

Summer Recreation Program

Date of Experience: Summer of 2010

Description of Experience:

As one of my teaching experiences, I was a day camp counselor at a park board sponsored, inner-city recreational program. This program was a six week long experience for girls and boys in the Rock Island/Milan area who were between the ages of 5 and 12. The camp lasted from 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. and took place at Ridgewood Elementary School. This artifact includes our program philosophy as well as dates and times, our service providers, and a list of several activities. I was one of six counselors at the site and was responsible for organizing activities, serving lunch, handling disciplinary issues, and keeping the environment safe and healthy for every camper. This overview of the recreation program helped when making activities, knowing rules, and using community programs to get the kids involved.

Wisconsin Teacher Standard Alignment:

This artifact aligns with Standard 10: Teachers are connected with other teachers and the community. *The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents and agencies in the larger community to support pupil learning, the students' well-being and acts with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.*

The summer recreation program that I was involved with shows my ability to connect with parents, the community and my fellow camp counselors in order to ensure learning and wellbeing at our camp. I worked with parents on a weekly basis, keeping them updated on their child's behavior and participation at the camp. It was my job to be honest and helpful when I talked to parents about their child's behavior or progress at the camp and in our daily activities. When it came to disciplinary issues I had to be fair and abide by the rules our staff had set forth. Keeping this consistent attitude and following the same regulations for every child reflected my ability to manage the group. It also set a general attitude for the camp and the kids knew what was expected of them and what the consequences would be for not following the set rules. Parents were also welcomed to come and help out on special event days, such as carnival day or 4th of July celebration. The activities that the children took part in at the camp were made possible through local organizations including the Red Cross, Fire Department, and 4-H program. Each day, a different group would come in and engage the kids in activities that helped to expand their knowledge while also allowing them to have fun. For example, the Red Cross would do a healthy foods lesson and incorporate it into a relay race. When the community organizations were not present, my fellow counselors and I were responsible for providing activities that allowed the kids to engage in several areas including sports, arts and crafts, reading, writing and how to follow rules. Overall, with the help of the parents, community businesses and organizations as well as my fellow camp counselors, I was able to provide an ideal learning environment for the kids attending the camp. Being able to work with the

community is a vital part of becoming a teacher. It is also a vital part of the growth of each student. By becoming involved with community members at a young age they are able to see what kinds of positive activities they can become a part of. Many of the kids at this camp have a shrinking number of role models to look up to and forming a bond with community organizations each week helps provide more of those. Many of the kids discover unknown talents, interests and leadership abilities that they never knew they had through simply engaging in activities each week with these community groups, which is incredible. If as a teacher, you can successfully collaborate with others to strengthen the learning abilities of your students, as well as help strengthen the community by teaching skills such as teamwork, dedication, hard work and perseverance, then not only are the students benefitting but the community as well. It is important to remember that our students will one day be making the decisions for our community and hopefully they will want to take a positive, active role in doing so.

This artifact further aligns with:

Standard 2- Teachers know how children grow.

Standard 4- Teachers know how to teach.

Standard 5- Teachers know how to manage a classroom.

UW-Platteville School of Education Knowledge, Skill, Disposition Statement Alignment:

This artifact aligns with KSD4.f Shows Professionalism. This alignment is accurate because I was able to participate in staff decision making and be highly proactive in serving students, working to assure that all students, particularly those traditionally underserved, have an opportunity for success both in and out of the school setting.

My campers were able to engage in a variety of activities, due in large part to the community involvement we had, as well as parental involvement. We engaged in sports to further develop motor skills for the younger children and to emphasize and teach teamwork for the older children. We worked on arts and crafts to develop artistic thinking for all age levels. A carnival fun day was organized specifically for the campers at my site by fellow counselors and I as an end of summer celebration. In order to make this a reality, we wrote a letter to several local businesses for donations to make our day a success. The outpouring of donations and help that we received allowed us to give the campers something they deserved. As I stated before many of these children come from underprivileged communities and backgrounds, which made this carnival day, one of the highlights of their summer.

Secondary Alignment:

KSD4.c

Personal Reflection:

What I learned about teaching/learning from this experience

I was given a job opportunity that allowed me to learn more about being a teacher than most lecture-based classes. I was able to work with local businesses and organizations as well as parents and staff members to ensure that each child was getting the most out of their camp experience. I was also able to work with an extremely ethnically diverse group of children, traditionally those who are underserved in society. I plan to teach in an urban setting and this experience as a recreation program leader allowed me to be exposed to the kinds of children and families that I may be working with in the future. I learned that all children have different needs and in order to allow them to succeed in their environment, it is my job to do whatever I can for them to learn and develop. By using resources such as the community and parents, I allowed the children new learning opportunities and I made a lasting connection with the community.

What I learned about myself as a prospective educator from this experience

During this experience, I learned that in order for children to get involved and increase their passion for learning, it is vital to incorporate local organizations and parents into your lesson plan. I believe that all children learn differently and in order to address their different learning styles, I need to broaden my resources. It is my goal as a prospective educator to provide an environment that fosters growth and opportunity for success. In order to do this successfully, I must know how to work with my colleagues, parents of my students, and community members and organizations. Their influences will help make the students well rounded people and hopefully create a positive impact on the community.