

Session Title:

Connecting Schools, Families and Community: Development and Implementation of Outreach Materials and Events Focused on Family Engagement

MSP Project Name:

NURTURES (Networking Urban Resources with Teachers and University to enRich Early Childhood Science)

Presenters:

Lacey Strickler-Eppard, The University of Toledo
Tamara Lemle, Apple Tree Nursery School
Charlene Czerniak, The University of Toledo
Scott Molitor, The University of Toledo
Robert Mendenhall, Toledo Public Schools

Authors:

Lacey Strickler-Eppard, The University of Toledo

Feedback Session**Strand 3****Summary:**

Our theory of change argues that young (PreK-3rd grade) children will learn core science concepts if they interact with teachers, family members and community partners during (1) Exploration of science through investigations (science and engineering practices), (2) Discussion that facilitates literacy skills and discourse competencies and (3) activities and interactions that make Thinking visible. This feedback session is focused on the development and early implementation of the outreach components of the project. Take home family packs and learning experiences were developed to follow a learning progression of science content and practices to build upon each experience and strategies to encourage discourse among family members. Our discussion will focus on the development, implementation and the artifacts produced from initial outreach components.

Section 1: Description of product, tool, process, curriculum, or instrument:

The outreach components of the *NURTURES* grant consist of family activity packs, science events held within the community, and one-minute public television spots. The developed learning experiences align to science content standards and scientific and engineering practices being taught in the classroom. These learning experiences are meant to enhance and extend the material learned within the classroom providing students an additional opportunity to experience the science content and practices within another context.

These experiences have been structured around an **E**xplore, **D**iscuss and **T**hink (EDT) learning philosophy that encourages families to explore science activities, discuss these activities and reflect on what occurred (think). We also developed and implemented

a conversation strategy - Chat Card Question Starters aimed at enhancing discourse among the family members during the community events. The learning experiences were also developed to follow a slow progression of science content and scientific and engineering practices to build upon each experience.

Moreover, the goal is to engage the families with the material that the student is experiencing in the classroom and to enhance the discourse among the family members in relation to the science content and practices. Discourse is critical to making thinking visible in classrooms.

Section 2: Question, issue, or challenge that is the primary focus of the session:

Little empirical research exists to assist us in developing a learning progression for the outreach components of our project. During the feedback session we plan on focusing on this question: How can we adjust the family packs, events and television spots to provide a good springboard for families to further explore, discuss and think about classroom science content and scientific and engineering practices at home?

Section 3: Types of people who you think might be most interested in discussing this and offering feedback:

The types of people who would be most interested in discussing this topic would be: K-12 Teachers, K-12 Administrators, higher education ED faculty, researchers and evaluators.

Section 4: How will you structure this session? What is your plan for participant interaction?

We will begin the session with an example of the learning experiences that are typical of a community event or family activity pack so that the attendees can experience these first hand. We will follow this with a brief presentation/discussion that describes these outreach components and their development. We will ask participants to break into groups of three to five and we will hand out packets of materials and artifacts that adequately represent the outreach components of the project. We will include a document that lists our main question: How can we adjust the family packs, events and television spots to provide a good springboard for families to further explore, discuss and think about classroom science content and scientific and engineering practices at home?

We will ask our attendees to think about these questions as they review the materials and we will then ask the group to come together for a roundtable discussion about these questions. Before the end of the session the presenters will hand out a half sheet of paper and ask the participants to write two brief sentences that encompass their suggestions for the development and implementation of the outreach components. These suggestions will be taken back to our NURTURES team and will be discussed and incorporated, where appropriate, to further develop the family packs, events and television spots.