

Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination

Dr. Alina Slapac
Assistant Professor
Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, TESOL, and Special Education
(ECETS) College of
Education
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Nominated By: Virginia
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April, 2013

Nomination for Dr. Alina Slapac

Submission of Materials and Format: Table of Contents

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o Dr. Carolyn Brown (Teaching & Research assistant, Dr. Slapac was a doctoral committee member)	
o Eleanor Taylor (M.Ed. Graduate teaching in Japan)	
o Jeffrey Pauls (Dr. Slapac's doctoral advisee and graduate assistant)	
o Lynnette C. Love, Undergraduate Student	
o Dr. Pat Kopetz (chair of Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, TESOL, and Special Education)	
o Dr. Margaret Cohen (classroom observation)	

2. Nominator Letter, Virginia Navarro, Ph.D.

April 22, 2013

Dr. Alina Slapac delivers Excellence in Teaching through care and concern for students and by being a master teacher in building relationships. Professional teacher-educators emphasize that learning outcomes correlate highly with one's ability to connect, to build relationships with students, their families, and their communities. Yet in higher education such an ethic of care and connection often terminates at the classroom door. Dr. Slapac models, in exemplary fashion, how to bring people together to celebrate good work with a combination of high expectations and high warmth. Dr. Slapac is always ready to go the extra mile for students at every level.

Her students write unsolicited notes to her after classes to thank her for the positive influence she has had on their learning and lives. A few examples of these follow: "I would like to thank you for all your help with my research in so many wonderful ways. I especially appreciate your valuable contribution to the focus group interview and your warm welcome to your Action Research class." Another writes, "Words cannot express how grateful I am for everything you have done for me. Your guidance was most helpful in developing a successful project." "You always challenged me to do my best, but also acknowledged my strengths throughout."

As Steward of the COE Master's degree capstone class, I have researched and published articles with Alina on how to successfully mentor those engaged in Action Research projects. Deep reflective processing has resulted in consistent improvement of teaching strategies based on feedback and study. In assessments from external evaluators each semester on our capstone students' projects, Dr. Slapac's students show the highest rating overall of any of the other instructors' students. I have seen the detailed pages of feedback Alina gives each student and have also seen this meticulous attention to detailed feedback at the doctoral level, since I serve on several committees with Alina. She reads student work with an open mind, a caring spirit, and a critical eye.

Connecting to students goes beyond the classroom in so many ways for Dr. Slapac. She has generously entertained those going or coming back from an international placement, has hosted showers for expecting doctoral students, welcomed new colleagues with dinners, brought snacks to class on a wintry night, met students in coffee shops for dialogue and reassurance and generally built networks of deep connections around a shared passion for learning and teaching.

The statement in UMSL's Strategic Plan that says, "We value collaboration among students and organizations and engage in research and teaching to improve the quality of life. Collaboration develops graduates who contribute in meaningful ways to a diverse global society" captures perfectly the strong assets Dr. Alina Slapac brings to her academic work and teaching. As advisor to KDP she creatively got students involved in campus commitments such as the MLK day celebration and also with the wider community. She has been a leader in reaching out to international students and faculty, such as the Korean English teachers on campus for a few months and visiting international professors from Ukraine and China, and was the faculty liaison for our Korean student teacher exchange. Her work in the language immersion schools in St. Louis City resulted in research publications with her doctoral students, pro bono PD for the

teachers on classroom management, and expanding networks that link community partners with the university. One of UMSL Strategic Plan's stated priorities involve enhancing "the quality and delivery of undergraduate and graduate/professional education"; this goal is clearly shared and actively supported in the day-to-day work of Dr. Slapac.

Recognition of teaching excellence can be documented from multiple sources. A letter written by Dr. Slapac's former Department chair, Dr. Joe Polman, offers insights into what makes Alina such an outstanding teacher and is worth quoting at length:

During my time as chair, the Division relied on Alina's teaching more than on that of any other tenure-track or tenured faculty member. Most faculty members play a key leadership role in one course, and sometimes that is a large enrollment course. Alina taught two courses with consistently large enrollments, and important places in our programs; one of these was an undergraduate Elementary Education course on Classroom Management, and the other was the graduate course in Teacher Action Research that serves as a capstone for the M.Ed. program. Alina designed the Classroom Management course in her first year at the university, and provided solid leadership for it from that time forward. She oriented and guided many new instructors who taught the course over the years as well as worked tirelessly to improve the curriculum and instruction of a very challenging course to teach well.

Alina was the most junior faculty member in the rotation of instructors for the capstone teacher action research course, and she provided the students in her sections with outstanding guidance on this project, which for the majority of students is the most important learning opportunity in their M.Ed. program. In addition to these two large courses, Alina was one of two faculty members to supervise student teachers studying abroad in our program for several years; in her case, she facilitated the work of UMSL student teachers in Seoul, South Korea. This was a challenging class from a cultural standpoint, and from a logistical standpoint, as she had to conduct all communications online. Alina helped make the experience of the UMSL students in this program transformative for them personally and professionally, while ensuring it prepared them for their future work in United States classrooms. In addition to the kind of guidance she provided to future and current teachers in her classes, Alina took on increasing numbers of masters advisees and served on doctoral committees over the years. As chair of committees on which she served, I appreciated her careful attention to rigor in methods and helpful input to doctoral students. In the midst of her very active teaching schedule, Dr. Slapac carved out a unique research

Undergraduate preservice teacher candidates attest to Dr. Slapac's skill in integrating textbook knowledge with actual practice. As one student said, "She was extremely knowledgeable in the field of classroom management. She had the book knowledge of terms, etc. but you could also tell she has had plenty of actual experience in the classroom to back up what she was saying. She often used real scenarios to get her point across."

Another affirmation of the power of skilled relationship building comes from a student in one of her graduate classes; the comment comes from a survey I recently sent out as part of Dr. Slapac's

tenure review process:

Dr. Slapac's teaching style also leads to great rapport with students. She consistently treats students with respect and regards them as serious professionals. Even during tense situations or when handling delicate material, Dr. Slapac manages to almost effortlessly maintain an air of respect and egalitarianism with her students. This creates a welcoming learning environment full of personal attention and supportive encouragement. This is a model environment to nurture professional growth and fuel student engagement. Dr. Slapac has high expectations for her students, but she also goes out of her way to make sure her students are supported and given every opportunity to succeed at the challenges she presents.

I feel this is an excellent articulation of the portrait I am trying to paint. The word 'rapport' is rich in connotation and meaning. The energy, verve, style, and graciousness exuded by Dr. Slapac, which I and others have experienced working with this special colleague, bring light and hope but are grounded in rigor, high expectations and incredible feedback. Many opportunities are provided to achieve success but the bar of learning and performance is always set high.

A final area that illustrates how Dr. Slapac embodies the criteria of the Emerson Teaching Excellence Award stem from her willingness to host CUT program participants as class observers. These are individuals who value teaching skill enough to engage in a systematic program to increase teaching proficiency. Here is what one observer shared from her field notes after an observation in Dr. Slapac's class:

Upon entering the classroom you and the students appeared to have collegial conversations and you were approachable

1. Introductions appeared to make the students a bit more comfortable with our presence (Thank You)
2. Students appeared to be a bit surprised by the quiz that was given
3. Most students finished in the allotted time given but ONE student took extra time that went into the partner activity time, he also did not participate fully in the partner activity
4. Group activities appeared to be organized, well thought out and meaningful to the topic for the evening
5. Some students did not participate in the question/answer periods of the class
6. Anecdotes and personal stories appeared to amuse the class and spark motivation to give input
7. The pace of the class was fast and consistent, some students may have needed a bit more think time at times (depending on the make-up of the class and personal preferences)
8. Modeling of strategies that can be used in the future classrooms appeared to be appropriate and meaningful (cooperative learning structures)

Once again, we appreciate you allowing us the time in your classroom. It was a great learning experience and we hope to see you again someday (teaching OUR own classrooms of course).

In a subsequent note in another semester, Dr. Cohen commended Dr. Slapac for the positive comments from CUT participants using real time observations: “My graduate students comment on the amount of activity there is in your class and how the agenda moves smoothly from one activity to another while reinforcing major concepts. They notice the ease with which you orchestrate instructional activities and involve students in addressing the class agenda.” I feel such recognition from those who actually sat through a college class focusing on pedagogical nuances offers confirmation of teaching excellence, along with the other triangulated data in this application. It is a delight to nominate Dr. Alina Slapac for the well-deserved recognition of being an ‘Emerson Excellence in Teaching’ nominee. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Virginia Navarro

**4. List of Courses (Extensive graduate advising details listed in CV)
(Fall 2008-Fall 2012)**

Course Number	Course Title	Course Focus	Course Level	Semesters Taught & Course Evaluations
TCH ED 2210	Introduction to Teaching	Level I	Undergraduate	Fall 2008 (4.46)
ELE ED 4990/4991 SEC ED 5012	Elementary School Student Teaching (Field Studies)/Student teaching Abroad-South Korea	Level III: Application Field-based supervision	Undergraduate & Post-Baccalaureate Certification	Fall 2009, Fall 2010 & Fall 2011 (qualitative comments in SCOPE; Linkert scale)
ECH ED/ELE ED/SEC 4320	Classroom Management	Level III	Undergraduate & Post-Baccalaureate Certification	Spring 2008 (4.65), Fall 2008 (3.65; 4.09), Spring 2009 (4.16; 4.65), Fall 2009 (3.75; 4.38), Fall 2010 (3.62; 4.61), Spring 2011 (4.57), Fall 2011 (4.35; 4.19); Spring 2012 (3.93; 4.23); Fall 2012 (4.09; 4.50)
SPC ED 6320	Advanced Studies in Classroom Management	Course taught with 4320 concomitantly	Graduate & Post-Baccalaureate Certification	Fall 2008 (3.78)
TCH ED 6910	Teacher Action Research Capstone	Capstone course	Graduate & Post-Baccalaureate Certification	Spring 2008 (4.56) Spring 2009 (3.99), Spring 2011 (4.70), Fall 2011 (4.35), Spring 2012 (4.23; 4.16), Fall (4.60)
TCH ED 6260	Practicum Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)	Seminar & field experiences	Graduate & Post-Baccalaureate Certification	Spring 2011 (4.13)

Notes:

***As an Assistant Professor on tenure-track, except for this year (2-course load), and my first year at UMSL, I taught 3-course load every semester with approximately 60-80 students per semester.

*** Ech Ed/Ele Ed 4320 is a combined section of Early Childhood and Elementary education majors. When listed separately it means that I taught two separate sections of 4320 in the particular semester.

***Spring 2010-No classes taught due to maternity leave.

- 5. Representative syllabi:** A. TCH ED 6910 Teacher Action Research Capstone
B. ELE ED4320 Classroom Management

A. CAPSTONE SEMINAR: TEACHER RESEARCH EDUCATION 6910

Course Outline Spring 2013

Location: 0155 Villa Building (South Campus)

Time: 5:30-8:10 p.m. (Thursdays)

Instructor: Dr. Alina Slapac

Office: 367 Marillac Hall

Office hours: By appointment

Telephone: 314.516.7358, cell 314.322.9938 (for emergencies, best to e-mail)

E-Mail: slapaca@umsl.edu

Website: <http://coe.umsl.edu/w2/About%20Us/Faculty/Profile/slapaca.html>

Course Description:

Prerequisites: Completion of all course work in the Master's in Education (M.Ed.) program or concurrent enrollment in one or two "final" courses.

Description: This is the culminating course in the M.Ed. degree program that provides an opportunity to integrate knowledge through developing, completing and publicly presenting an Action Research project. Teacher Research means reflectively assessing and acting upon one's own practice within situated contexts of practice. A formal Teacher Research paper will be submitted with a brief literature review, a plan of action, and interpretations and applications for practice.

Course Purpose:

The purpose of this course is for M.Ed. candidates to apply and showcase the knowledge and skills acquired during the degree program and to further develop the professional habit of reflective practice as part of becoming a lifelong learner and teacher-leader. Reflective practice, in this course, means the habit of being consciously and articulately aware of one's professional actions, systematically observing the effects of those actions, and considering outcomes in light of educational theory and practice. Reflective practice, in this sense, leads to a continuous cycle or process that leads to outcome improvement and improved practice in a situated context.

With assistance and support from faculty, the M.Ed. students will design and implement a teacher-research project and report the results of their effort to the educational community. By implementing the project, learners will demonstrate professional skills, high ethical standards, and active engagement with relevant communities and individuals. The course fosters concern for social justice aspects of inquiry and a critical appreciation of educational practices and outcomes. The course will provide an opportunity for building relationships with other scholar-practitioners both within and beyond the 6910 community.

Course Objectives:

- Demonstrate knowledge and skills acquired during the entire degree program by successfully engaging in a research study to demonstrate your knowledge of and ability to use the learning cycle process based in reflected practice.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and skills in applying the concepts, traditions, approaches, and methods of selected research methodologies.
- Articulate your understandings of the structure and goal of research using qualitative and/or quantitative traditions.
- Develop an appreciation for the discipline and rigor of reflective practice.

- Demonstrate skills in applying the research design steps from problem posing to proposal to product, from approval through implementation and reporting.
- Improve proficiency in educational observations and journal writing.
- Analyze collected data in rigorous and ethical ways to openly inquire about potential meanings.
- Develop skills in presenting and discussing one's reflective practices and results in a public environment consisting of colleagues, students and administrators.
- Demonstrate skills in the use of writing style and format requirements of the American Psychological Association (6th Ed.). <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Evaluation Criteria:

Students will be evaluated based on the quality of work, especially the written final product and presentation but also including some of the following: short assignments, feedback on others' projects, activity completion, proposal draft of Action Research project, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, presentation judges, leadership, participation and attendance.

Required Texts:

- Hendricks, C. (2013). *Improving schools through action research: A comprehensive guide for educators* (3rd). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.
- Selected readings
- SCOPE is the platform students use to access the program evaluation instruments (David Barbaro coordinates our SCOPE accounts out of TLC). SCOPE workshops will be offered by staff in the Technology and Learning Center (TLC). Students are responsible for seeking help with technology requirements by contacting the Technology and Learning Center (TLC) on South Campus at 314-516-4800 or contacting the Technology Support Center at 314-516-6034.
- SCOPE software – peer and instructor feedback tool. If you do not already have SCOPE from a previous course, then purchase it in TLC

Optional resources:

- Holly, M.L., Arhar, J.M., & Kasten, W.C. (2009). *Action Research for Teachers: Traveling the Yellow Brick Road* (3rd ed). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Hubbard, R. S., & Power, B. M. (1999). *Living the questions: A guide for teacher-researchers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Reference Resource:

American Psychological Association (2008). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Ed.) Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> for an online guide sheet
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/jpeg/APAPoster09.jpg>

Methods of Instruction:

The course objectives and purpose will be pursued and conveyed by use of face-to-face and online discussions, readings, writing, informal instructor presentations and student presentations. Group and individual consulting sessions with the instructor will be held as required/as needed for successful completion by each learner.

Course Policies

To foster positive learning, students and instructors need to work together to create environments based on mutual respect. As your instructor, I will meet class objectives; answer questions in class, office hours, and over email; and solicit your feedback in formal and informal ways throughout the semester.

During class—which will be a mix of lectures, student-led discussions, and group work—I will work primarily as a facilitator, aiming to ensure that we touch on a range of issues in an equitable and rigorous manner. Thus, *your input is highly valued*. I expect students will come to class ready to learn and to help others learn, as we work together to develop a well-reflected understanding of the relevant topics. Toward this end, please respect your colleagues by completing assignments thoughtfully, arriving on time, participating in class, turning off cell phones, and using laptops or other technology only for when requested by instructor. To ensure your success in this course, it is very important to attend all class sessions, read the required chapters/articles, keep up with the deadlines (turn in the assignments on time) and communicate with the instructor any concerns or needs for clarifications.

Students with documented special needs – should contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss any necessary arrangements; prior to our meeting you must have contacted the Office of Disability Access Services: <http://www.umsl.edu/services/disabled/index.html>

Make-ups – may only be arranged in the case of a serious and unavoidable cause. In all cases, you must contact the professor **before** the assignment due date, and you must provide written documentation (e.g., in the case of an illness, a signed note from a physician).

Academic Dishonesty – such as cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade or other sanctions. See UMSL's Policies and Procedures, including the Student Conduct Code, in your Student Planner: http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/dsa/student_planner/index.html

Additional Resources


- Center for Student Success – 225 MSC; 314-516-5300; www.umsl.edu/services/css
- Health, Wellness, and Counseling Services – MSC; 314-516-5380; www.umsl.edu/~uhwcs/
- Teacher Certification and Advising – 155 Marillac Hall, South Campus; 314-516-5937
- Writing Lab – 409 SSB; http://www.umsl.edu/~umslenglish/writing_lab/writinglab.html

Course Schedule: NOTES:

- Subject to modification based on the needs of individuals and the group.
- Students are responsible for checking My Gateway prior to coming to class each week and respond on Discussion Board by the deadline (see Course Calendar)
- The last day to drop without receiving a grade is after the 4th week of classes. The last day to drop/withdraw is around the 11th week of classes.
- *Additional Discussion Boards will be posted as/if needed.*

Course Schedule Key: Hendricks book=ISAR

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment
Week 1 Jan.24	<i>Introductions</i> <i>Course Goals, Expectations and Assignments</i> <i>What is Teacher Research?</i>		Complete Human Participation training on-line: http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php Information about IRB at : http://www.umsl.edu/services/ora/compliance/human.html COE forms: http://coe.umsl.edu/web/faculty/irb.cfm
Week 2 Jan. 31	<i>History and Context of</i>	Ch. 1 & 2 ISAR	Bring in a copy of IRB certification form.

	<p>Action Research. Action Research vs. Other Methodologies</p> <p>Ethics and doing research</p>		<p>DB: Introductions & My research interest (Post your DB by Wednesday, Jan. 30. Print and bring to class your DB posting).</p>
<p>Week 3 Feb.7</p>	<p>Developing an Authentic Question.</p> <p>Literature-Looking for a theoretical frame and ideas for action</p>	<p>Ch.2 ISAR (re-read) Read and print “Finding Research Questions” (in Additional Readings)</p> <p>Ch.3 ISAR</p>	<p>Work on the Opening narrative (Activity 2.2/p. 35, Hendricks; ONE topic only) and post as DB (could later become part of your proposal draft/introduction).</p> <p>DB: Opening Narrative. Post your DB and give feedback to at least 2 peers on their narrative through questions, comments, ideas for data sources, refinement of concepts by Wednesday, Feb 6, by noon. Print and bring to class your DB posting.</p> <p>**** A LIBRARIAN WILL HELP US LEARN HOW TO BE EFFICIENT USING TOOLS. Library Updates & Resources. (Explore Academic Search Premiere ERIC, EBSCO, ProQuest, Psych Info, Google Scholar, etc. Use library tab in My Gateway)</p> <p>Bring to class 3-4 peer-reviewed articles on your topic.</p> <p>Start Activity 3.1/ p. 62 (Hendricks).</p>
<p>Week 4 Feb.14</p> 	<p>Planning of the Action Research Study</p> <p>Strategies for Data Collection</p>	<p>Ch.4 & 5 ISAR</p> <p>Read both articles /action research studies (in Course Docs/Additional Readings).</p>	<p>Complete and post as DB Activity 4.1 (1. 2) /p. 74 (Hendricks). Complete INTRO to AR proposal; read literature articles; review texts from 6909 and 6910 as you develop proposal.</p> <p>DB: Articulating/refining my research question. Give feedback to at least 2 peers on their narrative through questions, comments, ideas for data sources, refinement of concepts (by Wednesday, Feb. 13). Print and bring to class your DB posting.</p> <p>You may find the articles in Course Docs/Additional Readings/Narratives from Teachers). While reading the action research studies, be prepared to discuss the following in class: Activity 1.2/p. 17 and 1) How does the opening work? 2) How does the author establish credibility? 3) What are the data sources?</p> <p>Bring to class DATA COLLECTION WORKSHEET (BLANK COPY; you may find it in the EVALUATION FORMS folder)</p>
<p>Week 5 Feb.21</p>	<p>Individual meetings on projects (as scheduled). Prepare questions, update work. Bring to meeting/submit a hard copy and an electronic copy of the Plan of Action Form (including timeline</p>		

	<i>for data collection & interventions). Read and write up your articles for the lit. review section of your project.</i>		
Week 6 Feb. 28	Individual meetings on projects: Sign up for your time slot. Prepare questions, update work. <i>Bring to meeting/submit a hard copy and an electronic copy of the Plan of Action Form (including timeline for data collection & interventions). Read and write up your articles for the lit. review section of your project.</i>		
Week 7 Mar 7	Collecting Data Final Planning	Ch.5 ISAR (re-read) Ch. 6 ISAR	Work on Activity 5.1/p.121 (for your AR draft). Bring your letters of consent to class (3 copies) and your Plan of Action (revised after meeting with the Instructor, 3 copies) Bring your baseline data to class (if any) and your observations logs/field notes/reflective journals to class. What did you learn so far from the process?
Week 8 Mar 14 Proposal Draft DUE	Looking at data with your group (Analyzing and Representing data using tools of Excel and Word) Students as Partners	Ch.6 ISAR (re-read) Ch.7 ISAR	Proposal DRAFT due (Title/cover page, intro with research question framed, synthesize at least 5-6 relevant articles, baseline data (if any), interventions, data collection action plan and time line, reference list at the end in APA+ consent letters (Submit proposal draft via Drop-box and as a hard copy in class to instructor). IN CLASS PEER REVIEW (bring 3 hard copies-one for instructor, two for 2 peers of your proposal). Complete the PEER Review form (bring 3 copies of the blank form to class) and submit it via Drop box for Instructor and as attachment to your peers by March 17 (Sunday). Bring your initial data for group analysis and feedback to class (tables, charts, test scores, student work samples, coded field and/or observation notes, interview transcripts, etc.) Be sure to have it on Thumb Drive.
Week 9 Mar 21	Data Analysis	Ch.7 ISAR (re-read)	Continue data analysis in class. Bring your data for group analysis and feedback to class (see above). Bring 3 hard copies of the completed Peer review form. Work on Activity 7.1/p.142 OR 7.2/p.155 OR 7.3/p.157(dependent on your data) Submit sample of data analysis via Drop Box and as hard copy (based on the activity above).
Week 10 Mar 28	SPRING BREAK NO CLASS		Work on your Action Research papers.
Week 11 April 4	Individual Meetings (as scheduled)		
Week 12 April 11	Writing as a Research Process and	Ch.8 ISAR	Resolving dilemmas; the art of re-writing and editing PPT or poster? Why?

	<i>Narrative Writing. Data Day.</i>		Individual and Group help during class time. Work on data analysis and charts/tables. Work day on documents.
Week 13 April 18	<i>The Journey of Action Research</i>		<p>Bring your Titles and Abstracts to class (3 additional copies of revised Abstracts) + 3 keywords + your AR draft. Submit the final revised Abstracts/Title/Keywords by Sunday, April 21st.</p> <p>DB: Titles & Abstracts</p> <p>Share notebook info with each other. Maybe begin PPT presentations. May bring Notebooks for Review for grading if ready.</p>
Week 14 April 25	<i>Presentation Rehearsal and Peer Feedback</i>	Poster & PowerPoint Presentations (as scheduled)	<p>1st group-Notebooks for Review-(include all your work that showcases your progress towards the completion of AR project –for example, field/observation notes, interview questions/transcripts, student work, articles you used/read for your literature review, your ongoing journal, instruments for data collection, materials that you used as/during interventions, letters of consent etc.)</p> <p>Come prepared for your presentation! (as scheduled/TBA) Share notebook info with each other.</p> <p>1st group-If you want feedback sooner from your peers, bring a hard copy/submit electronically your AR final draft to peer and via Drop box. Peer review of AR final draft (Use edit function in Word to make suggestions as well as filling out rubric; submit completed Rubric to instructor via Drop Box and via e-mail to peer) no later than Saturday, Dec. 1st to have time to make changes.</p> <p>DB: Final Thoughts on Becoming an Action Researcher</p>
Week 15 May 2	<i>Presentation Rehearsal and Peer Feedback</i>	Poster & PowerPoint Presentations (as scheduled)	<p>Notebooks for Review (2nd group) Come prepared for your presentation! (as scheduled/TBA)</p> <p>2nd group-Notebooks for Review Bring a hard copy/submit electronically your AR final draft to peer and via Drop box. Peer review of AR final draft (Use edit function in Word to make suggestions as well as filling out rubric; submit rubric to instructor via Drop Box and via e-mail to peer) no later than Saturday, May 4, to have time to make changes/revise paper.</p>
Week 16 May 9 5-7:15 pm	PRESENTATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC (Mandatory event) in TLC (Please arrive 20 minutes early in the Boeing Room to get set up).		<p>Share your findings in public forum.</p> <p>FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE. (Please submit the paper electronically via Drop Box and as a hard copy in large envelope; if you want your paper back with instructor's notes, please SELF-ADDRESS AND SELF-STAMP YOUR ENVELOPE (around \$2.00, around depending on Appendices length) Each student will receive an electronic</p>

	Celebrate impending graduation! Congratulations!	individual evaluation with comments and points. <i>Upload final paper and abstract into SCOPE AND Gateway drop box for assessment</i>
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NOTE: Please submit the Plan of Action Form, Written Draft of AR, Sample of Data Analysis, Peer Review of Final Draft and your Final AR paper as a hard copy and electronically (via Drop Box). Follow the instructions/requirements for assignments and postings.

Tch Ed 6910 Assessment Activities (600 pts)

Assignments	Due Date	Points
1. Plan of Action (Research Question, Topics to research in the literature review, Participants, Sources of Data Collection, Interventions, Timeline) + letter of consent for participants	Feb.21	25
2. Written Draft of Proposal for Action Research Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover page (title, name) Introduction/Opening narrative (situate within your autobiographical story, Include larger problem, why you are interested) Purpose of your study & Research Question (overview of process) Literature review analysis of at least 5-6 focused journal articles on your topic (reference list in correct APA style) (Essay on your understanding of CONCEPTS drawing on literature for clarity, etc.) Setting/Participants Data Collection (what you will/are collecting, when, and from whom, and how you plan to analyze the data); plan to increase validity; describe baseline data (if any). How will the data answer your questions? Interventions (describe clearly some of your interventions) Detailed timeline for project (data collection, analysis & results, writing final draft) References Appendices (Letters of consent, materials used during interventions) 	March 14	100
3. Peer Review of Proposal Draft	March 17	25
4. Sample of Data Analysis: At this point you need to write up an example of your data analysis for feedback even if not complete. Include, source of data, what you hope to learn from it, a table or evidence of how you analyzed the data and WHAT IT MEANS.	March 21	25
5. Notebooks for Review (evidence of AR process)/Table of contents included	As scheduled April 25/May 2	25
6. Peer Review of Final Draft (Use edit function in Word to make suggestions as well as filling out rubric)	By/before May 4	50
7. Final Action Research Paper (Cover page, Abstract, Intro, Purpose of the study/RQ, Literature Review, Setting & Participants, Interventions, Data Collection, Data Analysis and Interpretations, Implications/Conclusion, References, Appendices)	May 9	250
8. Positive leadership, in-class participation, attendance, peer review of action research drafts, rehearsal and final research presentations (including DB posts, activity assignments through semester, following the instructions/course requirements)		100

90-100%=A range; 80-90%=B range; 70-80%=C range Incremental grading is used + and –					TOTAL POINTS	600
<i>Grading Scale</i>						
>=95 = A	89-87 = B+	79-77 = C+	69-67 = D+			
94-90 = A-	86-83 = B	76-73 = C	66-63 = D			
	82-80 = B-	72-70 = C-	62-60 = D-			

Attendance and Participation. Your attendance is required for all scheduled class meetings in that you are responsible for information covered in assigned readings, handouts, discussions, and activities. Attendance is stressed because you will have opportunities to (a) improve your knowledge base through discussions of critical topics and issues, (b) practice skills needed to engage in professional dialogue/exchange with colleagues, (c) practice skills required to present information to others, (d) participate in discussions and activities regarding your Action Research project, and (e) submit required assignments. ATTENDANCE AT THE PUBLIC POSTER/POWER POINT PRESENTATION NIGHT on **THURSDAY December 6, 2012, IS MANDATORY. This event will run from 5-7 pm.**

Other Class Expectations

1. Students are expected to come to class meetings thoroughly prepared; “Thoroughly prepared” means reviewing materials from previous meetings and reading assigned texts sufficiently to participate actively and effectively.
2. All assignments must be submitted at or before the assigned due date. Place assignments electronically in the drop box set up under Course Documents AND bring in a hard copy to class. This keeps a record of when they came in and insures against missing papers, etc.
3. All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner. All final products must be typed, titled, double-spaced, and free of grammatical or spelling errors. Products, which, in the judgment of the instructor, do not meet these criteria or are unprofessionally prepared, will be returned ungraded for revision and resubmission. When including citations in the text and making references to resources, use the APA format (link to Purdue owl above). Assignments are expected to be reflective and include analysis/synthesis of knowledge and practical applications. Appropriate citations of literature and class readings should be included. Keep a copy (disk or hard copy) of everything and record your work in the course for reference in future methods courses.
4. All the data and documents including transcriptions of interviews, observation journals, reflective blog notes, student work samples (with names whitened out), published survey or test, memos, archival data, etc. should be kept in a **Data Notebook (Notebook for Review)** with each section clearly marked. **You should include a Table of Contents.** This must be on the table or available to the evaluators at the presentations.

Academic Honesty

- In all cases of academic dishonesty, the instructor shall make an academic judgment about the student’s grade on that work and in that course. The instructor is mandated by university rules and regulations to report all cases of alleged academic dishonesty to Academic Affairs in Woods Hall. **Papers will be randomly checked using tools that search Internet sources.**
- The assignment of DELAYED GRADES is discouraged and will be used only in cases of extreme emergencies where satisfactory progress has been demonstrated and a passing grade may be earned. However, should a delayed grade be required, students should notify the instructor at the time such circumstances exist. Upon notification, a course agreement between the student and instructor will be developed before the last week of the term.

- If you are in need for special accommodations due to a documented disabling condition, please speak with me as soon as possible. Formal requests for supports and/or accommodations must be initiated through the Disability Access Service in 144 Millennium Student Center at www.umsl.edu/services/disabled (516-6554).
- **Civility:** It is assumed that respect for the UMSL community and its rules as well as respect for the rights of others are standards for all UMSL students. Beyond adherence to the Student Code of Conduct, each student is expected to act with civility. Freedom of expression is an essential part of the University life, but it does not include intimidation, belligerence, threats of violence, or the inducement of others to engage in violence or in conduct that harasses or is disrespectful of others. Conduct that threatens, harasses, or denigrates others for any reason is unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. Proper social conduct includes not only civil behavior in interacting with members of the University community both within and outside of the classroom, but also respect for University facilities and property. If each member of the class lives up to these standards, the members of the class can be confident that everyone will benefit fully from the diversity found here. Civil behavior also includes good manners.
- The most efficient way to communicate with the instructor is through e-mail. All e-mail correspondence will occur using your UMSL e-mail account. **It is imperative that you check My Gateway and your UMSL e-mail account on a regular basis** (NOTE: Use the Student tab in My Gateway to consolidate or forward e-mails, create a user-friendly name, etc.). All class-wide announcements will be communicated through My Gateway and related class materials will be posted on my Gateway. If you have a question about class content or an assignment, please use the class discussion board to post your question. It is likely that others in the class have the same question and would benefit from the information. If you have a question that relates to you specifically, use e-mail to communicate.

B. ECH ED 4320 & ELE ED 4320
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SPRING 2013
Tuesdays 5:30-8:10 p.m., Room 0201 South Campus Classrooms/Marillac Hall

Instructor: Dr. Alina Slapac (Counselor of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education)
Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, Special Education & TESOL

Office Hours: by appointment

Office: 367 Marillac Hall

Phone: 314-516-7358

Mailbox: outside of 369 Marillac Hall

Email: slapaca@umsl.edu

Web Address: <http://coe.umsl.edu/w2/About%20Us/Faculty/Profile/slapaca.html>

Course Description:

Understanding classroom management as the development of engaging instruction that establishes healthy and culturally appropriate teacher-student relationships that builds successful classroom community and enhances student learning. Participants develop a culturally appropriate classroom management plan that includes rules, procedures, and expected behaviors and uses problem solving strategies to resolve behavior problems. Emphasis is on the teacher developing the social competence of PreK-12 students within culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms and engaging families in supportive interactions.

Objectives:

At the end of the course, students will have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions:

1. To create a positive classroom community that enhances student learning and social justice (MO-Step Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).
2. Connect the relationship between successful classroom management, character education and effective instruction within a multicultural and socially-just framework (MO-Step Standards 3, 6)
3. To establish positive student-teacher relationships which recognize the importance of considering each child's home culture and individual learning style (MO-Step Standards 3, 6, 10).
4. To develop a classroom management plan that takes into consideration the home culture of the children and includes appropriate rules, procedures, expected behaviors, and uses problem solving strategies to assure student success (MO-Step Standards 3, 5, 6).
5. To work with families to support the development of the social competence of all children in the classroom (MO-Step Standards 2, 7, 10).
6. To apply appropriate classroom management strategies and a variety of assessment tools that will support culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms (MO-Step Standards 1, 3, 6, 8).
7. To recognize the need for and to use culturally responsive classroom management strategies so all children can be successful in the classroom (MO-Step Standards 2, 3, 6).
8. To gain confidence and experience using technology in the classroom in order to create meaningful learning opportunities for all students. (MO-Step Standards 5,7, 11)
9. Reflect on the classroom management, character education, instructional and assessment strategies that aid and support the learning of a diverse student population within a multicultural and socially- just framework. (MO-Step Standards 1, 9)

Teaching Approaches and Expectations:

This course will be interactive, with both the professor and students serving as facilitators. Various approaches will be used, including small group discussions, and in-class assignments.

Students and the professor will share the responsibility for making each session intellectually significant, lively, and interactive. You are asked to:

1. **Read each assignment prior to class and critically reflect upon information.**
2. **Prepare for each class by asking several questions about the readings:**
What are the most important ideas expressed in the readings?

What ideas in the chapter will be most useful and valuable to you in a future teaching situation?

How has the content of this chapter changed your view of teaching and learning?

Course Policies:

To foster positive learning, students and instructors need to work together to create environments based on mutual respect. As your instructor, I will meet class objectives; answer questions in class, office hours, and over email; and solicit your feedback in formal and informal ways throughout the semester. During class—which will be a mix of lectures, student-led discussions, and group work—I will work primarily as a facilitator, aiming to ensure that we touch on a range of issues in an equitable and rigorous manner. Thus, *your input is highly valued*. I expect students will come to class ready to learn and to help others learn, as we work together to develop a well-reflected understanding of the relevant topics. Toward this end, please respect your colleagues by completing assignments thoughtfully, arriving on time, participating in class, and turning off cell phones.

Emphasis on effective communication through writing and speaking is an integral component of all coursework in the Division of Teaching and Learning at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Students in this class will be held to professional writing and speaking standards. Serious lapses in these standards may be reflected in the student's assignment and/or course grade.

Students with documented special needs – should contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss any necessary arrangements; prior to our meeting you must have contacted the Office of Disability Access Services: <http://www.ums1.edu/services/disabled/index.html>

Make-ups – may only be arranged in the case of a serious and unavoidable cause. In all cases, you must contact the professor **before** the scheduled presentation or assignment due date, and you must provide written documentation (e.g., in the case of an illness, a signed note from a physician).

Academic Dishonesty – such as cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade or other sanctions. See UMSL's Policies and Procedures in your Student Planner.
http://www.ums1.edu/studentlife/dsa/student_planner/index.html

Student Conduct. You are responsible for being attentive to and observant of campus policies about academic honesty as stated in the University's Student Conduct Code:
<http://www.ums1.edu/~webdev/bulletin/student-conduct.html>

Required Texts:

- 1) Bloom, L.A. (2009). *Classroom management: Creating positive outcomes for all students*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- 2) Evertson, C.M., & Emmer, E.T. (2012). *Classroom Management for elementary teachers* (9th ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- 3) Other readings will be posted throughout the semester in My Gateway as required (including 2 book chapters from Levin, J., & Nolan, J. F. (2008). *Principles of classroom management: A professional decision-making model* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education) or other optional Resources/Readings posted on My Gateway.

Suggested Reading (***)you do not have to buy this book):

Watson, M. (2003). *Learning to trust: Transforming difficult elementary classrooms through developmental discipline*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

*****SCOPE** is the platform students use to construct e-portfolios to meet program goals and complete surveys. SCOPE workshops will be offered by staff in the Technology and Learning Center (TLC). Students are responsible for seeking help with technology requirements by contacting the Technology and Learning Center (TLC) on South Campus at 314-516-4800 or contacting the Technology Support Center at 314-516-6034. If you do not already have SCOPE from a previous course, then please purchase it in TLC.

Reference Resource:

American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.) Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS (***)See detailed Guidelines for the Assignments in the Assignments Folder/My Gateway)

1. Reflection Journal “My Classroom Management Plan”

Create a child- centered classroom management plan that reflects best practices, and includes attention to classroom climate, community, student-teacher relationships, culturally responsive practices, family involvement, active student engagement, handling discipline and disruption, and teacher action research.

The reflections should represent a critical analysis of the respective readings (mostly from Bloom text) with specific examples. Use Bloom’s text as a primary source and other readings, class discussions, personal examples as secondary sources. The reflection journal should include examples (your own) and you may exemplify and critique the examples you see through your observations. It should provide reflective and argumentative view/approach rather than a descriptive one. In your reflections, you should be able to examine your current or prospective classroom management practices with regard to current research, multiple perspectives, goals and outcomes, relationships and structures.

You should use 1st person narrative for your journal (approx. 2 pages per entry). Please check the schedule for assignments for specific journal entries.

The journal entries represent another form of evaluation for this course. Make sure to read the required chapters before writing the reflection(s). Late journal entries are not accepted since the journals are on the day when the chapter is discussed. Use APA (6th ed.) for citations, paraphrases and References. All reflective journals are mandatory. They should be brought to class as hard copies and submitted electronically via Drop Box. Please include your name, Title of Reflection and the question as it appears in the syllabus on your reflection. Staple if more than one page. The reflection could be double-sided.

NOTE: By using critical thinking skills and argumentative analysis, these reflections will prepare you for your final Portfolio for Certification. You may actually use your Classroom Management plan as an artifact later while adding examples from your student teaching. The Circle of Courage framework is encouraged for most of the reflections. The Reflections marked with *** are not required in writing, but to be prepared for in-class discussion.

See below the following questions that should guide you while developing your journal based on the chapters from Bloom (2009) and the Circle of Courage framework:

1. My Classroom Management Philosophy Statement: Explain your rationale (using Bloom and your own examples) regarding your classroom management practices: learner centered or teacher centered, authoritarian or authoritative, proactive or reactive. Give specific examples.
2. Constructivist Perspective and the Circle of Courage: 1) Based on Bloom, write about strategies that you would like to incorporate in your classroom that fit with the constructivist perspective that encourages belonging, generosity, independence and mastery. Be specific. 2) You should also include few general classroom rules and their rationale that you would like to implement as your classroom expectations.
3. Constructivist & Behaviorist Perspective/Ethical issues: 1) Explain the advantages and disadvantages of constructivist AND behaviorist approach to classroom management, and 2) the ethical issues involved when using rewards and punishments.
4. Student perspectives: Reflect on and discuss strategies that you would use to incorporate student perspective in your own classroom.
5. ***Collaborative process: a) Describe the benefits of reflection and collaboration as preservice and prospective teachers. b) Explain how you would seek opportunities for reflection and collaboration as a future educator.
6. Establishing family partnerships and community involvement: Discuss how a) you can establish strong family partnerships, and b) nurture family and community involvement that would be meaningful and beneficial to student learning.
7. My cultural perspectives: *Based on Bloom's chapter and Weinstein, Curran and Tomlinson-Clarke's article (2003)*, a) Describe how communication, learning and motivation, values and behavior can be influenced by culture. How can these differences cause problems in the classroom? How could you become aware of these influences as a future classroom teacher? b) What are the specific culturally responsive classroom management strategies that you would create and use that allow for as well as celebrate diversity?
8. Creating communities: Explain how you will incorporate a) the role of community, b) instruction, c) learning orientation, and d) engagement of peers in developing roles and solving problems, in your classroom management practices.
9. ***My teacher-student positive relationships: Describe a plan for developing positive productive relationships with your students to motivate them and enhance academic achievement. Provide specific examples of action and communication patterns that nurture belonging, generosity, independence and mastery.
10. Fostering intrinsic motivation: a) Using the specific theories of motivation, describe strategies that you would incorporate in your classroom to foster intrinsic motivation and student engagement; b) Include strategies and examples for reluctant students.
11. ***My school-wide bullying plan: Develop your own effective school-wide AND classroom-wide bullying program/plan with specific examples.
12. Please respond to the following questions: 1a) What types of discipline issues are parents and teachers in your community most concerned with? 1b) Do you think there are issues that are

overlooked such as inequities in discipline practices, bullying, and so forth? Be specific. 2) How are consistent disruptions typically dealt with in classrooms you have observed? Be specific.

13. How can setting goals and conducting action research (refer to the specific steps of teacher action research) around classroom management issues take the focus away from controlling the classroom to developing responsible learners? Give specific examples following the steps of teacher action research on classroom management issues.

2. Interview Project. Using the readings on the Circle of Courage and classroom management practices based on a constructivist approach, please complete one of the two projects. You will receive more details about these assignments in class and online:

a) Interview a teacher about his/her classroom management practices. Use information from the text to generate questions. Determine if the teacher's practices are learner centered or teacher centered, authoritarian or authoritative, proactive or reactive. Include also the strategies and activities used by the teacher to encourage belonging, mastery, independence and mastery, and her classroom covenant and rules. Is the teacher engaged in research about his/her classroom? If yes, please describe.

b) Interview two groups of students, one group of popular high achievers and one group of low achievers and/or a group of students with behavioral issues. Ask about their school experiences with regard to belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. Compare and contrast their answers. Make recommendations for school or classroom practices based on your findings.

3. "Be the Teacher" Activity. The objective of this task is for you to demonstrate effective strategies in classroom management. **READINGS:** Make sure you also read the additional readings posted by the instructor (from Levin & Nolan, etc.) so that you are able to create specific strategies. For this assignment:

- 1) You will prepare and present a short lesson (5 minutes) in which you will role play 2 scenarios with **challenging** management issues. These issues will be pre-arranged with classmates before class starts.
- 2) You'll choose and discuss a current event from the media/news article that relates to classroom management practices. After providing a short summary of the article, you should comment on the article based on your personal opinion and discuss strategies of how you would have dealt with the situation (especially if different than what is suggested in the article).

You will be evaluated on your demonstration of your effective strategies. After each scenario or at the end of all 2 scenarios, you will give a brief explanation of the effective strategies that you used to handle each situation, including the behavior acted out by classmates. Your written explanation of planned behaviors and strategies presented along with the article from the media will be given to your instructor before your presentation. A rubric will be used to evaluate this activity (Check Assignments Folder in My Gateway). Specific requirements will be posted in Assignments folder.

4. Leadership, Class participation & Attendance. Class participation is required and models the constructivist, cooperative learning approach. It includes in-class small group work with weekly video demonstrations/presentations, case studies, vignettes, whole group exercises and/or discussion based on instructor's requirements and each week's group work from the texts.

To fully participate and engage in each class, you must complete readings and do assignments carefully beforehand. Students are expected to participate actively in this course (responding to questions, asking additional questions, and completing the in-class assignments). Total class participation points will be

determined based on: 1) meaningful class discussion, 2) number of absences/tardies, and 3) adherence to UMSL's civility policy, which includes professionalism.

Discussion Boards (DBs) Depending on how our in-class discussions evolve, you might be asked to respond to few questions posted by your instructor on DB by the required due date/time. The postings might include responding also to at least 2 peers with constructive feedback/meaningful discussion.

Important NOTES:

****** During the semester you'll be required to print and bring to class materials posted on My Gateway. Please make sure to have the materials with you as you'll work on the case studies or other assignments during class. Have all the printed materials with you for every class (in case we won't have time to finish working on some case studies, we will continue in the following class session).**

COURSE CALENDAR: This calendar is subject to change without advance notice based on the needs of individuals and the group. **Students are responsible for checking My Gateway prior to coming to class each week.**

KEY: Bloom textbook= BL; Evertson & Emmer= EE; Reflection Journal =RJ

Date	Topic	Readings	DUE: Assignments
Week 1: January 22	<i>Course and Syllabus Overview, Introductions</i>		
Week 2: January 29	<i>Historical Perspectives</i> <i>Organizing Your Classroom & Supplies</i>	1 BL; 1 & 2 EE	<i>*Print & bring doc. Effective Classroom Arrangement (see Case Studies & Strategies Folder on MyGateway)</i> • RJ 1
Week 3: February 5	<i>Circle of Courage</i> <i>Establishing Classroom Rules & Procedures</i>	2 BL & 3 EE	<i>Print & bring doc. Norms & Expectations to class (see Case Studies & Strategies Folder on MyGateway)</i> • RJ 2
Week 4: February 12	<i>Behavioral Theory Procedures for Managing Student Work</i>	3 BL & 4 EE	• RJ 3
Week 5: February 19	<i>Student Perspectives</i> <i>Getting Off to a Good Start</i>	4 BL & 5 EE	• RJ 4
Week 6: February 26	<i>Teacher Perspectives</i> <i>Non-Verbal & Verbal strategies</i> <i>Be the Teacher Activity/Presentation Introduction</i>	5 BL Readings from Levin & Nolan (Non-verbal and verbal interventions for common behaviors)	<i>*Print & bring to class the 2 chapters (Levin & Nolan)</i> • RJ 5 (no written Reflection, be prepared to discuss the question in class)
Week 7: March 5	<i>Community & Family Involvement</i>	6 BL & 6 EE	<i>*Print & bring to class Fostering St. Accountability for Classroom</i>

	<i>Planning & Conducting Instruction</i>		<i>Work+ Strategies (See Case Studies Folder)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ 6
Week 8: March 12	<i>Cultural Perspectives</i>	7 BL + Weinstein, Curran and Tomlinson-Clarke's article (2003)	<i>*Print & bring the article to class</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ 7 • Be the Teacher Activity (as assigned)
Week 9: March 19	<i>Creating Communities</i> <i>Cooperative Learning Groups</i>	8 BL & 7 EE	<i>*Print & bring to class Encouraging Appropriate Behavior+ Strategies (see Case Studies Folder)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ 8 • Be the Teacher Activity (as assigned)
Week 10: March 26	SPRING BREAK NO CLASS		
Week 11: April 2	<i>Student-Teacher Relationships</i> <i>Maintaining Appropriate Student Behavior</i>	9 BL & 8 EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ 9 (no written Reflection, be prepared to discuss the question in class) • Be the Teacher Activity (as assigned)
Week 12: April 9	<i>Motivation & Engagement</i> <i>Communication Skills for Teaching</i>	10 BL & 9 EE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ 10 • Be the Teacher Activity (as assigned)
Week 13: April 16	<i>Managing Problem Behaviors and Special Groups</i>	10 & 11 EE	<i>*Print and bring to class General Teaching Methods-Case 3 & Back to Square One case study (please read the cases before class)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be the Teacher Activity (as assigned)
Week 14: April 23 Guest Speaker: Michael Nobile, Instructional Specialist	<i>Discipline, Disruption & Violence</i> <i>Positive Behavioral Support</i> <i>RTI (Response to Intervention)</i>	11 & 12 BL Module on RTI (Additional Readings Folder) + re-read section in EE (Ch. 11) called Models of Identification (pp.236-238)	<i>*Print and bring to class He Just Needs a Little Discipline case study (read it prior to class)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview Project • RJ 12 • RJ11 (No written Reflection, be prepared to discuss the question in class)
Week 15: April 30 AERA Annual Conference	<i>TBA</i>		
Week 16: May 7	<i>Goals, Outcomes & Assessments</i>	13 BL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RJ 13 • Be the Teacher Activity (as assigned) Last day of class—attendance mandatory

Assignments

Assignments	Due Date	Points
Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance In-class participation/group/individual work such as case studies, videos, quizzes, DBs, etc. Professionalism 		106
Reflection Journals (10 points each, except for R7 & R12; 15 points each)	As scheduled	100
Interview Project	April 23	110
Be the Teacher Activity	As scheduled	84
Grading Scale >=95 = A 89-87 = B+ 79-77 = C+ 69-67 = D+ < 60 = F 94-90 = A- 86-83 = B 76-73 = C 66-63 = D 82-80 = B- 72-70 = C- 62-60 = D-		
Total points: 400 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The last day to drop without receiving a grade is after the 4th week of classes The last day to drop/withdraw is around the 11th week of classes 		

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Participation

Your attendance is required for ALL scheduled class meetings in that you are responsible for information covered in assigned readings, handouts, discussions, and activities. Attendance is stressed because you will have opportunities to a) improve your knowledge base through discussions of critical topics and issues, (b) practice skills needed to engage in professional dialogue/exchange with colleagues, (c) practice skills required to present information to others, (d) participate in discussions and activities, and (e) submit required assignments.

Class will begin promptly at the designated time. Promptness and attendance for all class meetings is expected. **Arriving late disrupts the learning process** (of yourself and) of others. This course has a strong emphasis on cooperative and collaborative learning processes. It is expected that students will actively participate in activities and discussions held during class time. It is also expected that students will show respect for their classmates and the instructor during all these interactions. TARDINESS AFTER 15 MINUTES will be counted as an absence. Similarly, students who leave class early by 15 minutes or more will be counted as absent for that class (unless they communicated the reason to the instructor and they were excused).

UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR of any kind will also be counted as an absence. Unprofessional behavior includes, but it is not limited to the following: text messaging while class is in session; checking emails; surfing the internet; sleeping; working on assignments that do not pertain to this class; listening to music on iPods while class is in session; or discussing personal lives. *** Do not bring your laptop to class.

Note: Students are expected to attend ALL class sessions, to be on time for the beginning of the class and

to remain until the class is dismissed. Failure to stay for the entire class session will lead to a full absence (without prior communication with the instructor. One absence is excused with no penalty. **Please notify the instructor via e-mail if you will be absent.** Multiple absences require a meeting and communication regarding coursework and continuance in the course. **Each absence beyond the one excused will result in 5% reduction in the final grade. It is your responsibility to clarify missed assignments with classmates or with me prior to the next class.**

Written Assignments

Students are expected to come to class meetings thoroughly prepared, which means having reviewed material from previous meetings and having read readings sufficiently to participate actively and effectively.

All assignments must be submitted at or before the assigned due date. Late assignments are not accepted. All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner. All final products must be typed, double-spaced, stapled and turned in on time. Products, which, in the judgment of the instructor, do not meet these criteria or are unprofessionally prepared, will be returned ungraded for revision and resubmission. When including citations in the text and making references to resources, use the APA format. Assignments are expected to be reflective and include analysis/synthesis of knowledge and practical applications. Appropriate citations of literature and class readings should be included.

Note: Points will be deducted for failure to use Standard English composition skills or failure to follow directions specified for a given assignment. Use the computer laboratories and the resources in the Writing Lab, Room 409A, SSB Tower. If a given paper is not acceptable, it must be revised and resubmitted at the next class meeting with the original copy attached. You may have 2 chances to revise/resubmit a paper.

Other Expectations

Civility: It is assumed that respect for the UMSL community and its rules as well as respect for the rights of others are standards for all UMSL students. Beyond adherence to the Student Code of Conduct, each student is expected to act with civility. Freedom of expression is an essential part of the University life, but it does not include intimidation, belligerence, threats of violence, or the inducement of others to engage in violence or in conduct that harasses or is disrespectful of others. Conduct that threatens, harasses, or denigrates others for any reason is unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. Proper social conduct includes not only civil behavior in interacting with members of the University community both within and outside of the classroom, but also respect for University facilities and property. If each member of the class lives up to these standards, the members of the class can be confident that everyone will benefit fully from the diversity found here. Civil behavior also includes good manners.

- Turn off cell phones during class. Adherence to the Student Conduct Code is expected.
- My commitment is to create a climate for learning characterized by intellectual diversity and a respect for each other and the contributions each person makes to class. I ask that you make a similar commitment.

5. **Communicating with the instructor.** The most efficient way to communicate with me is through e-mail. All e-mail correspondence will occur using your UMSL e-mail account. It is imperative that you check MyGateway and your UMSL e-mail account on a regular basis (NOTE: Use the Student tab in My Gateway to consolidate or forward e-mails, create a user-friendly name, etc.). All class-wide announcements will be communicated through MyGateway and related class materials will be posted on my Gateway. If you have a question about class content or an assignment, please use the class discussion

board to post your question. It is likely that others in the class have the same question and would benefit from the information. If you have a question that relates to you specifically, use e-mail to communicate.

Summary of expectations for attendance, written work, and professionalism during this course:

- Your attendance is required for ALL scheduled class meetings and you are responsible for information covered in assigned readings, handouts, discussions, and activities.
- Students are expected to attend ALL class sessions, to be on time for the beginning of the class and to remain until the class is dismissed (especially since we meet once a week). Failure to stay for the entire class session will lead to a full absence (without prior communication with the instructor).
- One absence is excused with no penalty. Please notify the instructor via e-mail if you will be absent. Multiple absences require a meeting and communication regarding coursework and continuance in the course. Each absence beyond the one excused will result in 5% reduction in the final grade. It is your responsibility to clarify missed assignments with me prior to the next class.
- If you are missing a class, please e-mail your assignments as attachment in the same day (if you had an assignment due that day).
- All assignments must be submitted at or before the assigned due date (including Discussion postings on Discussion Board). All assignments are mandatory.
- Late assignments are NOT accepted/graded (including DB postings).
- All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner. All final products must be typed, single or double-spaced, stapled and turned in on time.
- If a given paper is not acceptable, it must be revised and resubmitted at the next class meeting with the original copy attached. You have the chance of 2 revisions (1 point will be deducted)
- The most efficient way to communicate with the instructor is through e-mail. All e-mail correspondence will occur using your UMSL e-mail account. It is imperative that you check MyGateway and your UMSL e-mail account on a regular basis.
- Please refrain from bringing/using laptops and text messaging in the classroom.
- Bring all requested materials to class (for example, printed case studies from MyEducationLab).
- *Please be responsible for attendance, participation, and written work. As future teachers your work ethics is very important. Thank you.*

6. Personal Philosophy of Teaching & Impact on Practice

Overview: Using a professional (rather than technical) view of teaching, my vision and philosophy of teaching is to understand holistically the *whole student* while learning *with* my students and *from* them. I always try to challenge my students to strive to be better preservice, inservice teachers and teacher-researchers, and to believe that they can make a difference and be active agents of change within their communities. Prior to becoming a university professor, I taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses at elementary, middle, high-school and college levels in Romania. As an international faculty member, I constantly bring my cultural experiences, background, and passion for global and multicultural education into my teaching.

My philosophy of teaching relies on constructivist and transformative approaches to learning. I am constantly taking into consideration the diversity of prior knowledge, interests, perspectives, roles and experiences of my students by using an inquiry-based approach in my classes. I also communicate high but appropriate expectations for my students, and I strongly believe in second chances (for example, giving my students the possibility to revise and resubmit their assignments). I am always taking into account my students mid-term and final evaluations and feedback, and I make changes in the development of materials or assignments based on them. For example, since most students in my 4320 Classroom Management course do not have field experiences prior to taking this course (only some of them are in Internship concomitantly with taking this course), I thought it would be very beneficial for them to interview an experiencing classroom teacher regarding his /her successes, challenges and particular classroom strategies that he/she implements and to analyze /critique those strategies from a constructivist perspective using the Circle of Courage model we discussed in the course. In the last day of class the students share their findings in group discussions with tips of successful classroom management practices. Students find this assignment very helpful and relevant, and later on, they can add examples from their own teaching experiences (in student teaching) and use this assignment as an artifact in the final Certification portfolios. I also give ample feedback and extensive comments using face-to-face individual meetings, or other venues, such as online, in-class or written venues.

Teaching Strategies: To meet the needs and interests of my diverse learners and their learning styles and to have intrinsically-motivated learners, I use a dynamic approach to teaching, specifically using a variety of methods and resources while modeling and explaining teaching strategies and providing instructional accommodations. I think it is crucial to help students have a better understanding of the concepts by using real-life examples from my own research and international experiences along with their own field observations, work, experiences rather than using lecture-formats. Although I use PowerPoint presentations for the first part of my class in some undergraduate or graduate courses,, I expect these to provoke students to think critically, to pose questions, to solve problems and to apply the knowledge to case studies through in-class and online discussions. Group work then underlines the benefits of engaging analytically in a collaborative process. Another strategy is to bring attention to a specific video or current media event/situation that the students and I can analyze together.

The assignments in my undergraduate and graduate courses are designed to engage students to see themselves as practitioners while finding new modes to go beyond conventional meanings.

For example, in my Classroom Management course students are required to critically reflect on specific topics, additional readings and research-based studies while bringing strong arguments and using their own experiences as examples. Their classroom philosophy plan is an ongoing assignment that they will continue to develop and revise once they start their student teaching experiences, in preparation for their final Certification portfolios and it is based on a series of critical reflections. They also have to interview an experienced teacher regarding culturally responsive practice and deconstruct the meanings by using the conceptual framework of the Circle of Courage, community and civic engagement discussed in class.

In my teacher action research graduate course (Tch Ed 6910), student-practitioners are provoked to integrate and apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their degree program to further develop the professional habits of reflective practice and high ethical standards as part of becoming lifelong-learners. In my opinion, the most significant part of this course is the journey itself as the students are challenged to examine assumptions on which they shape their pedagogical practices and have the opportunity to build relationships with other practitioners in the community (within their classroom or within the larger community of practitioners, in a formal public presentation).

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Teaching: Using my Cultural Studies background, I bring film, literature and media examples into my courses as venues for further examinations of concepts to reach out for more in-depth analysis and meaning construction. I believe that by critically analyzing the concepts discussed in my courses and by applying them meaningfully, students learn beyond the classroom and bring a new dimension and enthusiasm to learning.

Connecting Research to Teaching: Since I started teaching at UMSL, I have constantly striven to connect my research to my teaching. Therefore, I have been collecting data from all my main courses (Classroom Management, Student Teaching Abroad, and Teacher Action Research) to understand/evaluate the impact of the preservice/in-service teachers' learning experiences. My passion for teaching is my dedication to my profession and my students. Looking at my own teaching from multiple perspectives with different sources of data and helping my students to think through the relationships between theory and practice has enhanced the richness of my theoretical thinking as a researcher. Also by intentionally investigating "local knowledge of practice" (Cochran-Smith, & Lytle, 2009; Geertz, 1983) on such strands as culturally responsive teaching, classroom management practices, differentiated instruction, intercultural education, and teacher action research I have become a stronger educator. From a professional view of teaching, one of my particular strengths is the constant interplay with my own research, either through action research and critical reflection inquiry to improve my practice or by gathering research data from my own classes in order to theorize, contextualize and evaluate the process of teaching and learning.

Creating a Community of Learners. I feel that developing a strong classroom community is a way to show caring, empower students and create a sense of belonging. Therefore, in all my classes, I am trying to build a community of learners and develop a culture of the particular classroom with my students, where different ideas, interpretive dialogue, and points of view are encouraged, concerns are addressed and important moments in my students' lives are acknowledged and celebrated.

7. EXAMPLES of Successful Teaching Practices and Accomplishments Related to Teaching

One of my significant contributions to teaching is bringing awareness to and celebrating diversity in my classes. When I started my job as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Teaching and Learning, I was hoping to teach a multicultural education course. Due to the overload of required courses in the undergraduate certification program, this turned out to be impossible. Therefore, based on my conversations with and feedback from students, I have strived to discuss issues of diversity and multicultural education with the focus on social justice and culturally responsive teaching, which also relates to my research agenda. I also always took into account the mid-term and final evaluation feedback received from my students, and improved my courses as a result of the feedback.

Teacher Leader/Faculty Steward of 4320 Classroom Management course (Undergraduate level)

At the undergraduate level, I have been fortunate to be the steward¹ of a required course in which, despite its technical title of Classroom Management, I changed its focus to creating a community of learners, character education, civic engagement and culturally responsive classroom management practices by using the Circle of Courage framework (encouraging a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity) (Bloom, 2009). Working with Marvin Berkowitz and Wolfgang Althof as part of the Center for Character & Citizenship, I identified and reviewed character education materials to insure up-to-date materials for this class. I then revised this management course to fit the needs of these teachers of tomorrow while ensuring alignment with the program goals. Topics relate to using a constructivist framework related to classroom management strategies drawing on Marilyn Watson's work and insuring that assignments are relevant, including critical reflections, an interview project with an inservice teacher on classroom management practices, in-class presentations and modeling of useful strategies. I recently added a media article of choice, so that students present and analyze real cases from the community to be familiar with the current issues and tensions that relate to school practice: e.g. zero tolerance policies, class/gender/racial inequities, bullying, etc.

Community Connections. I also incorporated a learning service project in this course by having students in fall semesters develop materials for Martin Luther King Observance Day for the Children's Program and then reflect on their experiences. The Children's Program is a program that I, as the Counselor of Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education (KDP), developed and implemented two years in a row, 2012 and 2013, designing diverse activities that educated children (ages 4-12) from the community about the ideals of Martin Luther King Jr. Many undergraduate and graduate students (Kappa Delta Pi members) participated in this program. This is one example of how I creatively connect people across campus and community to engage students in a real world action.

I also encourage both undergraduate and graduate students to visit my current research sites (St. Louis Language Immersion Schools) to complete class projects, service learning projects, or to conduct their own studies. Some undergraduate students volunteer in after-school program at this site, while some graduate students (who are not classroom teachers but need to conduct an action research project as part of their course requirement) from my 6910 Teacher Action Research course implement action research projects on culturally responsive classroom management, or

¹ The person who oversees all sections of a required course, working to update adjuncts, develop the curriculum, etc.

other topics of interest. I have also been working closely with graduate students on research internships at this site and especially with one of my graduate research assistant, Jeffrey Pauls, who is currently collecting data from the site on Positive Behavioral Support model that has recently started being adopted at the school as a model. I am also one of the faculty members of the St. Louis Education Research Group (SLERG), who was initiated by my colleague, Dr. Lisa Dorner, with whom I advise, give feedback and provide guidance to masters or doctoral candidates who are currently implementing projects at this site. Our work has been fruitful, through numerous presentations and publications (with students). I have also volunteered at this site and helped/provided feedback and guidance to teachers on classroom management issues; I also use some of the practical examples as successes and challenges in my own Classroom Management course, where students also appreciate real-life scenarios. The administrators at the school sought my expertise in Classroom Management and invited me to conduct workshops for their teacher and interns. The workshops were very well received. I am currently conducting another research project at this site with one of my colleagues, Dr. Ralph Cordova and another doctoral candidate, Jerol Enoch, identifying how the foreign-born teachers negotiated and transferred their own cultural experiences into their own classroom cultures /settings. I feel very fortunate to having access to this site and to getting to work with a group of dedicated educators.

I am currently collecting data from the management course (over three semesters) on the impact that it had on student learning regarding culturally responsive classroom management practices. I hope that the results of this study will provide me with further insights on preservice teacher preparation for diverse classrooms. Some evaluations discussed that, although relevant, the required written reflections were too numerous during the semester; therefore, since the students had to also write a final paper, I decided to minimize the number of written reflections and discuss them instead orally. In previous years, I also had presentations of specific chapters (in partners) but some students did not feel engaged enough by their peers, so I decided to take those out. The students' projects/assignments for this course and overall in-class participation show the growth over time, and the fact that I am using diverse evaluative types of assessments, showcases my care for differentiated instruction, learning styles and meeting the needs of all learners.

Redesigning Teacher Education Program. This year I was part of the faculty team on redesigning our Teacher Education Program with focus on community engagement. Along with my colleague, Dr. April Regester, I worked on making changes to the Classroom Management course adding a special education component since our preservice teachers will now be credentialed in special education or TESOL with their elementary certification.. This new course ELE ED 4323 will be offered to all early childhood, elementary and special education majors in fall 2013 and we are currently working on adding a new textbook and assignments. I feel my teaching strengths as an international faculty member supports this move to being more community engaged and international in orientation.

Teacher Action Research Capstone (6910) (Graduate level). At the graduate level, I have been regularly teaching the Capstone seminar course , working closely with graduate students (most of them teachers) to support the design and implementation of a teacher-research project. The results of these action research studies are shared in a public presentation, to the educational community. As an integral part of the instructor team, I recruit external evaluators and help with

planning and set-up each semester. Based on student feedback over the years, the Exit Course team collaboratively designed a course to better prepare students to conduct independent research. With a colleague, Dr. Virginia Navarro, I collected data from these graduate students documenting their experiences and our efforts to better prepare reflective practitioners; the results were published in an Action Research journal. My work in this course has been often praised by my students, as I spend many hours giving students extensive, individual feedback, and meeting face-to-face or online. This is an extremely challenging course to teach as students come with a variety of research skills and ideas, and some are often struggling. Nevertheless, everyone has grown in this course, having an impact and/or a positive difference in his/her own practice. Many students present findings to their faculty or departments; we emphasize the public nature of this type of research. While I mentor and support the students, I also encourage peer review and interactions through class discussions and readings of each other's work, and through constant constructive feedback. The culmination and celebration of the students' work is the Final Capstone presentations. Besides preparing the students for the final presentations (in the Power Point or Poster format), my colleagues and I work on designing the final program, advertising it, finding external evaluators, inviting colleagues and administrators to the event. The quality of my students' presentations has been praised by Chancellor Tom George, Dean Basile, Dean Schmitz, Chairs and colleagues. In looking at external evaluator scores on projects, my students garnered the highest overall means of all classes.

Technology. Another meaningful contribution to teaching has been the use of effective technology in all my classes, specifically modeling technology and encouraging my students to use it effectively in various ways. For example, by analyzing video case studies of "best practices" or excerpts of films and fiction or non-fiction pieces, using My Gateway site to communicate with students, post documents and online resources, using Skype and blogs with student teachers in South Korea, having student teachers (South Korea) and graduate students (in TESOL Practicum) use digital video-cameras to video-record themselves while teaching and critically reflect on their strengths and challenges, or use digital audio-recording for interviews with participants in their research (Tch Ed 6910).

Reviewer/Grader of the Final Certification Portfolios (in SCOPE) for Undergraduate Students: I also review and grade the final Certification Portfolios of the undergraduate preservice teachers every semester. I always enjoy reading the portfolios and providing feedback and comment and, especially, the artifacts that relate to the Classroom Management course that reflect the impact that the course had once they started teaching in diverse school settings.

Supervisor and Mentor. In my role as the Coordinator for the Student Teaching Abroad program-South Korea, I facilitated seminars with special topics before departure (invited Korean faculty and former students to share out experiences), found readings on teaching English as a Second Language, discussed culturally responsive teaching, and Korean culture and educational system). Besides aiding students in preparing curriculum and lesson plans, I communicated with students on a regular basis (including reading their blogs, and trouble-shooting issues and answering questions about teaching). I have also published an article from the data collected over three years from this intercultural exchange program (which unfortunately ended, due to funding). Along with my colleague, Dr. Virginia Navarro, I investigated the impact of student teaching abroad, specifically how intercultural experiences and teaching transformed 25

preservice teachers' ideas about pedagogy, English language learners, and identities as both national and global citizens. The results of the study indicated the transformative nature of such intercultural experiences. . I am currently in the process of submitting another article with some of the data related to classroom management practices and cultural adaptations made by US preservice teachers. While I recognize what a wonderful opportunity it was to coordinate this program, I was also challenged to make time for administrating details of the program (i.e. Visas plane tickets, passports etc.)

In my many roles with community and global partners (Internship in St. Louis Public Schools, Student Teaching Abroad-South Korea), and graduate level (TESOL practicum), I have been establishing and maintaining relationships with school communities as “catalysts for practitioner learning” (Cochran-Smith, & Lytle, 2009), to continue one of the strengths of the College of Education. Therefore, since most of my students are either interns, student teachers, or involved in other field experiences, I have been approaching all my courses from a “theory-to-practice,” student-centered perspective. My latest involvement in the community is through my research, volunteer work and workshops on classroom management at St. Louis Language Immersion Schools as discussed earlier.

Advising. In addition to regular coursework, I am also an advocate for scholarship in research, teaching and practice, for graduate and undergraduate students through my advising, mentoring, involving students in volunteering and professional opportunities, preparing them on the development of research projects, defenses, dissertations in different stages of progress and supervising independent studies and doctoral internships. I have also been collaborating with some of my graduate students on research projects, publications and presentations giving them the opportunity to practice research, and write for publication. Thus far, I have supervised three undergraduate and four graduate independent study projects, and research internships (doctoral level). I am currently a member in five dissertation committees (dissertation in progress), and I was a dissertation committee member in five other committees of students who defended their dissertations successfully and graduated (2011; 2012). I am currently the Chair in one dissertation committee. I evaluated six comprehensive exams between 2010 and 2012. I have also been the research advisor for Jeffrey Pauls, Yolanda Alover, Selena Eunice, and Timothy Ema, all doctoral candidates, with whom I have been working closely on developing their own research agenda and practicing qualitative research skills. As a research assistant and for his Research Internship, Jeffrey Pauls practiced his research skills contributing to two of my current research projects that led to paper presentations (one at AERA, 2011 and one at CIES, 2011). I have also collaborated with other graduate students on research articles and presentations. I participated in numerous doctoral interviews as part of the formal admission procedure into the doctoral program. I have received expressions of gratitude from these students and I am looking forward to continuing my role as a mentor, committee member and advisor.

These examples of how I go above and beyond basic course requirements to engage students in making a difference in their worlds illustrate my commitment to excellence in teaching across my roles in research, teaching and service.

9. Letters of Support

4 students, 1 administrator, 1 Center for Teaching Excellence letter

9.1. Dr. Carolyn Brown Letter

April 16, 2013

Re: Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award Nominee Dr. Alina Slapac

I am writing this letter to support Dr. Alina Slapac's nomination of the Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Dr. Slapac served on my dissertation committee between 2011-12, and she is the steward for one of the courses I teach in the Division of Teaching and Learning, ELE ED 4320: Classroom Management, so I have worked with her in a professional capacity since 2008.

Dr. Slapac is an outstanding educator in all respects. As a member of my dissertation committee, she made significant contributions to the project overall, particularly to the methodology sections. Dr. Slapac challenged my writing in ways that made my final product stronger. She was available whenever I needed guidance, and her ethical direction pushed me to examine my methodology choices to their fullest potential.

As the steward of the undergraduate Classroom Management course, Dr. Slapac redesigned the curriculum to reflect higher expectations for student performance as well as to ensure that preservice teachers are meeting state standards. I adopted Dr. Slapac's course curriculum with much success and have administered it consistently over time. This curriculum has proven itself to address preservice teachers' needs holistically, examining several classroom management philosophies throughout the course. The assignments reflect a variety of learners' strengths and strongly encourage critical thinking. Furthermore, Dr. Slapac works collaboratively on a regular basis. We often meet to discuss the content of the course and any collective changes we might make.

As a professor, Dr. Slapac is most certainly providing quality education for future teachers and professors who will positively influence the lives of our children. She is fair to all of her students, compassionate, has high expectations, and is approachable. Dr. Slapac has been an excellent mentor to me and to her other students, both graduate and undergraduate. In sum, she is a dynamic teacher and is most deserving of the Emerson Excellent in Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carolyn I. Brown
Student Teaching Supervisor and
Adjunct Faculty, College of Education and
Department of English

9.2. Eleanor Taylor, masters student now teaching in Japan

April 24th, 2013

To: The UMSL Senate Faculty Teaching and Service Awards Committee
Re: Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award Nomination
Dr. Alina Slapac, Nominee

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Eleanor Taylor, and I am a graduate of the University of Missouri-St. Louis' College of Education M.Ed. program. It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to support Dr. Alina Slapac's nomination for the Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award.

I first met Dr. Slapac in the winter of 2010 as a research participant preparing for a study abroad program in Northeastern China. From my first interaction with Dr. Slapac, I knew that she was an impassioned educator that genuinely cared for students' social and professional development. The following spring, I was fortunate enough to study under Dr. Slapac directly during my TESOL practicum and again in 2012 for my teacher action research capstone. As a former student of Dr. Slapac's, I can confidently say that she has had a profound impact on my experience as an UMSL student and on my identity as an educator.

During my time at UMSL, I found Dr. Slapac to be a consistent source of support and encouragement. She took an active interest in my academic and professional life from the first moment she met me, and she maintained that level of commitment and concern throughout my time at UMSL. She was always available to meet with me to address any concerns or confusion I might be feeling, even when I was not technically her student, and she was never short of suggestions or resource recommendations to aid me as I worked through whatever challenge I was currently facing. This level of personal engagement is what I found most impressive and most impactful about Dr. Slapac's teaching.

Not many professors are willing, or able, to devote the time and energy it takes to really learn about students' unique teaching and learning environments, but Dr. Slapac does this with nearly every student. More impressively, she is able to use the personal rapport she develops with students to aid in their learning and foster deeper student engagement. Dr. Slapac is an excellent example of how to effectively practice the educational principles she teaches, and it makes her an ideal professor for helping students uncover the interconnectedness between theory and practice.

It is an honor to support this nomination on behalf of such an authentic and supportive professor.

Sincerely,
Ms. Eleanor B. Taylor
Assistant Language Teacher
Fukuoka Senior High School

9.3. Jeffrey Pauls

April 24, 2013

Re: Emerson Teaching Award for Dr. Alina Slapac

I have taken six hours of research internship and eight hours of dissertation research coursework with Dr. Slapac. She has served on my comprehensive exam committee and currently serves as the Chair of my dissertation committee. Although none of the courses I have taken with Dr. Slapac have been traditional, in-class courses, I can speak to the fact that she is outstanding to work with from a graduate student perspective and as someone who has relied heavily on her guidance and instruction in charting a course through the doctoral program. She has been accessible, helpful, knowledgeable, and interested in my work and progress.

Dr. Slapac has been the most impactful professor/mentor I have had throughout my program at UMSL. Specifically in the area of teaching strengths and weaknesses, Dr. Slapac is excellent at providing helpful, challenging, thoughtful feedback for the writing projects I have done, and always in a prompt and respectful way, acknowledging my experience as an educator. Dr. Slapac always patiently and respectfully addressed the revision or changes required. On another positive note, Dr. Slapac has helped me a great deal in understanding and improving research methods and the research process as a whole. This help has not only come through the courses I have taken but also during my four years of work with her as a Graduate Research Assistant. She has given me unique and challenging opportunities in working in her research areas as well as my own and allowed me to contribute on two of her research projects, generously naming me as a co-author.

I have had the distinct privilege of watching Dr. Slapac work in a professional manner as a researcher and instructor and through her exhaustive service work at the University, particularly as the Advisor of the Kappa Delta Pi (KDP) International Honor Society in Education. As President of KDP for one and a half years I can attest to the fact that Dr. Slapac has provided KDP with unparalleled faculty leadership in nearly every single area of the organization: mentoring numerous undergraduate and graduate students in leadership positions, printing and distributing hundreds of service, initiation and recognition certificates to members, organizing professional and elegant initiation ceremonies (which the Dean of the College of Education and several associate deans and department heads have attended), developed an extensive and well-utilized KDP My Gateway site for members, encouraged KDP's involvement in numerous service projects, and has, nearly singlehandedly, grown the organization by over 200 members (in two years alone: 2010-2012).

Additionally, she was nominated for "Advisor of the Year" and was instrumental in helping KDP earning the "Cultural Awareness Program of the Year" through the UMSL Student Life Leadership Awards Program, during the 2011-2012 academic year. Finally, Dr. Slapac performs her duties with genuine care for her students and colleagues. During the past four years of working with Dr. Slapac I have witnessed, first-hand, the enormous positive impact she has made on students and faculty from the St. Louis Public Schools and the St. Louis Language Immersion School, community members, KDP members, students in the student-teaching abroad program (from UMSL and from South Korea), and many, many UMSL undergraduate and graduate students in education.

Jeffrey J. Pauls, PhD Candidate
University of Missouri-St. Louis, College of Education
Department of Secondary and K-12 Education
314-516-6519 (Division Office)
jjp2p8@mail.umsu.edu

9.4. Lynne C. Love, masters student

April 25, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

It is a privilege and honor to write a letter in support of Dr. Alina Slapac's nomination for this prestigious teaching award. Dr. Slapac served as both my academic advisor and my Teacher Research Education Capstone instructor during my time as a graduate student at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and she continues to be a positive influence in my life today.

Just last week I was reminded of how much I respect and admire Dr. Slapac as a teacher. She invited me back to speak to her spring semester students about the capstone research paper I wrote last year, but the pleasure of being back in her classroom, again, was all mine. I quickly remembered all of the lessons she taught me—all of the time and energy she spent combing through a myriad of my drafts, and my doubts, about my body of work. She challenged me and pushed me, but not without a constant barrage of support and encouragement. It is true that Dr. Slapac's class was the most difficult I have ever encountered during the course of my educational career, but it is, by far, the most beneficial and rewarding sixteen weeks I have ever spent in a classroom. She inspires me to be a better teacher, and because of her wisdom and talent, I am.

Dr. Slapac is not only an excellent, knowledgeable teacher; she is a friend. She recognizes that, even at the graduate level, it is important to build relationships with students. She is the first to bestow balloons and best wishes to her student with a newborn baby. She would always share the apples she picked at Eckert's with us because she understood that a tough night of class, after a long day of work, is sometimes only bearable when there is food. She took me out for coffee before I presented to her students last week; then, she sent me home with one of the kindest thank you notes I have ever received when, really, I should have been thanking her. I cannot fully impart the ways in which Dr. Slapac has had an influence in the lives of her students, but I can say that I am elated to be a part of the celebration of my greatest teacher, Dr. Alina Slapac, and I highly recommend her for the honor of this esteemed teaching award. She is most deserving.

Sincerely

Lynne C. Love
Language Arts
Ritenour High School
(314) 493-6000 x1235
lovec@ritenour.k12.mo.us

9.5. Dr. Patricia Kopetz, Chair, Department of Elementary and Special Education

April 25, 2013

Re: Emerson Excellence in Teaching nomination for Dr. Alina Slapac

I am happy to provide my recommendation of Alina Slapac for the UMSL Teaching Award. She has been a colleague of mine for nearly five years, during which I have enjoyed her friendship and enthusiasm for teaching. During this school year, in my capacity as department chairperson, I have worked closely with Alina and am proud of her research accomplishments.

Alina is popular among her students. She is dedicated to providing solid instruction that students respect, and they desire to meet her expectations of them.

As an instructional anchor for TchEd 6910, Alina has provided students with guidance that helps them build their action research and presentation skills. She enjoys the camaraderie of her students and supports their efforts in assignments and class activities.

Sincerely,
Patricia Kopetz, Chair
Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, TESOL, and Special Education

9.6. Dr. Peggy Cohen, Center for Teaching & Learning, Observation Letter

Office of Academic Affairs

Center for Teaching and Learning
University of Missouri-St. Louis
519 Lucas Hall
One University Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63121
Telephone: 314-516-4508
Fax: 314-516-7130

April 13, 2013

Alina Slapac, Ph.D.

Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, TESOL, and Special Education
College of Education

Dear Alina:

I very much appreciated the invitation to visit your class on Tuesday evening, April 9, 2013. This letter summarizes my visit and our related discussions. It is for your use. If you opt to submit the letter to your colleagues as evidence that you are working on improving your teaching effectiveness, I am comfortable with my letter being used in that way.

I observed in your undergraduate Classroom Management course that meets from 5:30 – 7:15 PM in room 201 of the South Campus Classroom Building. I arrived as the students were arriving and catching up with one another. I was glad to have your agenda and a copy of the materials related to the evening's work. Many thanks for providing those. You suggested that I observe your teaching strategies and how students were engaged with the class. You cautioned that the group was not talkative and many are attending class after a full day of courses and/or Internships.

I found the class of about 25 students to be livelier than you predicted. I appreciated that you introduced me to the group and asked me to explain my work. The students seemed genuinely interested in the CTL and the fact that you invited a senior colleague to your class. I sensed a high degree of comfort in the room and no self-consciousness about my presence. Students were comfortable with one another and with you – they volunteered responses to your questions, snacked as they participated, and quietly exited for a break as needed.

This was a very interesting class to observe since I saw how you put into your own practice the strategies being discussed that students would eventually apply to their own instructional work in K-12 settings. From the start of my observation I was alert to how you made concepts transparent to your students. I noticed this first when you explained my visit as a peer review and an opportunity to reflect on your teaching, much as you are encouraging your students to confer and reflect on their teaching and learning opportunities. When you explained the evening's agenda, you did so by relating concepts to the artifacts students will be including in their portfolios. You persistently made transparent the reasons for each activity scheduled for the evening. I noticed this as you transitioned from one topic or activity to the next and as you amplified a principle under discussion by seeking students' examples from their field observations and experiences. When you set students up for an upcoming assignment to interview a teacher, you made very clear the criteria that would be used to assess their interviews.

For the last two fall semesters students in my graduate class, Teaching for Learning in the University (EdPsy 7647) have observed in sections of your Classroom Management class. They've marveled at the variety of instructional strategies you use, so I was pleased to attend a class where I could see this variety for myself. You began the evening with a quiz assessing their comprehension of the assigned reading, cleverly explained that it would not be graded, and gave students five minutes to complete it. Then, students were instructed to work in groups of two or three reach consensus on their responses. Everyone participated in this activity which set you up for a discussion of theories of motivation and engagement. As you questioned the class about their responses, you related their contributions to material discussed previously, pulled examples from their observations, and offered examples of your own. Students were engaged and thoughtful about the implications of each conceptual approach. The quiz included different question types and led to more than one opportunity for students to confer with one another. In the first 90 minutes of class, instruction revolved around the quiz, case studies, discussion, and application questions.

Many of the topics under discussion allowed you to question students on related or previously discussed concepts, and to integrate into discussion ideas that seemed thematic to classroom management. Thus, students conveyed their understanding of cultural differences and learning styles, topics that appeared to me to be familiar to the class. You use an inviting questioning strategy that attracts a variety of responses to your open-ended questions. You move around the room using proximity to let students know that you are attentive to them. The slides that are projected provide anchors that students use to follow the agenda or question under discussion. Students were engaged as they responded directly to you and as they initiated or volunteered a comment. They responded individually to you, worked in pairs or small groups, and followed the patterns you set for participation.

Thank you for the opportunity to observe Classroom Management. You employ a broad array of strategies to engage and assess what students comprehend. I am glad to have had the opportunity to observe the active, participatory class that my graduate students have described.

Sincerely,

Margaret Cohen, Ph.D.
Director and Associate Provost for Professional Development