

Health Science Teacher Uses Blended Learning to Make Lessons Come Alive



Auburn Career Center

SCHOOL TYPE:

Career and Technical Center

COURSE TITLE:

• Allied Health Technology

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Sue Lefler teaches Allied Health Technology classes at Auburn Career Center in Concord Township, Oh. Her students are juniors and seniors from 11 different schools in 2 counties.

Lefler's students have an interest in health care as a career. Some students know what health career they want when they start the course. Others know they want to be in health care, but don't know in what capacity. Lefler makes sure that health career exploration is featured in her courses.

Describe a Typical Day

A typical class begins with bell work to get students focused. Often that work includes, medical terminology or anatomy and physiology or something in allied health tech. The majority of the bell work information comes from HealthCenter21. Lefler gives them questions based on what they learned in HealthCenter21 and has them write a scenario. Or she might give them a scenario and have them go from there.

Each day after bell work, students have an assignment in HealthCenter21. The Anatomy and Physiology and Medical Terminology are considered freshmen college level courses for Lefler's students.

"They work on HealthCenter21 while in class. I love that it's online. If someone is sick or behind or doesn't progress as fast, they can do it at home, which is a HUGE help," says Lefler. The majority of her students have Internet access outside of the classroom. If they can't access HealthCenter21 any other way, they use their smartphones. "It really works well for us," she adds.

Lefler applauds how HealthCenter21 has an exploration and ending, where everything is tied together.

Allowing Students to Work Independently

Lefler gives the students as much responsibility as possible, while also trying to keep students on task. When she sees that the majority of students are finishing a unit, she says, "You have 2 more days to finish this up." If they don't finish, she allows them to keep moving, but doesn't hold up the rest of the students.

"Most kids stay on task," she explains, "Some get done really fast. There are always other things for students that are done early to do...read, do medical terminology flashcards, etc."

Projects are Important

In keeping with the new normal of blended learning, Lefler has added projects to topics in HealthCenter21. Team types of activities are so important in CTE, these kids are very hands on. And so she adds a project to every unit.

The students "truly have fun with the invention project. They develop an invention. One student made an organ regenerator. You put a piece of organ in the machine. Flip a switch. And a kidney or a liver spits out using the patient's DNA," Lefler recalls.

After doing the HealthCenter21 Health Care Systems module, the students "enjoy doing quite a bit of research about health care agencies and investigating non-profit agencies in their area," she explains. Lefler's students vary in backgrounds. Some are from very rural areas, while others are from suburban areas outside of Cleveland. Lefler mixes the students together so they can get an idea of what it's like to live in a different area. They discover what kind of health care is available in rural versus suburban and urban areas.

Another project the students do is a consumer health poster. Students decide

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on an issue in their community, such as smoking or teen pregnancy, and create a poster. Then they present their research to other classes.

Blended Learning Brings Life to Lessons

Lefler credits the combination of HealthCenter21 and real-world projects for making learning come alive for students. “Kids respond well to blended learning,” she says. She breaks it up by assigning a few lessons and then giving them a couple days to complete them. At the same time, she has other things for them to do with medical math and med terminology, so students are not sitting constantly in front of a computer screen.

What’s the Best Part about HealthCenter21?

When asked what she likes best about HealthCenter21, Lefler responds, “the ease of access to it for the students. It’s easy to get into and once they learn what is going on and how to access it, they can be pretty independent. I’m extremely pleased with it.”

“The nice thing about online is that I know that the information is being updated. For me, this is the biggest selling point. It’s not something that you buy now and use for 5 years without updates. It’s updated as new technologies are developed. You can’t do that with a textbook. These kids are going on to nursing school or pre-med. They really need to understand what’s going on and what’s new and what’s out there, and I know that HealthCenter21 is being updated,” she adds.

What Do Students Like About HealthCenter21?

Lefler says that the online program is a selling point for students coming to see if this is a program they want to invest their time in. “My ambassadors sell the heck out

of HealthCenter21!” Lefler shares. “They like the fact that they can work at their own speed and that they can work from home. If they are having an off day in class, they can catch up at home. All in all they like HealthCenter21,” she adds.

What’s your Biggest Challenge?

When asked about challenges in the classroom, Lefler shares that not having a dedicated lab is an issue, but she and her students work around it.

The biggest challenge? Lefler shares, “as a teacher in this age, it is keeping up with where the kids are what’s new to them. What they’re thinking about. What they’re reading. I like to know what’s going on with ‘my kids’ so that I can pull in real-world things and understand what they’re talking about.”

“These kids are facing such challenges that I never even thought about until I was out of school and in college. They are experiencing it and becoming frustrated and angry and how are we going to deal with these things, that I didn’t have to deal with until I was an adult. This can be distracting and make it difficult to try engage them. In 10 years, the biggest difference is change in motivation...everybody wins. And students don’t understand the responsibilities that they will face in a few short months in college or in the work world. There are some real motivational challenges,” Lefler explains.

“I just really love my job. I just really enjoy the challenge of teaching teenagers. It keeps me young. It’s fun!” Lefler concludes.



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