

## ***Ag Fundamentals***

*Development: The Teacher knows how children grow. The teacher understands how children with a broad range of ability learn and provides instruction that helps their intellectual, social and personal development*

**Date Experience Completed:** Fall 2010

**Describe your educational artifact:** During my student teaching experience, I taught an Ag fundamentals class. My artifact is a letter written by the special education teacher who was one of the co-teachers in the class. She reflected my ability for students to improve their intellectual, social and personal development. I also included a worksheet of the egg and the parts students had to identify as well as a copy of the chart students recorded the incubator environmental controls at (heat and humidity).

**Alignment: Wisconsin Teaching Standard 2 Development – The teacher knows how children grow**

*This artifact aligns with standard two, development: the teacher understands how children with a broad range of ability learn and provides instruction that helps their intellectual, social, and personal development.*

During my student teaching experience I taught a course called Ag fundamentals. The students enrolled in the class were students who functioned at lower levels and could not learn in a normal classroom lecture setting. Students in this class were all ranges of abilities from those who had problems staying on task to those who needed social interaction. In this class there were two students who were severely autistic. Every day included new accomplishments especially for the autistic students and activities to engage all of the students. I feel the goal for students in this class was to learn basic life skills and knowledge related to agriculture. Such as abilities students gained were caring for tropical fish, to incubating eggs and caring for chicks. Students also built bird houses to learn wood working skills and safety while working with equipment. Students learned how to plant and grow lettuce. During the course of the year students learn how to cook with lettuce and other plants grown in the hydroponics units. Students also practice filleting fish and learn other valuable life skills.

This course helped provide instruction for students to develop intellectually through activities we provide. For example students in this class weighed chicks each day and determined the rate of gain. Prior to the chick hatching students candled eggs every class period and drew pictures of their growth on daily charts. Students completed a worksheet on labeling the development of the chick while inside the egg. Students also learn how to cook meals and other units of basic survival through the processing of fish and shrimp.

Socially students develop by having class time to connect with their peers who have similar learning disabilities. Students in this class can meet friends and compete with other students who are at their learning level. Students and I discuss how an egg develops, why it is important to process fish, and how cooking together can be fun and rewarding. Students also learn how to work together to complete large tasks like landscaping projects around the school.

Ag fundamental students develop their personal skills through the ability to learn basic units of adulthood in relation to functioning on their own in American society. Students learn different recipes, and how to weed and care for a flower garden. Ag fundamental students can

watch lettuce grow, see different stages of development and the uses when mature. They can see how it can be clipped and eaten as well as how it can have multiple crops. In Ag Fundamentals, students, in essence, can see how to grow food and bring it to the table for human consumption.

### **UW-Platteville - Knowledge, Skills, and Disposition Standards: KSD2.c – Manages Classroom Procedures.**

During the time I spent teaching the Ag Fundamentals class, I had to constantly keep students motivated by assigning them to small groups in which they could teach each other and learn how to work together. For example I had one group of students may be filling up fish tanks and testing the water for the amounts of nitrates, nitrites, pH and other important factors. Another group of students would label eggs for the incubator while another group of students will be emptying the manure and filtration barrels for the hydroponics units. When working in their groups student developed skis which help them work together more and helped the classroom run smoothly.

### **Secondary KSD Alignments:**

- KSD1.b – Demonstrates knowledge of students
- KSD1.f – Assesses students learning
- KS2.e – Organizes physical space
- KS3.c Engages students in learning

### **Explain what you learned about teaching/learning from this experience:**

From teaching, I have learned that simple things like basic activities for example, labeling a picture with the parts of the egg or showing pictures is the best way for high school students in this lower level class to learn. Students need hands on activities as they are not able to learn through formal assessment. Many students learn better when they are assessed over the skills they master. If I can teach students how to hatch and grow chickens or fillet fish, I can teach students life skills that will help them later in life. Through this experience, I learned that teaching can be hands on and does not have to be lecture or formally tested. Due to students lower learning levels they have a high inability to be patient and self-motivated. I learned that I need to keep students constantly busy with absolutely no free or slow time. Students in this class always have to be doing something hands on. Students who are not busy working on projects often gets into trouble by picking on other kids or getting into things they shouldn't. This class helps me recognize that in a normally functioning class, students may be self-motivated and there are particular individuals who need to constantly be kept busy on other projects to continually enhance their learning.

### **Explain what you learned about yourself as a prospective educator because of this experience.**

As a prospective educator, I learned that using group learning helps students teach themselves and think on a deeper level. I also learned that group learning helps a student who is struggling be taught by a student who succeeds with the same concept. I learned I can use group learning to

help students work on small projects and enhance critical thinking in my classroom. I also learned that I could enjoy looking up children activities online and doing fun activities like a maze of how the egg gets from the farm to the store. I learned that finding new and exciting activities is fun as these students often do similar lessons in their classes from year to year and that I have a wide variety of technological resources to help students learn the most basic information. I also realized that as an educator this helped me be better to relating material to other material for example while measuring how much the chick grows, I can compare that growth to a baby and show students that while babies are fragile and light weight like the chick they grow fast and gain durability to take care of themselves. It is these small simple aspects that I learned as an educator which I can use relate to students who need information for basic lifelong skills. As an educator I enjoy that I can continue to relate to students by enjoying learning with students