

Effective Strategies for Working with Teens **Course Syllabus**

Instructor: Maria K. Keesler

1. Dates of Course

This course is set to run: **(TBD)**

2. **Course Description:** Understanding the brain development of the typical teen/adolescent is imperative in effectively approaching these learners who have or are in danger of dropping out of the traditional education system. Brain research is the basis for this approach to teens/adolescents. Building relationships with these teens is a delicate matter that must be addressed to lead to positive learner outcomes. This course will welcome you into the chaotic world of teen/adolescent behavior that drives their decision-making abilities.

3. Course goals, outcomes and objectives:

Goals:

After completing this course, learners will be able to:

1. Understand how the adolescent brain differs from the mature adult brain;
2. Understand why the adolescent learner, although they may look like an adult and/or may already be a parent or simply, should not be expected to act or reason as an adult;
3. Apply effective techniques that will help build effective relationships with teens/adolescents;
4. Articulate appropriate expectations for teens/adolescent, being mindful of their developmental levels.

Outcomes and Objectives:

Week 1:

Outcomes: The participants will get to know the participants of the course and their icebreaker techniques. The participant will apply the knowledge of students' developmental levels to determine appropriate techniques.

Essential question: What is the best way to develop, nurture, and maintain relationships with students and how will it benefit the learning that is to occur?

Week 2:

Outcomes: The participants will recognize the purpose of the different areas of the brain. The participant will assess how brain development affects decision-making in teens.

Essential question: When does a brain become an “adult”? How do you know what can be reasonably expected from teens?

Week 3:

Outcomes: The participants will identify effective strategies for building relationships. The participant will develop a plan for building positive relationships with students.

Essential question: What is the best way to develop, nurture, and maintain relationships with students and how will it benefit the learning that is to occur?

Week 4:

Outcomes: The participant will apply knowledge of brain development to set appropriate expectations of teens.

Essential question: How do you know what can be reasonably expected from teens?

Week 5:

Outcomes: The participant will investigate the importance of recognizing and maintaining appropriate boundaries.

Essential question: What is the best way to develop, nurture, and maintain relationships with students and how will it benefit the learning that is to occur?

Week 6:

Outcomes: The participant will develop a personal philosophy that addresses the techniques and rationale that will be used to build strong, positive relationships with teen students.

Essential question: Why do some teachers put so much time and effort into building relationships with students?

Grading Policy

Grade	Percent of value of the assignment- (approximate- Use as a guide)	Translation: What does it mean
C+	100%	Responded effectively with a fully developed post and commented on several other student's response.
C	90%	Responded with a fully developed post and commented on at least one other learners' response.
C-	75%	Responded minimally. Did not comment on any other learners' responses.
INC+	50%	Response not fully developed but commented on another learners' response.
INC-	25%	Response not fully developed and no comment on another learners' response.
NS+	10%	Not submitted with an appropriate response to another student
NS-	0%	Not submitted with no response or an incomplete response to another student.
Late (plus the above)	Lose 20 percentage points from the above	Late assignments will lose additional credit

Course Requirements:

Learners must read all assigned chapters, papers and articles and participate in each weekly discussion. These discussions reflect a strong understanding of the reading materials for the week and encourage critical thinking of all learners. Weekly assignments must be completed by the specified dates for all learners and facilitator to view.

4. **About the instructor:** For the past 6 years Maria Keesler has been teaching in a family literacy program in the Binghamton City Schools District where she works predominantly with teenagers who are also parents. She has found that it is very easy to look at a teenager, especially one that has some adult responsibilities, and expect them to act as an adult. In addition to her current teaching assignment, she has also taught in a Job Corps Center where many students were forced to grow up in certain aspects of their lives prior to being

developmentally ready for the task. Throughout her professional experience working with teen parents and their children she has found that the brain development of teen and toddler are similar. It is her goal to help teachers better understand teens and be more realistic in their expectations. She earned a A.S.B. from Northeast Institute of Education, a B.S. in Liberal Studies from the University of Scranton, K-12 Business and Distributive Education certification through SUNY Oswego, and M.S. Ed., in K-12 Administrative Leadership.

5. **New York State Standards Addressed:** ELA Standards 3, 4

6. **Contact Information:** This instructor can be reached via email at keeslerm@Binghamtonschools.org

7. **Prerequisite Skills/Requirements:**

Participants need to know how to download, attach and create documents in Microsoft Word and Excel. Participants need to be able to access the internet and use e-mail.

8. **Required Software:**

Microsoft Office and e-mail are required.

9. **Recommendation for In-service Credit:**

Students will be recommended for in-service credit based upon their participation in discussions, completing required readings, and posting completed assignments. Students will be provided with a grading rubric. Late and/or missed assignments may result in loss of in-service or credit.