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University of Mary

EDU 413 Final Project

Professor Bassingthwaite

### Summary

When I graduate from the University of Mary, I plan to teach first grade in a smaller town. I really want to have an environment where my students feel at home. I want them to feel that this is their space and area where they are free to learn and ask questions. My classroom will be filled with flex seating. I will have charts and posters, but I will leave most of the classroom bare. Throughout the year I will fill the classroom with students' projects and posters that we make as a class. This will make the students feel that my classroom is their classroom too. In my classroom, I will be focusing on communication, involving parents, learning at home, having volunteer opportunities, decision making, and collaboration. I think these aspects are so important to have in your classroom and they will benefit the students learning. I want my students to feel comfortable in my classroom and to have them know it is a judgment-free zone. I want to make learning fun and exciting! In my classroom, I will bring all I have learned about parent involvement from this class. Parent involvement is a factor in what makes such a successful classroom.

## Parenting

### Description

Parent involvement is a key aspect of education. When parents are involved in their child's education, that child's attitude changes for the better and can affect their behaviors in class (Olson, & Fuller, 2007, p. 94) When parents support their children in education, it makes the child feel valued and it is also beneficial for the teacher (Olson, & Fuller, 2007, p. 94). Parent involvement is important, but it can be challenging at times. Single parents may have trouble coming to school during school hours in order to be involved. Working parents may also not be able to come during the school day and can't come into the classroom. You will have parents who are uninvolved and may not want to come into the classroom. Students come from all different types of families, divorced, same-sex marriages, single parents, living with other families, poverty, and much more. Each parent that walks into your classroom will have different backgrounds and personalities. As an educator, it is your job to make that relationship with the parents of the students so you can encourage them to be involved in the classroom. "The most basic involvement of parents is their continuous responsibility for raising their children and providing them with food, clothing, shelter, health, and safety" (Olson, & Fuller, p. 134). As an educator, you have to realize that parents are also parenting your students at home. They are raising them and trying to make them the best person they can be. As a teacher, it is important to understand that and keep that in mind when building a relationship with them. Each parent is going to have different parenting styles and skills, so each parent is going to have different relationships with you, and you have to know how to manage that.

### Description of strategy/artifact

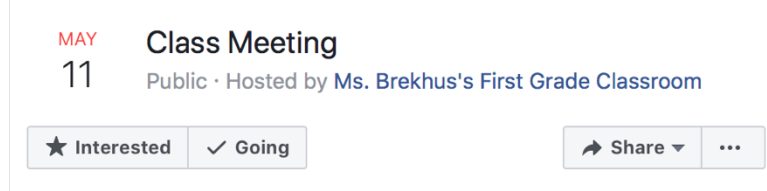
I plan to have many different strategies to create parent involvement in my classroom. One strategy I will use is to create a Facebook page for parents only. This page will have videos of the students working on a project, pictures of what they learned throughout the day, and updates on upcoming meetings and events. I chose a Facebook page because I feel that it will reach each parent. Working parents are able to look on their phone and see what their child learned that day. Even uninvolved parents who don't want to come to the school can still be involved just by downloading an app on their phone. This is an easy and simple way to bring parents into my classroom without them physically being there.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Details

This meeting will be held in my classroom. We will be discussing the upcoming field trip to the zoo. There will be snacks and punch, hope to see you all there! :)

Other

Fig. 3

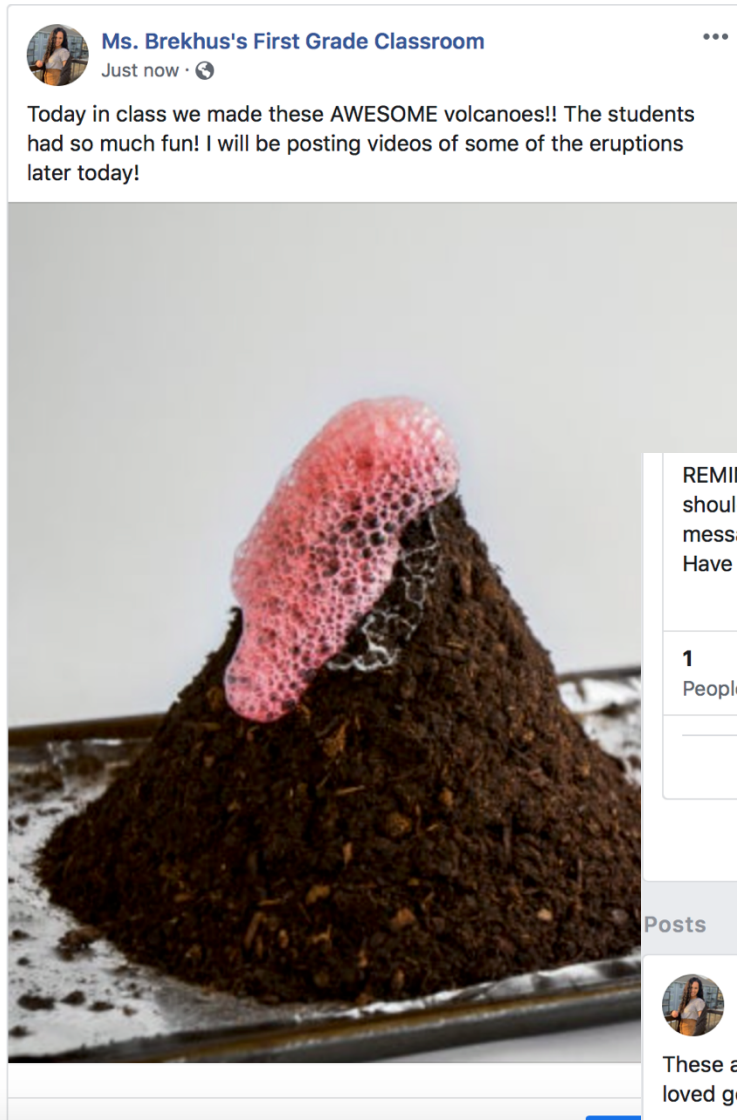
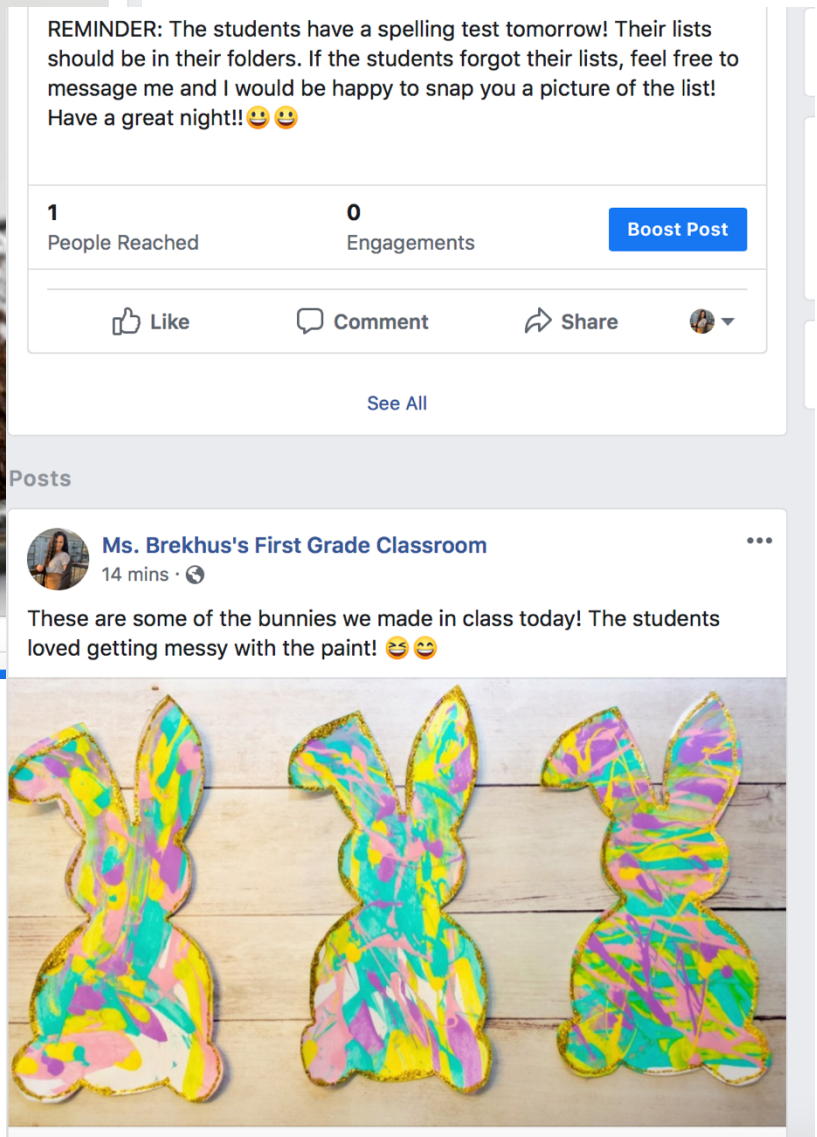


Fig. 4



## **Communicating**

### **Description**

Communication is very important in the educational setting. In order to build a relationship with your students and their families, you need to communicate with them. “Effective communication is essential for building a successful partnership between school and home” (Olson, & Fuller, p. 136). Communicate about their child’s behavior, communicate about expectations you have in your classroom and communicate with your coworkers to create new ideas. When you communicate, you allow ideas to flow and also let parents know that they can come to you with any concerns they may have. As an educator, you will encounter parents/families with different personalities than you. They may be quick to the point and say what is on their mind while the next parent thinks carefully and comes prepared. In order to build relationships with these parents, you need to have effective communication. “True leaders understand that communication isn’t as much about the words you say as it is about the sincerity with which you say them” (Bearden, 2018, p. 7). Parents are going to say things that can be harsh, and we disagree with, we have to remember to talk back with sincerity and understanding. Communication also eliminates confusion and allows the students and families to be prepared. Teachers communicate with students and families to help them organize upcoming events, know what is going on in the classroom, and to be prepared. When communication is successful, it reduces conflict between you and the family and eliminates the stress (Olson, & Fuller, 2007, p. 137). Building an effective and strong relationship with parents starts with great communication.

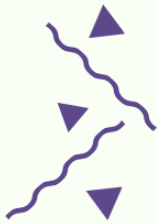
### **Description of strategy/artifact**

There are many different ways to communicate with parents in your classroom. One way I plan on doing this is through a class newsletter. I chose this Newsletter because it is something

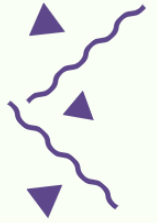
the parents and children can read and reference to each week. This newsletter will have test dates, field trips, other class plans. I chose a newsletter because I knew it would be a great way to communicate with parents who I may not be able to meet face to face. It will also help parents and students plan for upcoming tests and activities! It is something they can hang on the fridge and look at each day during the week.

Fig. 5

April 20th - 24th



# CLASSROOM CHRONICLES



*THE LATEST EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS  
FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS*

**MATH:**  
This week we are working on our math projects and will be presenting on Friday, April 24th! Parents: we will be presenting at 1:00 P.M. if you would like to come watch! :)

**READING:**  
This week we will be reading to the Kindergartners! Students, don't forget to bring your library books to class by Thursday, April 23rd

**SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES:**  
This week we will be finishing our volcano projects! In social studies, the students will be learning about trading and Native American tribes!

**EXTRA EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT!!**

- **April 21st:** Wear pajamas to school day
- **April 22nd:** Earth Day! The students will be picking up garbage around town from 2:30-3:15. Wear **GREEN** :)
- **April 23rd:** Picture day (Don't forget picture forms!)
- **April 24th:** Spelling test and crazy hair day!
- **May 11th:** Class meeting on field trip to the Zoo in my room from 7:00-8:00 P.M. Snacks and punch will be provided.
- **May 15th:** Class Field Trip to the Zoo!!

## **Learning at Home**

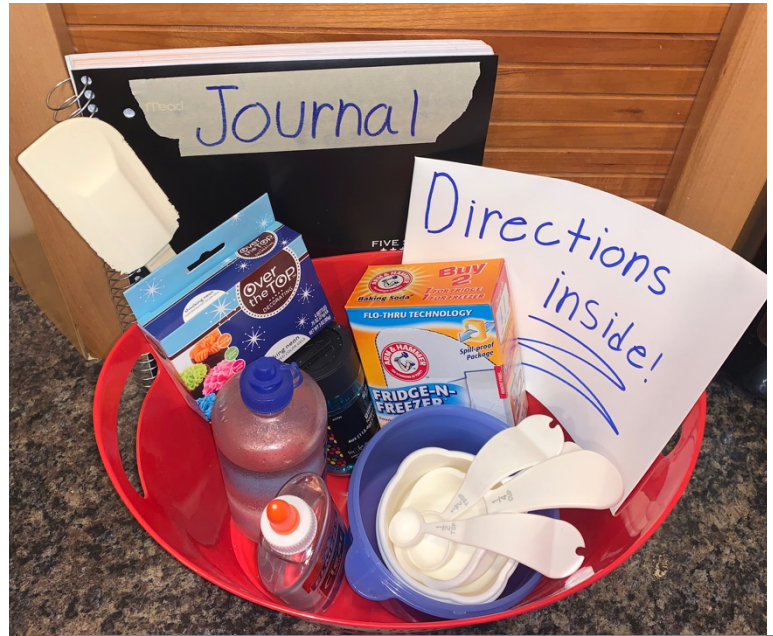
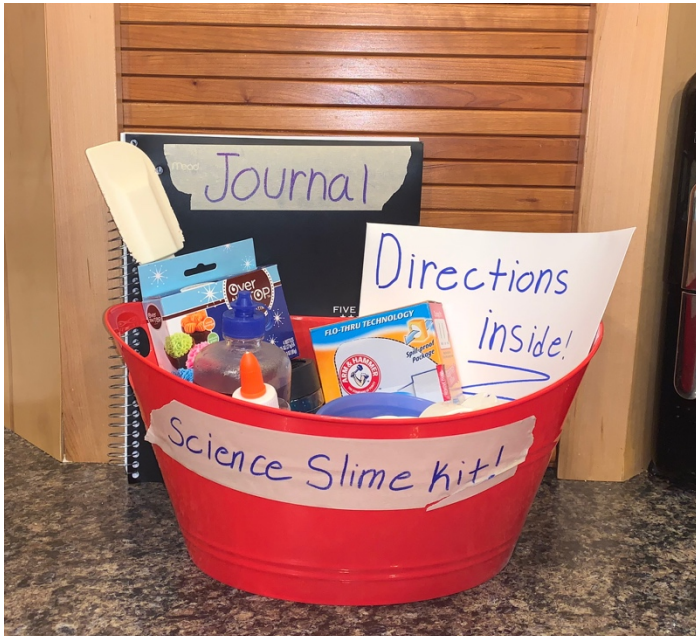
### **Description**

As an educator, you will have uninvolved parents and parents who are unable or do not want to come into your classroom. One way to bring parent involvement from your classroom to them is by learning at home. When you bring the learning to their home, you give the parents/guardians to work with their children and understand what they are learning in the classroom. This is also great for working parents and single parents. They don't have a lot of time to come into the school, so this is a great way for parent involvement and family bonding. "When children reach school age, the amount of time spent at school is less than that spent at home and in childcare combined. Thus, the amount of time spent away from school is valuable for learning and building positive attitudes about education" (Olson, & Fuller, 2007, p. 142). Home-based learning helps improve the child's learning experiences outside of the classroom and involves the family with the children (Olson, & Fuller, 2007, p. 142). Learning from home is so important, which is why educators incorporate it into the classrooms.

### **Description of strategy/artifact**

There are multiple ways to involve home learning in classrooms. One way I plan to involve home learning is with Take Home Learning Kits (Olson, & Fuller, 2007, p. 143). The child will check out this kit for a week. This kit will include the material for the activity, directions for the activity, and a journal to provide feedback and results. These kits will be themed base. I will have Science, Math, Reading, Arts, Social Studies, and Language Arts. I chose these kits because they are fun and exciting. They are a small project that they can do and learn with their family at home. It will also be a great way to show the family what the students are learning about in class.





## What is Inside Journal:

- What should the slime look like after you make it?
- What do you think the slime will feel like? Why?
- Do you think the slime will be thick or watery? Why?
- Will the slime have other special properties? Does it sparkle? Does it glow? Does it stick to certain things?
- What was your favorite part about making the slime?
- What was the hardest part about making the slime?

(Science Buddies, 2020)

## Directions

1. In the small mixing bowl, mix  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of glue, and a few drops of food coloring (choose any color!)
2. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp baking soda and mix
3. Add 2 tbsp contact lens solution and stir until the mixture starts to pull away from the edges of the bowl.
4. Use your hands to knead the slime for about 10 minutes or less.

(Science Buddies, 2020)

## Materials Inside Kit:

- Elmer's Liquid Glue
  - Baking Soda
  - Contact Lens Solution
  - Food Coloring
  - Measuring cups/spoons
  - A small mixing bowl
  - A spatula
  - Plastic baggies
- (Science Buddies, 2020)

## **Volunteering**

### **Description**

Volunteering is a great way to build the parent-teacher relationship! With working and single parent or divorced families, it can be hard to volunteer during classroom hours (Olson & Fuller, 2007, p. 139). That is why it is important to have multiple volunteering activities throughout the year during school time hours and after school hours! Volunteering is also a great way for the parent to be involved with their child within the classroom setting and to see what they are learning. Having parents within the classroom gives a chance for the teachers to build relationships with the parents. Many schools struggle with having very few volunteers (Olson, & Fuller, 2007, p. 138). By having multiple volunteering activities, you give parents a chance to plan and you give them options. Families have other plans, so it is easier to work around multiple options for volunteering rather than just one. Having small volunteering jobs can also be helpful, you could drop off a pan of bars for a game that your kid is playing in or donate food for a class party. This way each parent can volunteer no matter how busy they are! Having flexible times and places will show parents that you understand that they are busy and have lives, but you still are giving them the chance to volunteer.

### **Description of strategy/artifact**

I will have multiple volunteer activities throughout the school year. I will make sure to have a variety of times and locations. One that I plan on doing each week is having a parent come into the classroom and read to the students. This will happen once a week. There will be a sign-up sheet for the parents to pick times to sign up and read for about 15-20 minutes. I chose this because it is a good way for the parent to interact with every student in the classroom, not just their own child. They can also see the environment that their child is learning in and looking



at their projects that they are doing around the classroom. I think this is a great opportunity for parents to come into the classroom. Having a set time for the volunteering also allows the parents to plan and prepare for the reading.

# I WANT TO VOLUNTEER



	VOLUNTEER NAME	PHONE (CELL)	TIME	BOOK YOU PLAN TO READ	DAYS/TIMES AVAILABLE
1	Shantell	701-123-3333		The Puppy Place	Wednesday, April 22nd
2	Marissa	701-222-2222	2:00 P.M.	The Great Ice Age	Tuesday, April 14th
3	Kirsten	701-111-1111	1:00 P.M.	Sukis' Kimono	Friday, May 1st
4	John	701-343-3333	1:00 P.M.	My Pet Slime	Monday, April 6th
5	Julius	701-222-3333	2:00 P.M.	After the Fall	Wednesday, May 6th
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15					

(Volunteer Signup Sheet for Word, 2015)

## **Decision Making**

### **Description**

Parents spend so much time with their children, and they know them best. They deserve to have a say in the decision making of their children. You should involve the parents as much as you can. Parents want to know what their students are learning, projects they are doing, and field trips they plan on going on. Parents of special needs children are especially involved in decision making. They want to make sure their child is receiving all the education they need and are involved in decision making. Parents can also be involved by voicing their ideas and views on how to make the school a better learning environment for their children. “Another level of advocacy is to have parents come together as a group to represent group objectives on issues that affect the quality of school and improve children’s education and families’ lives” (Olson, & Fuller, 2007, p. 145). As an educator, you want to work with parents and take their input on things. You both have the children’s best interests, so you should work together to create the best education for them. “Building true partnerships is a process that requires both teachers and parents to create a shared meaning about education” (Olson, & Fuller, p. 103). Building relationships will be challenging with some parents but remember to always try you are hardest in making great relationships with them. Involving parents in the student’s education is important and very beneficial for you and the student.

### **Description of strategy/artifact**

A great way for parents to be involved is with PTA meetings and having the parents create groups. One way that I plan to create the parent-teacher relationship is having meetings with parents once a month. This will be a group meeting in my classroom. This will allow all of us to discuss the student’s education and what parents have seen throughout the month. This will

be a chance for parents to voice their opinions and ideas. It will be a great way for me to build relationships with the parents and to understand what they want for their child. During these meetings we would talk about upcoming projects, field trips, what we will be learning about within the next month, state tests that may be coming up, and for them to ask me questions. I would also like for the parents to set up one on one meetings with me anytime they feel the need to. I want to have a trusting relationship with the parents of my students and to involve them in my classroom as much as possible.

# AGENDA

## First Grade Parent Meeting

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*Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 7:00 P.M. Meeting called by Ms. Brekhus*

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<b>Time</b>	<b>What we will be discussing</b>
7:00 P.M.	Welcome Everyone! Feel free to grab some snack and punch!
7:15 P.M.	First Grade Field Trip to the Zoo <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We need volunteer chaperones</li><li>• We need to talk with a local business to donate sack lunches</li><li>• We will discuss times of leaving and returning from zoo</li></ul>
7:30 P.M.	Community Game Nights <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss new game night ideas for May</li></ul>
7:40 P.M.	Discus Social studies Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student's will be researching a president</li><li>• There will be work done at home</li></ul>
7:50 P.M.	Lori will be talking about the upcoming PTA Meeting
8:00 P.M.	Meeting will be Adjourned <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thank you all for coming, hope to see you next month!!</li></ul>

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## **Collaborating with Community**

### **Description**

“As the African proverb says, “it takes a village to raise a child.” Schools and teachers need to see the community in a broader context by including community members in improving the quality of education and responding to the needs of children and families” (Olson, & Fuller, p. 147). As a teacher, I want to involve my students in the community. You will have families that are struggling with money, poverty, single parenting, and you can work with the community to help these families. I also want my students to interact with people in the community. In my school, we always had events with the local firefighters, the workers at the bank, and the rest of the community. I want to involve the community in our school events. Have them sponsor and work with the school. The community can give materials to the schools which is why it is so important to have those connections with small community businesses, colleges, cultural groups, and much more (Olson, & Fuller, p. 147). If our schools support small business and community businesses, they will support us in providing materials for the students. Our businesses always sponsored our proms, sports, and other activities. Involving the community also shows the students the importance of collaboration and working with others.

### **Description of strategy/artifact**

I would love to incorporate community game nights once a month. One month I would do board game night. The next month will be a dodge ball tournament, the next a basketball tournament, and the next could be a Pictionary night with teams. I would take suggestions for new game nights. The point of these game nights is to have everyone involved with one another. The students are with their families and the community all gets together to have fun, have some snacks, and play some games. It can also be a great stress reliever and give the students

something to look forward to each month. I would like to have the game nights to alternate places. One month it will be in the school gym, while the next month it could be at the city hall/rec center.

## Community Dodgeball Tournament





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