

Using Scenarios to Help Prepare Educators for Involving Families of ELLs

Michelle Abrego, Renee Rubin, and John Sutterby



Educators Underprepared for Family Engagement



- Study of teacher educators found they valued family engagement but felt their graduates were underprepared (Epstein & Sanders, 2008).
 - 79 percent of teacher educators at 161 colleges and universities thought family engagement was important
 - Only 7 percent thought their graduating teachers were well prepared in this area

Educators Underprepared for Family Engagement



- Same study found:
 - 89 percent thought family engagement preparation was important for principals
 - Only 19 percent thought principals graduated with strong preparation in this area

Families of ELLs



- Educators feel particularly underprepared to engage families of ELLs (Flanigan, 2007)
 - Language and communication style differences
 - Different expectations of education due to culture
 - Different socioeconomic levels

Families of ELLs



- ELL families growing throughout the United States
 - 16 million children with at least one immigrant parent; twice the number of 1990
 - Increase of ELLs in non-border states; Georgia, North Carolina, Nebraska...



Benefits of Family Engagement



- Benefits for students, educators, and families
 - Improved academic achievement
 - Better attendance
 - Higher graduation rates
 - Fewer classroom management problems
 - Empowers families to help their students
 - Trust develops between schools and families

Teaching Family Engagement

- Practicum with ELL families best but
 - Requires time and resources
 - Schools often do not want to involve students with families because of the sensitive nature of some of the information



Teaching Family Engagement



- Using case studies/scenarios
 - Students see multiple perspectives
 - Critical thinking and problem solving improve
 - Students apply classroom learning to real world situations in a safe environment
 - Scenarios can be written to address ELL families

Teaching Family Engagement



- Activity: What Would You Do?
 - Discuss one of the scenarios in a small group
 - There are no correct answers
 - Think about how this would work in your learning environment
- Copyright © 2013 Eye On Education, Inc. Larchmont, NY. All rights reserved
www.eyoneducation.com
- For information about permission to reproduce and distribute this material, please contact
- Sales and Marketing, Eye On Education, (888) 299-5350 or customer-service@eyoneducation.com.

Activity



- ♦ Scenario One. Ms. Tan has sent three notes home with Raul, an English language learner, asking that his mother call or come to school to discuss his academic progress. After three weeks, she has received no response by phone, in writing, or in person.
- 1. What could be the reasons for a lack of response?
- 2. What should Ms. Tan do now in order to speak to one of Raul's family members?

Activity



- ♦ Scenario Two. Mr. Lopez has a conference with Mr. Sanchez, the father of Sergio, who has been involved in several fights at school with Ramiro. When Mr. Lopez asks for Mr. Sanchez's help to stop the fighting, Mr. Sanchez claims that Ramiro has been bullying Sergio and he told Sergio to stand up for himself and fight back. Mr. Sanchez asks Mr. Lopez, "Do you just want him to stand there and get beat up? I have complained about Ramiro picking on Sergio on the bus and nothing has been done."
- 1. What should Mr. Lopez say to Mr. Sanchez now?
- 2. What can Mr. Lopez and others do to stop the fighting?
- 3. What types of policies and procedures might prevent similar problems with other students in the future?

Activity



- ♦ Scenario Three. Ms. Walton speaks to the mother of Meira, who is from Bosnia. Meira has been daydreaming and not completing her work at school. Through a translator, Ms. Walton asks the mother to talk to Meira about the problem. The next day, Ms. Walton asks Meira if her parents talked to her, and Meira says, “No, they just spanked me for not getting my schoolwork done.”
- 1. What should Ms. Walton say to Meira?
- 2. What might be a more effective way to deal with children who are not completing their schoolwork?

Activity



- ♦ Scenario Four. Victor has been talking back to the teacher and being disrespectful. Ms. Garcia decides to call in his mother, who is a young single mother from the Dominican Republic. They both speak Spanish although with slightly different accents and vocabulary, since Ms. Garcia's Spanish was learned along the Texas-Mexico border rather than in the Dominican Republic like Victor's mother, Ms. Villarreal. When Ms. Garcia explains the problem at school, Ms. Villarreal says she has the same problems at home and doesn't know what to do about it. She says, "He just doesn't want to listen to me. Can you help me?"
- 1. What suggestions should Ms. Garcia make to Ms. Villarreal?
- 2. What resources are available at your school or in your community that might help family members who are having trouble disciplining their children?

Activity



- ♦ Scenario Five. Linda doesn't hand in her homework. After numerous tries, Linda's teacher, Ms. Maupin, reaches Linda's father by phone. Although his English is not fluent, they are able to communicate. Her father says that he works at night and that Linda and five of her cousins stay with her grandmother. The grandmother is busy taking care of babies, making meals, cleaning up, and getting children to bed. She doesn't have time to supervise Linda's homework and Linda does not have a quiet place to get it done.
- 1. What should Ms. Maupin say to Linda's father?
- 2. Do the homework policies at your school take into account families like Linda's?
- Copyright © 2013 Eye On Education, Inc. Larchmont, NY. All rights reserved www.eyeoneducation.com
- For information about permission to reproduce and distribute this material, please contact Sales and Marketing, Eye On Education, (888) 299-5350 or customer-service@eyeoneducation.com.

Discussion



- After completing the activity in small groups:
 - How do you think you might use these or other scenarios in your learning environment?
 - How might they benefit your educators?
 - What modifications or changes would you make for your situation?

Contact Information



- Renee Rubin, Ed.D.
 - Rubinlive@gmail.com
 - 956-463-1069
- Michelle Abrego, Ed.D.
 - Michelle.Abrego@utb.edu
- John Sutterby, Ph.D.
 - John.Sutterby@utb.edu

