

The Farmer's Lunchbox

Opening the Farmer's Lunchbox has added a whole new vocational dimension to our special education program. The variety of functional tasks made available through the Farmer's Lunchbox provides the opportunity for all students who struggle academically to be successful. When their confidence soars they become more successful in all areas of their lives. Teachers and students coming into our classroom to purchase their morning coffee and muffins or for lunch on Thursday see my students being productive. They become familiar with their names and their abilities. Friendships develop which facilitates and makes mainstreaming a more functional and positive experience for both teachers and students.

Curriculum/State Standard

Language Arts: listening and speaking strategies; communication skills and vocabulary development; following written and verbal directions; thinking and reasoning

Science: chemical transformation

Mathematics: measuring; classifying; money management

Overview

This is a multi-disciplinary project that combines the learning of academic subjects with the development of vocational and life skills. Students maintain a morning coffee bar and a weekly restaurant for teachers and staff. Students are responsible for taking orders over the phone, delivering around the campus, menu planning, shopping, preparing food, serving, cleaning up, and managing money.

Objectives

- Students will gain confidence in their own abilities by being successful at vocational tasks.
- Students will develop life skills by learning how to safely operate kitchen appliances to prepare a complete meal for themselves or their families.
- Students will learn to follow written and verbal directions.
- Students will develop a greater understanding of money.
- Students will develop higher level thinking skills, reasoning, and problem solving in a functional setting.
- Students will learn to communicate with customers.
- Students will learn money management skills.

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THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

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9-12

GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



SOCIAL STUDIES

On-Going

MONTHS

\$885

TOTAL BUDGET

“The Farmer’s Lunchbox” project continued...

Materials

Cooking accessories, food storage containers, baking accessories, serving dishes, reliable electrical appliances, sink, stove, refrigerator, washer, dryer, microwave, computer, cash register

Readiness Activity

Students discuss their favorite foods and are encouraged to bring recipes from home. To develop specific techniques we watch cooking shows on the Food Network. We decide what the menu will be for the week, who will work in the kitchen, and job assignments. Since we only have one small oven and four burners we must figure out what needs to be prepared first and which pots, pans, and bowls we will use. We also review kitchen safety rules.

Strategies/Activities

Each Friday students look through grocery store ads from the newspaper, magazines, or cookbooks, to get ideas of what they would like to cook for the next week and what is on sale. On Monday we put together the weekly menu including homemade soup, salad, main course, dessert, and beverage. Then we prepare a shopping list. Students who are able write or type this list into the computer. Some shopping lists are compiled with cut out pictures. Tuesday, a group of students travel into the community with the instructional assistant to purchase the groceries. Wednesday we prepare anything that can be done ahead of time. The cashier will practice working the cash register and making change for \$20.00.

Culminating Activity

Thursday is the day of our big luncheon for the teachers. We prepare 20-30 meals each week. Students not working in the kitchen are given an academic assignment to complete. The kitchen crew put on their aprons, wash up, and head for the kitchen. Knives, cutting boards, and food items are brought to the main work table, and we begin to prepare the meal. We have from 8:00 until 11:15 to put the food on the table. All the teachers come at once and must be served quickly. Students are expected to clean up their work area and tools as they go. Forty-five minutes before the teachers arrive, we clean up the kitchen area and begin to set the tables. Desks are washed, moved, and covered with tablecloths and centerpieces to reflect our theme and our football team, The Hayward Farmers. The food table is set and the food is laid out in a pleasing yet practical way for fast service. Teachers pay the cashier as they enter or wait until they leave. Students hand out plates and cutlery as the teachers come in the door. Others are lined up behind the table and serve the food as the teachers walk by, almost cafeteria style. When all teachers are seated the students serve the beverage of their choice and bus the tables as they leave. Soft music plays in the background. The teachers enjoy a great meal.

Afterward the students that gave up their lunch hour to work in our restaurant get to sit down with the teacher and the instructional assistant and share a meal, family style, out of the leftovers. This is a terrific bonding time to talk to the students about everything going on in their lives, and it's a great incentive for the students because the food we prepare is awesome! The rest of the class does the cleanup. Everyone participates and takes a turn doing all jobs.

Evaluation

Students are evaluated by teacher observation of their performance in the kitchen and the community. Their effort, attitude, and how well they follow directions and pay attention to the safety rules while in the kitchen, are all taken into account. Comments and tips from our customers are also helpful to assess our success. The amazing number of teachers that attend our lunches and the confidence the students demonstrate while serving them is a tribute to the success of this program.