan

This final session will provide learners with the opportunity to pull together all the concepts they have learned during the course and reflect on what they have learned.

By the end of this session, learners will be able to:

- Evaluate their partnership plan and ensure it meets the needs of all stakeholders.
- Assess their learning in this course by comparing prior knowledge and acquired knowledge in a journal activity.
- Analyze the learning experience in this course by reflecting about professional goals and expectations in the online journal.

Complete assignments

- Final Project Review/Revision: Partnership and Unit Plans: Review and revise the final project draft they posted to the discussion forum in Session 5, incorporating changes based on feedback from fellow learners.
- Reflection Paper Assignment– learners will write a brief reflective summary of their work using the notes they took on the process of designing their partnership and unit plans.

Write in online journal

- Acquired knowledge
- Professional goals and expectations

Participate in an online discussion

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- Peer review of Partnership and Unit Plans.

## Schedule

It will take about 30 hours to complete this course. Each session should take approximately 4-5 hours. If you find yourself spending several hours more than this in any given session, please contact your facilitator to make sure this is necessary to complete the given assignments.

## Requirements

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments.
- Maintain an online journal.
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge.
- Be self-directed and self-motivated.
- Ask for assistance when they need it.

## Materials (hardware, software, plug-ins)

### Technical Requirements

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail

### Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by university institution only

## Evaluation

This course is evaluated on a letter grade basis, and may be available for graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.

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