Task Number: 5

Task Name: Parent Conference

Educator Accomplished Practice Indicators:
(A) Quality of Instruction 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 4e
(B) Continuous Improvement Responsibilities & Ethics 1c

Task Description:
The teacher will observe a parent conference conducted by an experienced teacher and write a reflection on the observation. The teacher will prepare and participate in a parent conference for one of her/his students and write a summary of the conference, including the follow-up actions.

Directions:
In this task you will observe an experienced teacher conducting a parent conference. You will then plan and prepare for a parent conference that you will conduct.

Observation of a Parent Conference

With permission from the parent, observe an experienced teacher conducting a parent conference. Follow up by writing a reflection to answer the following questions:
- What did the teacher do or say that you want to emulate?
- What changes would you make if you were conducting the conference?

Conducting your own Parent Conference

1. Before your conference, plan what you hope to accomplish by reflecting on the following questions.
   - What information do you want to share with the parent?
   - What problems need discussion and ideas for solutions?
   - What positive remarks can you say about the student?
     Remember not to overwhelm the parent. Settle on no more than two or three concerns to be addressed. A laundry list of complaints will only discourage or alienate them.
   - If possible, clarify ahead of time who will be attending the conference and their relationship to the child. Is this the child's mother, father, guardian? Is this the custodial parent? Verify the person's name and make sure to pronounce it correctly.
   - Arrange the room setting to minimize potential distractions or interruptions during the conference. Close the door if necessary.
   - Assemble samples of the student's work and a list of her/his grades before the conference.
2. **During the conference**, address all parents by their last names preceded by the appropriate title until you are invited by them to use their first name.
   - Begin the conference on a positive note. Think of two or three positive descriptors for the student. It is important to find something to praise with each student.
   - Question the parent about the student's special talents, interests, or accomplishments. Express a genuine interest to better understand their child's successes and strengths as well as challenges.
   - Be specific when discussing difficulties the student is experiencing. It is generally better to be candid, yet non-blaming. Stick to the facts, giving concrete examples, rather than broad generalities.
   - Actively listen to the parent. Respond empathically to feelings expressed by the parent. This communicates that you really are trying to understand the parents' perspective; it does not imply you necessarily agree with their view.
   - Encourage parents to ask questions and respond fully, yet tactfully. Avoid jargon, "educationese," or psychological labels.
   - Allow parents time to talk.
   - Inquire about home routines (responsibilities, homework habits, play, etc.). Seek information that might help you gain a better understanding of the student's talents, interests, and challenges.
   - Some traps to avoid: discussing family problems, discussing other teachers' classroom treatment of the student, comparing the student with siblings, arguing with the parent, attempting to psychoanalyze the student, blaming the parent for the student's misbehavior.

3. **To conclude the conference**, invite the parents to contact you with any future concerns about their child's classroom progress.
   - End the conference in a positive tone.
   - Summarize the main points discussed and any steps to be taken to resolve identified problems.
   - Thank them for coming to the conference.
   - Do a follow up with notes or a phone call, especially if a particular problem has been identified for attention.

4. **After the conference**, write a summary.
   - Reflect upon the effectiveness of your conference.
   - What will you do again and what will you change?
   - Write about the follow-up actions you have already done or will do in the future.

**What to submit?**
- Reflection of an experienced teacher’s conference
- Summary of your own parent conference
Criteria for an Acceptable Task

*Before submitting the task to the drop box, review the criteria for an acceptable task. To get credit for your task, you must meet all criteria for each element.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Criterion for Acceptable Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection of an Experienced Teacher's Parent Conference</td>
<td>Attends a parent conference conducted by an experienced teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflects on observed actions from the experienced teacher that he/she would like to use</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflects on observed actions from the experienced teacher that he/she would not use or would adapt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Reflection of a Parent Conference</td>
<td>Conducts a parent conference</td>
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<td>Reflects on what he/she hoped to accomplish prior to conducting the conference</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Summarizes the details of the conference (omitting names and specific identifiers)</td>
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<td>Reflects on the effectiveness of the conference.</td>
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<td>Discusses what worked well and what he/she would use in the future.</td>
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<td>Details follow up actions to be taken as a result of the conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Exhibits correct spelling</td>
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<td>Exhibits proper punctuation</td>
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<td>Exhibits correct sentence and paragraph structures</td>
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