

**Teaching Parent Communication in the
Match Teacher Residency & Charles Sposato
Graduate School of Education**



Components of Developing Effective Parent Communication Practices

- A. Make the Case
- B. Immersion in a “Culture of Communication”
- C. Get Specific

Making the Case: The “Classroom Learning Formula”

$$\text{Classroom Learning} = \text{Lesson Quality} * \sum \text{Individual Student Effort} * (1 - \text{Misbehavior Tax})$$




Parent Calls

Parent Calls

Making the Case: Phone Call Study Design

- Conducted in Match Summer School programs for 6th and 9th graders during Summer of 2010.
- Research Team: Dr. Matt Kraft (Brown Univ) and Dr. Sean Dougherty (Univ of Connecticut).
- Randomized Controlled Trial of parent communication (phone calls and text messages) over a 4 week period.
- Randomized which parents received a phone call or text message home each night with a brief update on students' daily progress.

Making the Case: Phone Call Study Results

Treatment Group	Impact
Odds that Students Completed Daily Homework	 Increased by 42%
Instances of Redirecting Student Behavior	 Decreased by 25%
Voluntary Classroom Participation (6 th grade)	 Increased by 49%

Culture of Communication: Charles Sposato



“Students don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Culture of Communication: Phone Calls in the Match Schools

- Residency is embedded in a school where:
 - ✓ Every student's family is called before the year starts.
 - ✓ Every student's family gets one phone call per week.
 - ✓ Every resident is responsible for minimally 6 calls per week.
- No gap between theory and practice; and no shortage of practice

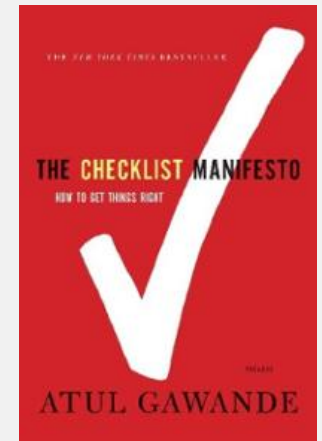


Teaching the Practice: Our Long-term Goals

- Implement proactive relationship building strategies early in the school year.
 - ✓ August intro calls
 - ✓ September praise calls
- Enlist the parent as a **partner in helping students**, instead of just reporting the problem to the parent.
- Effectively engage and push parents who are reluctant or resistant communicators, instead of giving up.
- Effectively problem-solve logistical communication issues, instead of giving up.

Teaching the Practice: Develop a Call Routine

- Full transparency about why this routine will be HARD.
- Be explicit and specific about the time– 30 minutes per day.
- Identify call times that respect teachers' energy levels.
- Teach strategies for tackling logistical barriers (e.g. translating calls for parents who don't speak English).



Teaching the Practice: When to Call

Seven Non-Negotiable Incidents

1. August intro calls
2. September praise calls
3. In danger of failing
4. After sending a student out of class
5. Major behavioral incident
6. Emotional distress
7. New pattern of negative choice

Teaching the Practice: Anticipating Parent Responses

Four Types of Parent Responses to Calls

1. Proactive – a partner in generating solutions.
2. Appreciative – supportive of your solutions.
3. Reluctant – open to hearing, but not enacting, solutions.
4. Resistant – question your framing of the problem.

Teaching the Practice: Phone Call Tone & Content

Tone

- Care, Partnership, Clarity

Content

- Share data about student choices
- Describe the impact of those choices
- Enlist parent in determining next steps
- Check in on next steps

Teaching the Practice: Training Exercises and Structures

- Analyzing call transcripts
- Scripting calls
- Peer role play
- Parent panels
- Role play with parents
- Coach observations
- Regular team meetings to plan call strategies