

Becky McDonald

CAWS Education Exchange Narrative

REHAU week of 6/9/2014

My philosophy of teaching is always being amended, made stronger blended with new ideas, innovations, and experiences. My experience at REHAU made possible by Cullman Area Workforce Solutions (CAWS) was outstanding! CAWS works as a partnership between business/industry, economic development, industrial relations, education, and social services in an effort to enhance and improve workforce development outcomes in meeting the employment needs of the Cullman area. In this unique professional development experience, as a teacher I became the student.

My week began with a tour of the plant. Now keep in mind, my only plant experience would be watching *I Love Lucy* on the assembly line in the chocolate factory. As a lifelong Cullman County resident, I had no idea what all was going on right in my backyard. To say I was impressed would be an understatement. As the week progressed we spent time in various areas of the plant observing, questioning, learning, and "working". As I talked with a young man in paints he shared with me how he was proud to be able to say he had a part in making a Mercedes. REHAU is not just providing a product, but is giving a gift to this community by providing a work environment in which employees can take pride in what they do while making a good living. I entered this week thinking of GED students and the average "C" students as the workforce at REHAU and there is a place for them to have a career there. As the week progressed, we shadowed in the various departments and talked to several employees. I realized that REHAU is a place for our elite honor students to excel as well and that is exciting to me.

My responsibility, as an effective teacher, is not only to teach facts, but also to empower each student with the ability, the skill, and the desire to be a productive citizen. After this experience, I will focus on several key elements in my classroom to help students retain a job in their future workplace. First and foremost is to address the importance of attendance, concentrate on written and verbal communication skills, technology skills, problem solving, attention to details, following directions, ability to work with others, and to take pride in whatever you do. It is important to enable each individual student to develop to his or her fullest potential for a life of fulfillment. I hope to instill basic skills, good time management, self-motivation, positive attitudes, respect, and discipline that will transfer into their future workplace.

I would like to say thank you to CAWS and REHAU for this very unique real world experience. It has opened my eyes to a new avenue in which I can guide and instruct young citizens. The future for our Cullman County students looks bright!