

Standard 10

Artifact: A letter from my supervisor while I was a Girl Scout Leader for Junior Troop 292

Date Experienced Completed: School year 2007 - 2008

Description: During the 2007 through 2008 school year I was the Girl Scout Leader for Junior Troop 292. I worked with girls in the 4th through 6th grades, in Shullsburg, Wisconsin. The artifact is a letter from my direct supervisor who I reported to during my time as a troop leader. My responsibilities included preparing meetings twice a month, that ensured a fun and safe learning environment, and helping the girls build character and skills for success in the real world.

Wisconsin Teacher Standard Alignment: I believe this experience best aligns with Wisconsin Teaching Standard Ten, "The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support pupil learning and well-being and acts with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.

As a Girl Scout Leader for Junior Troop 292, I had to attend seminars every other month with other Girls Scout Leaders to discuss issues and ideas for a meaningful curriculum. During these meetings I participated by giving examples of the ideas I had to fulfill certain badges that our troop was currently working on. I gained valuable insight from other Troop Leaders in how they also structured their lessons, and we would even discuss management ideas with disruptive students. These seminars allowed the leaders to create meaningful relationships with other Leaders from around the area.

Girl Scouts requires two adult leaders at every meeting, and because I was the lone volunteer, I had to recruit parents to also attend the meetings. I created a sign - up sheet and sent letters home to the parents requesting their help at the meetings, and what would be expected of them at these meetings. At times it was difficult to get volunteers, and it also seemed certain parents volunteered more than others, but it also gave me valuable insight as to how much parents are involved with their children. This experience shows how I fostered a relationship with the parents of the students.

Another example of having to foster a relationship with the parents was through the local Cookie Sales. I admitted that in order to run a successful cookie campaign, I needed to rely on the parents to help with collecting totals, calling them in to me so I could order the correct amount, and then to help sort and deliver the cookies. I sent home letters to each parent outlining what I needed for volunteers, and readily had 3 parents willing to help with the sorting. I feel this is because of communicating my needs via letters, and being explicit in what was required, the parents knew what was expected and

were willing to help.

While working on our Horse Lovers badge, we needed to interact with live animals. My students had previously worked on worksheets and discussions and were getting excited to finish up this badge. So I contacted Shenandoah Riding Stables in Galena, Illinois, and discussed with them what I was wanting out of the girls riding experience. I asked them to go over the parts of a horse, the rules around horses, and proper riding attire, and skills. The Shenandoah Riding center did a great job with my clear expectations, and the girls had a wonderful time. This would be an example of working with agencies in the larger community that supported pupil learning, as well as their well being.

Our troop also visited a local park, and discussed who uses the park, how important the park is to our community, and what happens when the park is littered with garbage. The girls readily cleaned the park, and explained how the park should be enjoyed by all.

An example of how the teacher acts with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner was when I had one particular girl who insisted on keeping her cell phone on during meetings, used it during meetings, and also made other students feel bad about not having a cell phone. One of my requirements was that for the hour and a half of our meetings, cell phones should be on silent. This particular student said she had to have her phone on this particular day because her mom was going to be calling to let her know where to go after our meeting. I did allow her the leeway to leave the phone on during our meeting. However, she continued to play with it disrupting the lesson at the time, and I asked her to put it in her book bag where it could still be heard, but not seen. She said she did not have to do that, and I simply said that if she did not want to follow my request than she should call her mother and tell her the meeting was over for her. She did put the phone away. Later on as part of our meeting we were taking a walk to the local park, where she had made a comment to another student that she wasn't good enough to have a cell phone. The student was upset, and I brought all the girls together and talked about how important treating everyone with respect is. How words can hurt other people, and what appropriate responses should be. I then asked the troop to make a group decision on cell phones, and as a group they decided all cell phones must be turned off during the meeting and kept in their book bags-no exceptions. I think giving the students a role in the decision making process allowed them to experience integrity, fairness and ethical decision-making skills.

UW - Platteville School of Education Knowledge, Skill and Disposition

Statement Alignment: This experience best aligns with KSD4.c
Communicates with Families: The candidate is able to provide frequent, sensitive and appropriate information to parents and students about student's positive and negative progress within the instructional program and successfully engages families in the educational process when appropriate.

Being a part of this after-school program gave me a lot of experience working with parents of the students. I had to rely on the parents to participate in volunteering for meetings, to shuttle the students to weekend workshops, to chaperone at these workshops and help with cookie sales and delivery. I learned how to write letters home to parents, not only for volunteer sign-up sheets, but I also wrote home updates on what we were planning on doing in the upcoming weeks. I also learned that without good planning, prodding or good communication sometimes things fall through the cracks as when I didn't get the permission slips back in time to go to an overnight musical at UW-Platteville and the girls were disappointed.

This experience also aligns with: KSD2.a Creates an Environment of Respect and Rapport

What I learned about teaching/learning from this experience:

During this experience I learned that each level of interaction requires a different type of communication. Whether it is building a relationship with colleagues, with the parents, or with the students, each level has a different requirement for communicating, different tact, but yet all have similarities in still treating each one with respect and fairness. I discovered all those levels are important in supporting the student in their learning process, and all are examples for the students both good and bad. I understand how important a student's parent is to the student's learning, and could also see how it affected a student if the parent was absent. Parents are eager to help their children, and their encouragement shows in how the students react when the parent is involved in the lesson or the activity. I appreciate how important it is to have peers to bounce ideas off of, to discuss alternative activities, or just for support. I also recognize how important the community is to the student, as well as helping the students learn they are important to their community.

What I learned about myself as a prospective educator as a result of this experience/artifact:

I learned what communication tools work and did not work. Verbally asking for parental help did not work, sending letters home outlining the help I needed, what was expected and when it was needed did work. I discovered that sending home monthly progress letters, indicating what we had finished, what we were working on, and where we were going helped the parents see how beneficial Girls Scouts is. It also helped the students to see where we were headed. In the future, in my classroom, I will have the students create their own progress reports, and that would show me what is important to the students, what they were proud of and where they wanted to go in future lessons. I realized that allowing the girls some democracy in their meetings, they took ownership of those meetings, and enforcement, and extrapolating that into my classroom will help my students take an active role in their learning and their education. Guiding the students to more independence is where I would like to head in the future as

an educator. Being a guide will give the students more real-world applications and useful tools to be successful in their future endeavors.