University of Wisconsin - Green Bay

COURSE SYLLABUS

Spring *2021*

Advanced Theory to Reality

Executive Functioning, Social-Emotional Development, & Trauma

**Instructors:** Sarah Ellinger- smellinger@plymouth.k12.wi.us

920-980-5245

**Course Number**:

**Credits:** Three (3) Graduate Credits

**Prerequisite:** You must have taken the original Theory to Reality course and have a Graduate Standing (must have earned a bachelor’s degree); this course is open to 4K-12 educators employed with the Plymouth School District.

**Schedule:** Tuesdays: March - May

Weekly independent reflection post/discussion

**Location:** Plymouth School District

**Course Emphasis and Rationale**: This advanced course is designed to educate students on the diverse needs that students display due to potential traumatic incidents, how to handle crisis situations, what is happening in the brain of a child with mental health needs, and how to support social emotional learning. We will focus on making a plan for a specific student in this course who is struggling with mental health needs. It could be caused by the pandemic or other traumatic experiences.

**Course Description**: Educators will review a variety of techniques to interact with and support children who have faced trauma or have a mental illness in their classrooms. This class will allow students to do a case study on a student of their choice to dig deeper into the causes and effects of the trauma on the student. Students will also make a plan to support the student using a researched based strategy. The class will cover warning signs of trauma, readings and discussions to better understand how mental illness or trauma can change a child’s brain, triggers that can retraumatize children, social-emotional needs of our students today, and the tools and strategies to teach our students how to build resilience and identify their own coping strategies to use when they become unregulated. Students will participate in article studies, group discussions, and a final project that will consist of reflections of their findings, a paper of the strategy they picked to use with the student, and a review of how effective their strategy worked to support the students with mental health issues, trauma, or executive functioning needs.

**Course Objectives and Learning Targets:**

* Participants will explore Adverse Childhood Experiences and form an understanding of how these experiences affect a child.
* Participants will explore mental illnesses and develop an understanding of how to meet the needs of children with mental illnesses within their classrooms.
* Participants will learn about social-emotional learning and explore different strategies or curriculums to support social-emotional learning.
* Participants will develop an understanding of *how to support* a child’s executive functioning skills.
* Participants will complete a case study on a student of their choice to support their executive functioning needs, social-emotional needs, mental illnesses, or children who have faced trauma in their lives.

**Required Readings:**

* Weekly Assigned Articles
* Benson, J. (2014). *Hanging In: Strategies for Teaching the Students Who Challenge US Most.*
* *Greene, R. W. (2008). Lost at school: Why our kids with behavioral challenges are falling through the cracks and how we can help them. New York: Scribner.*

**Requirements and Evaluations:**

* Active and full participation in all course sessions. (50%)
* Reflection Journal (10%)
* Final Paper and Presentation on chosen subject (40%)

**Evaluation Descriptions:**

* *Active and full participation in all course sessions:* Participants will contribute to discussion in class and provide constructive feedback to peers weekly reflection goals.
* *Reflection Journal:* Throughout the course, participants will reflect on their student’s needs, behaviors, past traumatic experiences, and how their interactions and practices are developing with the student.
* *Final Paper and Presentation on chosen subject:* Participants will research and implement a researched based strategy to use with one student to support their mental health, social emotional learning, or executive functioning skills. The last class, participants will present their implementation practice.
  + Paper & Presentation should include:
    - Reasoning for practice choice
    - Research regarding development and best practices
    - Discussion and reflection of actual application with their student
    - Recommendations and/or replication strategies for peers

**Outline of Schedule:**

Topic 1: Overview of Trauma, Social Emotional, and Executive Functioning Skills

Topic 2: Trauma in Student Lives & Case Study Development

Topic 3: Trauma in Student Lives cont. & Case Study Development

Topic 4: Social Emotional Needs of Students & Case Study Development

Topic 5: Social Emotional Needs of Students cont. & Case Study Development

Topic 6: Executive Functioning Skills and Needs & Case Study Development

Topic 7: Executive Functioning Skills and Needs cont. & Case Study Development

Topic 8: Final Presentations

**Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure:**

1. Teachers know how children grow.

The teacher understands how children with broad ranges of ability learn and provides instruction that supports their intellectual, social, and personal development.

1. Teachers understand that children learn differently.

The teacher understands how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils, including those with disabilities and exceptionalities.

1. Teachers know how to manage a classroom.

The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

1. Teachers are able to evaluate themselves.

The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on pupils, parents, professionals in the learning community and others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

**Wisconsin Standards for Administrator Development and Licensure:**

1. The administrator has an understanding of and demonstrates competence in the Ten Teacher Standards.
2. The administrator manages by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to pupil learning and staff professional growth.
3. The administrator ensures management of the organization, operations, finances, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.