School Counseling at Hansen Elementary

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Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.uni.edu/csbsresearchconf/2020/all/1
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Introduction
Over the course of the Spring 2020 semester, I partnered with Hansen Elementary to fulfill my Psychology Cooperative Education internship. While there, I worked closely with the school counselor (Jen Alexander) to teach children K-6 about things such as emotional well-being, conflict resolution, making goals, and building healthy, lasting relationships. As one of the undergraduate interns, I was able to meet with students one-on-one as well as assist faculty in classroom lessons. Aside from working with students, I was also able to research trauma-sensitivity and its importance in the education system. My role at Hansen has given me the opportunity to work with students, learn from mentors, and grow as a professional. This internship has truly been the foundation of my future career, and I cannot wait to get started.

Hansen’s Mission
- A curriculum that is differentiated and engages all students in 21st century, real-world, meaningful, rigorous and relevant learning opportunities where all students have the opportunity to achieve at high levels.
- Students and staff that are goal oriented, innovative, collaborative, problem solvers, and critical thinkers.
- A safe, nurturing environment where all students are successful, well-rounded individuals who respect and accept diversity striving to be the best versions of themselves.

Hansen Pride
- Positive and Accountable
- Ready to Learn
- Insist on My Personal Best
- Dependable and Respectful
- Encourage Others to do the Right Thing

Position Responsibilities
- Met one-on-one with assigned students
  - General framework: before meeting, got a run-down of the child’s situation (struggles, concerns, strengths) and discussed the best course of action
  - Course of action: What activity would be best for this child specifically?
  - Once baseline was established, I decided how to approach the situation and connect with the child
  - No formal training on how to meet with students
  - Met with 9 kids in total, ranging from 1st grade to 6th grade
  - Each session was different, as each child brings their own experiences and personalities to the table
- Managed the daily schedule
  - Ensured everything ran smoothly
  - Filled in weekly schedule
  - One-on-one meetings
  - Parent conferences
  - Classroom visits
  - Lunch and planning periods
- Communicated with parents about child involvement
  - Gained permission to work with their children
  - Email updates about their children
  - How the sessions were going, any concerns or questions, etc.
- Sat in on classroom lessons
  - Hung student artwork in the hallways
  - Sat in on classroom lessons
  - Ensured everything ran smoothly
  - Filled in weekly schedule
  - Sat in on classroom lessons

What I Learned
This internship has taught me how much I truly love working with children, taking on a role in developing lifelong skills, such as communication or maintaining relationships, is so rewarding. Thanks to my experience at Hansen, I have become much more informed on what it means to be trauma-sensitive. All children deserve the chance to succeed, no matter their backgrounds or past experiences. Likewise, no child should have to worry about dealing with their trauma alone. Schools are a safe space for so many kids, and therefore I hope to advocate for more schools to become trauma-sensitive. I also intend to further my experience in the psychological field by pursuing a master’s degree in school counseling. This internship has truly been the foundation of my future career, and I cannot wait to get started.

STRIVE Framework
- Supportive Trauma Interventions for Educators (STRIVE) Framework
  - Emphasizes the importance of:
    - Responsive adults
    - Children’s ability to have choices and self-regulate
    - An environment that encourages safety and trust
  - Based on resiliency instead of risk factors
  - 3 levels of intervention
    - The individual student
    - The teacher
    - The school as a whole
  - Core principles
    - Increasing teachers’ understanding and awareness of trauma
    - Providing teachers with concrete strategies and interventions for their classrooms
    - Improving young children’s ability to access the curriculum
    - Serves as a much-needed guideline for schools to follow when implementing trauma-sensitivity.
  - It is important for educators to be able to recognize triggers and promote regulation within their classrooms

References

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank Jen Alexander for being such a wonderful mentor. Without her, I would have been completely lost. She has served as an incredible role model, and I hope to one day be half as good a school counselor as she. I’d also like to thank Carolyn Hildebrand for providing me with this opportunity in the first place. She has also been a great source of ongoing support. Thank you both so much!