Application for Individual Teaching and Learning Mini Grant

Gustavus Adolphus College

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Submitted by Aaron Banks

Basic Pedagogical Idea Proposed

 As the director of the Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) program at College, I am continually analyzing the program for weaknesses. Weakness in PETE programs result in unprepared teachers and unmotivated students. A major weakness that has emerged in the GAC PETE program over the past five years is the absence of outdoor activity instruction for our pre-service teachers.

 Outdoor activities (Nordic skiing, downhill skiing, and snow shoeing) are specialized skills that have re-emerged in modern physical education programs as a result of an increased interest in lifetime activity and adventure-based programming. More and more schools have incorporated outdoor education units of study into their curriculum. The DNR, US Skiing, and other outdoor groups have been providing equipment to interested schools at very reduced rates, making it possible for physical education programs to offer these unique units of study.

 The problem we are dealing with in the PETE program is that neither Bonnie Reimann nor myself are certified to teach pre-service teachers to teach children and youth various outdoor skills in an educational setting. Due to our lack of experience, training, and liability concerns, we simply are not teaching these units of study. This is very unfortunate because in the past 5 years, I would estimate that 80% of our students that have been completing their student teaching have been expected to teach outdoor education units in their placements. We always have exit interviews with our graduates, along with interviews of their cooperating teachers (practitioners who work directly with the student teachers), and a common theme has arisen: we need to begin teaching outdoor activities! However, in order to do so, we need to have appropriate training. Therefore, I am very interested in learning more about these wonderful lifetime activities and Olympic sports.

Course of Focus

 During the mini-grant period, I will be focusing on developing a winter sports unit of study for implementation into HES 304. HES 304 is entitled “Methods for Teaching Secondary Physical Education”. The unit of study will include Nordic skiing, downhill skiing, snowshoeing, and ice skating. HES 304 is a very important course for pre-service PETE majors. It is in this course that teaching and sport skills are developed for age appropriate instruction. Students not only participate in lessons taught by instructors regarding “best practices” within specific units of study, they also design and implement lessons that have the potential to be taught within the public schools.

Plan of Work to be Completed

 Because of my interest in this area and the very real need we have to add this to our program, I have already taken the first step in training myself. I personally purchased Nordic skis and snowshoes this past year. Due to our bountiful winter and access to the Arboretum, I had the chance to gain a lot of experience by simply getting out and developing new skills. I am now ready to tackle downhill skiing, but will need professional training to acquire these skills. To be able to teach downhill, one must be a proficient skier him/herself. Therefore, in order to implement this unit of study I will need training instruction, practice, and time. I am requesting $1,500 for downhill skiing training instruction from professional instructors at Mount Kato, equipment, and hill fees. As you can see, the cost of taking this on will be much greater than $1500. I am willing to pay the rest myself to learn these skills, as I am passionate about this topic and committed to getting this added to our curriculum. The budget I am anticipating is the following:

12 hours of private ski lessons = $40/hr = $480

12 hours of private snow board lessons = $480

1 adult Mount Kato season pass = $389

1 season locker fee = $130

Skis (400), Boots (200), Helmet (100), Goggles (100), Poles ($50) = $850

Snowboard (300), Boots (200) = $500

TOTAL = $2839.00

Evaluation of Outcomes

 I will measure the outcome of this mini-grant funding through the successful inclusion of a winter sports unit within HES 304, Spring 2015. Pre-service PETE students will experience a two-week winter sports unit and be tested on skill development, knowledge acquisition, and pedagogical practices for the instruction of winter sports with children and youth. The skill test will be a traditional performance-based format, while winter sporting knowledge and pedagogical practices will be assessed on the end of the unit examination.

Final Comments

 Thank you for considering my application for an Individual Teaching and Learning Mini Grant! If I am successful with my training and implementation of a winter sports unit within HES 304, I see this mini-grant turning into much more than a two-week unit of study taught annually. This is something that could be taught as an ACT or FIT class as well, so there is the potential for a great number of students to be impacted.

Respectfully submitted,

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