

Selena Skipper

CAWS Educator Exchange

Narrative Report

June 20, 2014

I Can See Clearly Now

Through the CAWS program, I have been fortunate enough to work in a variety of industries. This year my placement was at Wallace State College and EPSCO Staffing Inc. Unique to my previous experiences, this year allowed me to understand how all the components of a community work in unison toward a common goal – preparing students for successful transitions into the workforce.

As a Career and Technical teacher, I certainly enjoyed spending the first three days of my week visiting the various Career Technical programs at Wallace State College. It was exciting to visit with students from my very own school that were spending their summer taking advantage of dual-enrollment scholarship programs in the Culinary and Pre-Engineering programs. It was truly a win-win situation as these students were both enthused about what they were doing and anxious for me to see on what they were working. John Wilson, Department Chair of the Culinary Arts, was courteous enough to allow me to sample the delicious meal that one of our students prepared and finally, I witnessed a true application of Geometry when visiting Mr. Todd Hardman's Pre-Engineering program. Each instructor that I met during my tenure at Wallace State supplied me with resources (hard copies and web-based) and offered to assist my program at Fairview High School in a variety of ways. I am very excited at the prospect of Mr. Joe Hendrix, Industrial Electronics Dept. Chair, visiting my high school and sharing with my students about the industrial robots.

Additionally, I look forward to working with Christine Wiggins, PAVES Project Coordinator, and her team of Career Coaches in the upcoming year. Last year's job shadowing program that was spear-headed by Career Coach, Lisa Farnsworth of WSCC was a huge success at our school. It was great to be able to discuss with the team other possible services that might be made available to high school students.

While higher-learning facilities work closely with industry, staffing agencies also have strong relationships with these very same industries. The last two days of my CAWS experience was spent with EPSCO Staffing, Inc. I learned that EPSCO actually facilitates the supplying of workers to many of the very same industries that I have visited in previous years of my CAWS experience. So now, I have not only observed higher education, industry, but also what is oftentimes the liaison between the two.

While hard skills may be the first requirement for a job, I have always believed that soft skills may help one get or keep a job. My experience at EPSCO allowed me to actually observe a wide range of soft skills from a diverse population. Nancy, Ben and Belle answered ALL of my questions and supplied me with a variety of samples of pre-employment testing. I can now better relay to students local employer expectations and what is involved in the employment process.

Finally, thank you to CAWS for providing a venue by which high school educators can build relationships and form alliances with both higher education and industry. It is through experiences like CAWS that

high school educators become better equipped to prepare students for the workforce. Also, thank you to Wallace State and EPSCO Staffing, Inc. for a great week and a wonderful experience.