

Facilitating an Early Field Experience via a Regional Career and Technical Education Outreach Event for Underrepresented Students

Introduction

- Agricultural teacher education programs should provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to hone their knowledge and skills (Wells et al., 2018).
- Early-career teachers need a range of technical skills (Albritton & Roberts, 2020).
- Thus, opportunities to develop such skills are needed.
- Early field experiences (EFEs) help expose pre-service teachers to the realities of working with public school students (Wells et al., 2018).
- Perhaps an EFE that combines opportunities to practice teaching technical skills to others with engaging underrepresented students in selected aspects of Career and Technical Education (CTE) would be practical.



Project Phases / How it Works

- During the Spring 2021 semester, I began planning a grant-funded event with local educational cooperative personnel.
- Once SAU's portion of the grant funds (\$12,000.00) were allocated, I worked with 14 pre-service teachers to identify and plan six rotation activities.
- The six rotations included: (1) woodworking, (2) metalworking, (3) welding, (4) electrical circuit wiring, (5) vehicle maintenance, and (6) plasma cutting.
- I collaborated with the educational cooperative personnel, SAU personnel, and the 14 pre-service teachers to plan the event and divvy out responsibilities.
- The event took place on Friday, November 5, 2021.
- Eighty high school students from underrepresented backgrounds participated in the event. Each student completed three rotations.



Implications, Future Plans, Advice, & Costs

- Once the event concluded, I met with the 14 pre-service teachers who led the rotation activities and debriefed.
- They reported that despite the issues they encountered, they enjoyed the opportunity to teach actual high school students.
- They further shared ideas for improving both their own knowledge and skill sets and future iterations of the event.
- Funding permitting, I plan to continue hosting this event for the foreseeable future. I found that the pre-service teachers gained much from the event experience.
- I recommend that other agricultural teacher educators explore opportunities to use events such as this as EFE activities for their pre-service teachers.
- It cost approximately \$12,000.00 to support this event.
- These funds supported the acquisition of tools, equipment, and materials that will have lasting impacts beyond the event.

References

Albritton, M. C., & Roberts, T. G. (2020). Agricultural technical skills needed by entry level agriculture teachers: A modified Delphi study. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 61(1), 140-151. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2020.01140>

Wells, T., Smalley, S. W., & Rank, B. D. (2018). Early field experience course students' perceptions of school-based agricultural education laboratory environments. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 59(3), 243-257. <https://doi.org/10.5032/jae.2018.03243>