Investigating the Computer

Students in WLC Lapham Level 2 working with David Le Clair, have been spending the semester taking apart and reassembling computers.

With support from the MMSD’s Information Technology department, students have access to older, still functioning computers so students can really find out how a computer works. Students will be able to ultimately bring these computers home to help them in the future.

WLC thrive on blending critical classroom thinking with real-world vocational skill development. In Level 1 and 2 students are investigating many different career paths, and hands-on computer discovery is but one way to provide students a way to experiment in a number of professions to find the right one for them.

When asked about learning about the parts of a computer and taking computers apart, Juan Reyes wrote, “This was an experience you can’t get at a regular high school.”

By The Book

Students in WLC Lapham Level 1 put together a children’s book based on their volunteer experiences and their knowledge of childhood development.

After writing, illustrating and constructing the book, they brought the books to their volunteer sites as a thank you for the experience.
SAPAR

The Madison Children’s Museum and SAPAR have been granted funding from The Robert & Isabelle Bass Foundation to develop the “You Belong at the Museum” pilot project for our teen parents.

Our students will be attending a series of exploratory visits, educational sessions and interactive trainings with their babies at the museum. Students will gain valuable parenting experiences, skills and knowledge about infant development and begin to build a lasting partnership with the Madison Children’s Museum which includes a complimentary year membership for those who participate. Our hope is to develop lifelong accessibility to the museum and foster an ongoing relationship which will serve as a resource for these teen mothers now and in the future.

This quarter gives us the opportunity to use our field trips to further develop both MEL-Con and OPTIC (Overview, Parts, Title, Interrelationships and Conclusion) writing. Students can examine visual texts using both formats for effective analysis to build meaning from their observations. We are using exhibits on the UW Campus and the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMOCA) this quarter as examples.

In Social Studies last quarter we were able to celebrate the success of SAPAR students who honed their public speaking skills during our mock trial. They certainly impressed our visiting “judge,” attorney Michael Rosenberg from Community Justice, Inc. After the trial, several students wrote passionate letters to world leaders during Amnesty International’s “Write for Rights” campaign. At the end of this quarter, students will debate immigration issues. Meanwhile, they are developing strong skills in research and MEL-Con writing as they analyze how famous disasters have altered history.

SAPAR Student Voices

My name is Taylor Brent, former SAPAR student. Prior to coming to SAPAR I really hated math; I didn’t understand it and often found myself falling behind. After coming to SAPAR I started to understand math. Amanda really helped me and broke the work down for me to be able to understand. I recently started a new school and, while I know how to do the work, I still wish I could take Amanda with me for the new stuff I have to learn! Fortunately, I know I can always come back and ask Amanda if I have a question.

ROAD Memorial

This past quarter, ROAD Memorial students have been looking at their post secondary options. We went on a tour of the ITT campus where we did some hands on activities to give us a taste of the programs offered and how they could be applied to a degree and a career. We also toured Madison College (MATC) where we were able to see how students learn hands on skills in fields such as healthcare and media. Students were pretty excited to see what was available to them and know that they have many post-secondary options.

This next month we are looking at how to finance going to school as well as applying for programs and classes. We will be filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to find out what each student may qualify for so that they can finance their education. We will also be learning about how to budget our money to pay for the things we need as well as learn the skills needed to be financially savvy to pay for the things we want.

Three of our students have been awarded scholarships from both Summit Credit Union and Rubin for Kids. Marazh Munoz and Fabian Inguanzo both were awarded $500 towards tuition at Madison College after writing an essay to Summit. After being nominated by ROAD, Tierra Gibson won a $250 award towards taking a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) course from Rubin For Kids. We are extremely proud of them! They are taking charge of their future!
The Level 3 Driver’s Education Scholarship project is getting ready to move into the fundraising phase. The scholarship grew out of a student project highlighting the need to help low-income students pay for mandatory driver’s education classes. Subsequent student research on the need for this scholarship and found that cost is the primary barrier to obtaining driver’s licenses for teens from low-income families. Along the way, we have partnered with the Madison Police Department and the YWCA, and we now getting close to turning this student vision into a reality. Our project goal is to create a scholarship for a few high-achieving, low-income WLC students to get a scholarship to pay for driver’s education classes at a local private driving school. If you are interested in contributing or supporting this project, please contact Greg Miller at 204.4342 or gtmiller@madison.k12.wi.us.

Level 4 students created this program using the prompt “WLC at its best...”. Students combined their experiences into this one poem demonstrating collaborative content creation.

Work and Learn at Its Best...
- Gives me work experience and good people skills
- Helps me to graduate on time
- Is mostly drama-free
- Prepares me for college and everyday life

Work and Learn at Its Best...
- Started me on the right track with a job opportunity
- Helped me change my attitude toward teachers
- Helped me jump in front of 300 hundred people to get into Operation Fresh Start
- Made me more responsible

Work and Learn at Its Best...
- Helps me learn things that regular school didn’t teach me or provide for me
- Keeps me motivated and moving forward in life
- Helps me learn new things — exciting and important things
- Gives me people to trust.

Upon selecting a specific career path, student will work with the School Counselor to find the best training program and take all the necessary steps to enroll. Many times it is necessary to take a qualifying test for entrance into a specific program. If the scores are not sufficient, an alternate route will be mapped out to attain the skills necessary for entrance. Never allow that obstacle to deter your dreams.

Dependent upon progress toward graduation, students from all programs will receive assistance to register for post high school training and financial aid. I am always available as a resource to parents and students, in these very vital areas. Please feel free to call at anytime for an appointment. If I am not at my desk please leave a message and I will get right back as soon as I possibly can.

Paul Harshner
204.4225 pcharshner@madison.k12.wi.us

Counselor

WLC, AERO and SAPAR are all at various stages in using Career Cruising as the foundation for career planning. Many students have already completed the “CareerMatch” inventory to determine suggestions for careers that may fit their interests. They are also in the process of finding career options that are associated with their favorite subjects and/or skills. When students have located a number of career possibilities they are instructed in the process of discovering details for each career and narrowing the possibilities.
We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all our January Graduates. These young men and women continued to persevere to complete their graduation requirements. Many of these students have already begun their post secondary education and we are very proud of all they have accomplished.

We also would like to thank all the family and friends who assisted and continue to assist our students in making their dreams a reality. Your partnership with our dedicated staff is invaluable.

As we begin this second semester, we welcome new students and their families to our programs. We truly look forward to the many opportunities the students will experience as they continue to develop their academic, social emotional, and post secondary skills. You are in compassionate hands.

Hello, my name is Megan Miller and I am the new Social Worker for both WLC sites and AERO.

During first semester this year I was home with my baby and was fortunate to have Jill Galbraith return from retirement to cover my leave. She will be very missed and I am grateful for her work and guidance as I transition into my role.

I have been with the district since 2001 when I interned at Shabazz City High School while completing my masters in Social Work at the UW. It has been a wonderful, informative, and long awaited ten year journey to get back to alternative high school. I am so pleased to be with the wonderful people at the Innovative Education now!

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you believe I can be helpful to your student, your family, and yourself. Just a few of the things Madison’s School Social Workers are available and trained to assist with are:

- Help to remain in school and graduate
- Help students solve problems
- Assistance with attendance
- Assistance finding community services
- Assistance to parents on school and teen issues
- Assistance when a crisis occurs at school or home
- Conflict resolution
- Help with decision making about life issues such as avoiding the use of alcohol and other drugs
- Help if someone is in an abusive situation or violent relationship
- Help with friend and family relationships, loss, or mental health problems

We’re really proud of our students from last semester for a variety of reasons, but one of them is the fact that, as a group, they increased their rate of attendance by 15% compared to their previous placement! Way to go! Good attendance increases learning, adds structure to your day, and improves your chances of getting into your desired program, whether that is AERO, Shabazz, WLC, or ROAD.
AERO began our second semester by inviting fifteen new students to join our returning ten students. With additional students come not only new challenges but also new talents, personalities, and strengths. We are honored to have them join us for the remainder of the year and look forward to the possibilities that they bring!

As the year progresses, we will continue to work on community building, taking the students on more field trips, engaging in more academic work, and finding any way we can to cultivate our own professional innovation as well as the students’.

Finally, we would like to welcome Barb Arcand-Campbell as our new SEA (special education assistant). She has joined us from East High School, has been in the district a number of years, and is excited with the new opportunities that the Innovative Education team offers her. She is incredibly talented and we welcome her new and strong breadth of knowledge!

Teacher Jocelyn Lepinski teaches proper and safe knife skills.

Making healthy meals together weekly has promoted the AERO community, increased awareness of healthy foods and provided good food!

WLC Stephens Level 1 teacher Jen Bien works with students to create model brains during a unit exploring how the brain works.

“I think WLC is important because it's such a great honor to be here. Not many students get in, but me, one who did get in, has a second chance. I am so happy to be here because I am finally getting the help I need and know I'll graduate and go into college for mixed media graphic arts.” — Mariah Robinson, Level 3

“WLC is important to me because it is giving me a second chance to graduate. The teachers here let you know that they really care. It just gives me hope and lets me know I can do what I put my mind to.” — Takela, Level 3

“WLC is important to me because it is more my speed. I like having one on one time and it helps me be more independent.” — Nikosha, Level 3

“WLC is important to me because it made learning better and easier for me and it is helping me to get ready for the real world. The teachers really care and understand and are willing to help the best way they can.” — Nicole, Level 3

“WLC is an important program because it gave me a second chance at my education. If I wasn't attending WLC, which I have for the last two years, I would have been failing miserably. The teachers here have given me the experience and knowledge to be successful in my future life. I am thankful for being able to continue and expand my education at WLC. When I graduate in June, I know that I will go to college for criminal justice. All the teachers here are supportive and caring and they want you to succeed in life. I hope this program will be around long enough for other at-risk teens to experience and have the chance to get a second chance at their education, like me, Nicole Ashford, who is going places in life!” — Nicole Ashford, Level 4
Spoken Word Poetry Slam

The third Annual All-Alternatives Teen Poetry Slam Semi-Finals is coming! On February 22 at 6:30pm, students enrolled in Innovative Education or Shabazz are eligible to compete in our very own All-Alternatives Semi-Finals held in the Lapham Auditorium.

The top two students from our slam will move on to compete in the Wisconsin State Finals at UW-Milwaukee on March 10, 2012. From there the top Wisconsin poets will represent the state at the Brave New Voices International Slam this summer in California.

This is our third year collaborating with UW OMAI for the Semi-Finals Slam — the event will have professional sound, DJ and MC.

Please come out and support our brave young people — if you know a student from AERO, CRIS, Phoenix, ROAD, SAPAR, Shabazz, TLC, and WLC who would like to compete, please have them contact Alexis Anderson-Reed, 890.1006 or aandersonree@wisc.edu.

A full teen slam schedule, rules and policies, and registration information can be found online at www.omai.wisc.edu