

LOCK HAVEN UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

**SYLLABUS**  
**HELPING SKILLS IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION**  
**ALTE 610**

**I. Introductory Information:**

- A. Department Name: Graduate Studies
- B. Department Catalogue Number: ALTE 610
- C. Course Title: Helping Skills in  
Alternative Education
- D. Credit/Semester Hours 3 hours
- E. Clock Hours per Week 3 hours
- F. Restrictions Upon Student Registration  
Restricted to graduate students.

**II. A. Description of the Course:**

This course is an introduction to working with at-risk youth in alternative education settings. The course is designed to prepare educators and others for work in alternative education settings by reviewing the characteristics and dynamics of at-risk conditions for youth while providing opportunities to develop basic helping skills.

**B. Comprehensive Description:**

This course is designed to examine at-risk youth issues, establishing appropriate conditions for helping, and the programmatic considerations in Alternative Education. Students will learn basic helping skills necessary for effective intervention with at-risk students including helping communication, referral/case-management, conflict management, handling crises, and interviewing. Students will be introduced to Choice Theory, Reality Therapy and other models of classroom management.

The course addresses the following National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Propositions (NBPTS):

## **NBPTS Proposition 1**

### **Be committed to students and their learning.**

- Be attentive to human variability and knowledgeable about learning disabilities, physical, mental, and emotional challenges. The teacher will adjust instructional practices accordingly and evaluate the effectiveness for student success, willingly changing the practices as needed.
- Provide socially and cognitively stimulating activities that engage all students at their appropriate developmental level of learning.
- Show evidence of concern for the students' self-concept, motivation, and character development, fully recognizing the impact on intellectual development.

## **NBPTS Proposition 2**

### **Know the subjects and how to teach those subjects to students.**

- Help students learn to pose problems and work through alternate solutions, in addition to teaching them about the answers that others have found to similar problems.

## **NBPTS Proposition 3**

### **Be responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.**

- Know and effectively employ a variety of instructional strategies.
- Know how to manage groups of students and help them to adopt appropriate roles and responsibilities for themselves and their peers.
- Assess student learning and use this for individual student evaluation classroom evaluation, and to evaluate and reflect on the lesson taught.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding that student learning is influenced by family, community, prior experiences, language, and culture.

## **NBPTS Proposition 4**

### **Think systematically about classroom practices and learn from experience.**

- Exemplify the virtues actively sought to impart to students including curiosity, love of learning, tolerance, open-mindedness, fairness, and justice.
- Model appreciation for culture, intellectual heritage, respect for human diversity, and multiple perspectives.

- Actively seek the advice of others and show evidence of utilizing educational research and pursuing scholarship to improve his/her practice.

### **NBPTS Proposition 5**

#### **Be a member of a learning community.**

- Communicate regularly with parents and guardians, listening to their concerns, respecting their perspective, enlisting their support, informing them of their child's progress, and educating them about school programs.
- cultivate knowledge of the school's community as a powerful resource for learning and become knowledgeable about the character of the community and its effects on the school and students.

### **III. Exposition:**

#### A. Objectives

The graduate student will be able to:

1. access and navigate course delivery technologies including, but not limited all course tools, emails, audio and video conferencing and PowerPoint software;
2. analyze the ten axioms of choice theory;
3. identify, describe, and research the concept of total behavior;
4. identify the relationship between Quality World and Perceived World in Choice Theory;
5. identify connections and areas of congruence among various components of choice theory;
6. analyze specific classroom exercises and strategies;
7. analyze and evaluate individual helping strategies;
8. identify and discuss basic components of counseling;
9. analyze different philosophies of classroom discipline;
10. examine common diagnostic categories of children and youth, and;
11. define mental health or behavioral issues in the classroom.

#### B. Activities and Requirements:

1. Graduate students will complete readings, web-based research activities, and participate in daily/weekly discussion groups sharing ideas, insights, discoveries and projects.
2. Discuss the ten axioms of choice theory.
3. Create a report analyzing a specific at-risk child and their total behavior used to meet their needs.

4. Discuss strategies to create a needs fulfilling environment in the classroom.
5. Create a report summarizing the aspects of the book, charts and units.
6. Create an I-Five lesson plan.
7. Create a brief role-play scenario that represents a student problem or area of concern.
8. Review a case study and present how the case study relates to the 5 steps in counseling.
9. Create a paper evaluating one of the basic approaches to classroom management.
10. Discuss you understanding of Conduct Disorder and how it compares to research
11. Develop and present a report on a mental or behavioral issue.

C. Major Units and Time allotted:

1. Alternative Education: Purpose, Philosophy, Program Structure and Program Settings (one week)
2. Societal factors, family issues, school settings, and individual characteristics contributing to at-risk conditions for children, youth and families and program considerations (one week)
3. Theory and practice in helping. (two weeks)
4. Helping skills- Helping communication, interviewing, assessment... including role plays, case studies, and skill evaluations (five weeks)
5. Helping skills- Referral, case-management, documentation of progress and other interventions... including role plays, case studies and skills evaluation (two weeks)
6. Helping skills- handling crises (one week)
7. Helping skills- planning interventions for specific behavior problems; social skills and resilience education; etc. (two weeks)
8. Intervention strategies in communities for at-risk children and youth (one week)

**D. Materials and bibliography-**

1. Required Text:

Selected readings will be provided by the instructor. The required text will be announced by the instructor.

2. Other Resources:

Computer modem with Internet capability.

3. Basic Bibliography:

Cipani, E. (2007). *Classroom management for all teachers: Plans for evidence-based practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Emmer, E., Worsham, M.E., & Everston, C., (2005). *Classroom management for middle and high school teachers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Erwin, J., (2004). *Classroom of choice: Giving students what they need and getting what you want*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Glasser, W. (1999). *Choice theory: A new psychology of personal freedom*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Glasser, W. (2001). *Counseling with choice theory: The new reality therapy*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Glasser, W. (2002). *Unhappy teenagers: A way for parents and teachers to reach them*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Glasser, W., (2004). *Warning : Psychiatry can be hazardous to your mental health*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Smith, R., (2008). *Conscious classroom management: Unlocking the secrets of great teaching*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Snow, D. R. (2005). *Classroom strategies for helping at-risk students*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Sullo, B. (2007). *Activating the desire to learn*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

IV. Standards

The grading criteria for this course will be as follows: The final grade will be based on on-line participation and discussion, postings on reading assignments, skills evaluations, a research paper, examination(s) and on-line presentation. All grades will be assigned in accordance with university policy.

The grades achieved on each activity serve as the assessment for this course. Each activity is aligned with the numerically corresponding objective.

- V. Rationale. This course is proposed as a graduate level course in the Master's in Education program.

The Helping Skills in Alternative Education course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the concepts and issues of at-risk youth, Alternative Education settings, and special skills required for work in Alternative Education. The premise for the course is that some of the skills required in alternative education classrooms are somewhat different than those typically utilized in the mainstream classroom. The course does, however, take into account that many mainstream classroom students will benefit from the concepts and skills taught in this course. The ever-increasing prevalence of violence, abuse, poverty and other family and societal issues and the impact of these issues upon the classroom are rationale for the efficacy of the course in serving all teachers.

In a focused fashion this course introduces the concept of at-risk children, youth and families. The course takes the student through a basic understanding of etiology of risk conditions on an individual, family and societal level. The student learns individual, family and community behavior patterns that are consistent with at-risk conditions. The student learns about the impact of at-risk conditions at various levels within the community.

Secondly, the student will be introduced to and explore in some detail one aspect of community response to at-risk behavior- the alternative education program. The setting for alternative education is different than a mainstream setting. The bottom-line educational objectives often remain intact, however it is clear that other objectives having to do with breaking cyclical, problematic behavior patterns are integral to these programs. Students explore the philosophy, mission and program structure of alternative education programs. A comparative approach is used in this exploration.

The student will have an opportunity to develop basic skills in helping that will facilitate work in the alternative education classroom. These skills are thought to be essential in achieving long-term success with at-risk youth. Labeled as helping skills, a model of preparing counselors to work effectively with youth will be used to provide a basic skill set for teachers working in the alternative education setting.

The definition of helping skills extends to establishing a favorable environment for helping, using innovative curriculum approaches, teaching students self regulation and evaluation skills, a brief exploration of social

skills training, referral, establishing relationships with community agencies and additional helping strategies.

This class will be offered as an online course and may also be offered in other modalities.

- VI. Cost Analysis- This graduate level course will be a requirement in the Master of Education - Alternative Education. The course will be offered a minimum of one time per year and will be taught by a faculty member in the School of Graduate Studies.

Syllabus

ALTE 610 Helping Skills in Alternative Education

approved

not approved

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Dr. Keith T. Miller, President  
Lock Haven University of PA

Date