



Minnesota State University Moorhead

news

from home

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News From Home is a publication from the Field Experiences office at Minnesota State University Moorhead. This newsletter pertains to first year teachers who have graduated from Minnesota State. The contents include articles, lesson plans, fun ideas, games, inspirational quotes, and tips for a new teacher. Our goal is to assist you in your first year teaching venture.



In The News

Teaching with Technology by Adam Waxier states that telecommunications add to more effective teaching and can better equip students to learn. Telecommunications can assist teachers in presenting material to the classroom. He also mentions that the internet is beneficial to a student's education. It is important for students to use time on the internet with more efficiency. He explains that even though teaching computer skills to students may be overwhelming, it can be done as long as teachers use certain strategies in presenting the material. Here's the link to the article.

<http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/pages/4228.shtml>

"If you do not hope, you will not find what is beyond your hopes."

St. Clement of Alexandria



Lesson Plan

Science Experiment

FISH IN A BOTTLE by Judy Schneider

Primary Subject - Science

Secondary Subjects - Science

Grade Level - 6 - 8 (adaptable)

PROBLEM: Can I raise small fish in a closed system in a gallon bottle?

RESEARCH: Go to a store that sells fish and find out what fish need to live. Be sure to get the Bibliography information from the person you interview. This aquarium can be self-sustaining. But you will have to find out what to do to start it right.

HYPOTHESIS: What do you think you will have to do to make your aquarium self-sustaining?

MATERIALS NEEDED: A one-gallon jar (glass or plastic, any shape) - a restaurant is a good source for a jar from pickles, olives, or cherries, Gravel - about 1 ½ pounds, 1 adult guppy, 1 very small snail - you may get one with the plants, but make sure you have only one in the jar, fish food, and aquatic plants - sagittaria, eelgrass, anacharis.

PROCEDURE:

1. Wash the jar well
2. Fill three-quarters full with room-temperature tap water. Let stand for at least two days, uncovered.
3. To clean the gravel, place in a strainer and rinse with water. Do not use soap.
4. Transfer the gravel to the bottom of the jar. You should have a 2-inch layer.
5. Put the aquarium in a spot where it will get sunlight, but not direct sunlight, it is too hot.
6. Add plants and fish to the aquarium. Even if the plants do not have roots, push the stems into the gravel.
7. Observe your aquarium for 28 days. Make careful observations each day. Many days you may only observe that there was no change.
8. Enrichment: Get a male and a female guppy for your aquarium instead of only one guppy. Feeder guppies are very inexpensive and will work well for this experiment.
9. Enrichment: Be sure the jar you get has a lid. After about one week seal the jar with the lid and do not open it for the remaining 21 days of your experiment.

DATA: Make a data table to record your observations for the 28 days.

CONCLUSION: This is not optional. You must explain what you learned by doing this activity. Remember that you must answer the question you asked in your original problem statement





This is an article written by Mike Martin, principal at Hawley High School

I was so nervous I cannot believe I even remember this. I was a student who taught at Jamestown, North Dakota. During the workshop days prior to school, it was announced that the school would be utilizing assertive discipline and that all teachers would be trained. This seemed like a good idea, possibly. School started. I was with an excellent veteran teacher. She was petite in stature and not even a little bit imposing in any way. After a few days, I wondered if she were ever going to have the “opportunity” to put a name on the board.

It never happened in the weeks I spent there. I talked about this experience recently at our morning book club meeting. A group of us are reading “What Great Teachers Do Differently.” The author, Todd Whitaker, did not get beyond Chapter 2 before he made what I consider his most direct and important statement in a subtitle: “It’s People, Not Programs”. Think about that for a moment. Gregory Michie was recently at MSUM. He wrote the book “Holler if You Hear Me.” Mr. Michie made mention that if there were ten rules listed somewhere that would change schools and make them effective, everybody would have these rules engaged. There are not ten rules. There might not even be one or two.

In my tenure around education, I have seen Outcome Based Education and many other programs come and go. They are “this day’s truth” and they die an irreverent death. There was very little useful residue left after their passing. Think about No Child Left Behind. It appears this landmark legislation may be gasping its last breath. Why? It’s all about programs and has very little to do with people. If effective and long-lasting change is going to occur, our focus needs to be on people. It needs to be on how we teach, not what we teach.

Whittaker asks the question, “If every teacher in a school were like the best teachers, would that be a great school?” The answer is obvious. Of course it would be. It would be a great school even if no single program were ever introduced. This is great news for people embarking on a teaching career. Much of the knowledge needed is highly practical. In fact, it’s been consistently practiced by great teachers for years. The key is to find out what these wonderful educators do. If I were starting over, there are three books I would read prior to student teaching and certainly before my first job interview. They are “What Great Teachers Do Differently” (Todd Whitaker), “Teaching Outside the Box” (LouAnne Johnson), and “Best Practice” (Zemelan, Daniels and Hyde). If I were the king of education, every teacher prep program would utilize these three resources.

Great teachers will figure much of the content out, by why wait? Finally, at our breakfast club meeting, I shared a couple lines from Lee Colan who wrote “Inspire.” His words coincide greatly with Wittaker (people, not programs) and gives all of us a charge. Colan writes, “...when you inspire students to see and develop their own gifts, you launch their journey to personal, not just educational, success. In short, you make a difference to those students...and they make a difference in the world. All of this positive impact starts with a connection—a connection between you and your students. Connecting with students is a prerequisite for inspiration—no connection, no inspiration.”

DID YOU KNOW...

To renew your MN teaching license, you must have 125 clock hours of Continuing Education. You have 5 years to complete the requirement. If you are currently teaching, your school's union rep will have renewal information for you. If you are subbing, one of the schools in which you regularly sub will help you out. Teachers can begin collecting hours by attending staff development opportunities, taking classes and going to conferences. For more information go to the Minnesota Education website at <http://education.state.mn.us>. Click on BOT, then Continuing Education-Renewal.



Game Zone

Capture the Flag is an active game that involves cooperation and teamwork.

- Number of players: between 10-50
- Time limit: 45-90 minutes.
- Materials needed: two flags

The object of the game is to capture the opposing team's flag and carry it to one's own side without being touched by an opponent. The game consists of dividing players into two teams. A captain should be appointed for each team. Each team hides its flag in a territory where the flag is reachable. Each team chooses a "jailer" and picks a site for the jail. Everyone else is assigned roles for the team. Roles for the games are scouts and territorial guards. Each team sends members into the other teams territory in attempts to find and capture their flag. If any player is touched by an opponent in the opposing team's territory, he has to go to the jail of the opposing team. A player who is jailed can be set free by a teammate by reaching the jail and touching him. Neither player is safe from being captures until they return to their own territory. When a person safely captures the other team's flag and brings it back to their own territory, their team wins.



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