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C.A.W.S. Narrative

Wallace State Community College / Quality Staffing Solutions, INC.

Week: 6/09/14-6/13/14

As a participant of the CAWS Educator Exchange Program, I spent three days touring the Wallace State Community College (WSCC) Vocational and Academic departments and two days with Quality Staffing Solutions, INC. Both experiences gave me insight to the current demands on young and older adults in choosing the right field of study to ensure they are vendible in the highly competitive job market. Through my observations I noted the skills and values that I believe to be significant in preparing students for college and careers. Among the most visible of these attributes are communication, both verbal and written, personal grooming, and career knowledge. As an educator of elementary students, my goal is to take this new learned knowledge and develop a curriculum that introduces and builds on developing a well-rounded student who will become a viable employee.

The first skill I noticed that was lacking in future employees was communication. Throughout my tour of WSCC, instructors pinpointed the need for students to be able to communicate through different means. Deborah Hoover, RN, MSN, CRNP, Program Director, in the Health Nursing Division at Wallace, emphasized the importance of knowing how to communicate with not only their patients in the medical field but also their co-workers to ensure that quality care is given to the patients. Mrs. Hoover took us to view the new Simulation Center for the nursing training program. This is a hands-on training facility where the students participate in real-life medical situations as they would at a hospital, clinic, etc. The most interesting focus of this center in my opinion was what happened outside the patient's room. There are debriefing rooms in the simulation center where the students and instructor meet before, during and after a scenario is conducted. During this time, the instructor uses visual images and even recorded video of the students during the role play to discuss correct and incorrect procedures conducted. This type of communication allows the students to see themselves as others view their actions. Mrs. Hoover pointed out that some of the students had no idea of an action they did unconsciously. In my opinion, this is a quality program that should be implemented throughout the education world. Students would be more aware of their learning if instruction occurred in this type of setting. While at Quality Staffing Solutions, the receptionist spent much of her time helping the unemployed fill out applications correctly. I was amazed at the questions that people would ask. A majority of the applicants could not fill out the forms independently. When interviewed by a Quality Staffing Solutions employee, the applicant did not answer the questions in a coherent way. As an educator, I will begin with my kindergarten students instructing in oral and written communication, emphasizing the important

of clear, concise information. Scenarios will be used to simulate the job searching process. Each grade level will add more depth to the process of applying for a job.

The second attribute that I noticed a deficiency of in the college and employment office was personal appearance. Young and even older adults gave the impression that they had rolled out of bed and went on their way without choosing to change their attire. In my opinion, first impression whether in a classroom or at an employment agency, provides an insight into a person's work ethics and values. It is not the name of the designer of your outfit but the actual outfit you are wearing that matters. If we expect to have professional people then we need to expect professional grooming. Even though as an educator I cannot tell students how to dress, I can conduct lessons about the need for cleanliness and appropriate attire for the environments that a person enters.

The third and final aspects that I noticed while observing was lack of knowledge about the needed skills for a job and the student's inability to determine a career to enter. The instructors at WSCC reiterated how students entered a program having no idea what they would do with the degree once finished. I was amazed at the technical programs that utilize a variety of math applications. In the past, I have heard educators tell students to enter the technical field if they were weak in math. That information is inaccurate. The technical programs require higher order thinking skills in addition to the knowledge of subject matter especially math. When applicants came into the employment service, the majority of the people could not connect their skills to a preferred job; some wanted a job they were not qualified to complete. Watching the staff at Quality Staffing Solutions work with the applicants to match them with appropriate jobs helped me see the importance of introducing careers and the required skills to students at an early age. My curriculum plan will include the introduction of careers, the required job skills, and the research skills needed to help students find compatible careers for their interests.

Overall, my experiences at Wallace State Community College and Quality Staffing Solutions, INC were the best professional development for connecting the new Alabama Course of Study to the work force. Using the *Leader in Me* ideas along with the knowledge I gained through the CAWS program, I will develop a new sequence of skills incorporating the course of study standards utilizing career/work related scenarios to create an experience that students will remember later in choosing their own career.