

Success Story



Amanda Klenke FACS Teacher

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Amanda Klenke
Family and Consumer
Sciences Teacher
Battle High School
Columbia, MO

Program Highlights

Goals:

- To educate students on child development, real-life situations along with caring for a child.

Topics Covered:

- Child Development
- Pregnancy
- Parenting

RealCare® Baby Provides Missouri FACS Students with Authentic Learning Experiences

Since September 2013, Battle High School Family & Consumer Sciences Teacher Amanda Klenke has used Realityworks' RealCare® Baby infant simulators to provide her Child Development 1 & 2 students with authentic, hands-on learning experiences as they discuss human development. As a result, Klenke's 14- to 18-year-old students leave the classroom more prepared for children in the future and for careers related to child care.

"The Babies have become so much more than just a project for these students," said Klenke, who has 11 RealCare Baby 3 infant simulators and one RealCare™ Pregnancy Profile Simulator. "They have really become a great discussion piece for choosing to parent or building their resumes for jobs."

The electronic infant simulators cry for care throughout the day and night and require regular changing, feeding, burping and rocking. They also monitor surrounding temperatures, track how long they sit unattended in car seats and how often their clothing is changed. All of this data is wirelessly tracked and used to generate caregiver reports. The Pregnancy Profile simulates the final trimester of pregnancy, allowing users to feel what it is like to be 9 months pregnant.

Klenke acquired the

Babies, car seats, accessories and program materials in June 2013, and started getting to know her new additions right away. As Klenke recalls, understanding the best way to use these powerful simulators required time, but was the process was made easier thanks to support provided by Realityworks.

"I spent lots of time on the Realityworks website and with the help line," recalls Klenke. "The more I used them, the more comfortable I became with their needs and knowing what to expect."

Klenke debuted her infant simulators in September 2013, using them to give her Child Development 1 students hands-on time caring for Baby while in class. Her first weekend simulation occurred the following spring, when her Child Development 2 students took them home after weeks of practicing in-class.



Battle High School students experience RealCare® Baby infant simulators during weekend simulations and in-class "Baby Bootcamp" sessions.

Such preparation not only helped her students succeed with Baby, but also helped her colleagues and her student's parents understand the importance of the project. Before the first weekend simulation, Klenke sent a school-wide email describing the project and its goals to faculty members, and included an open invitation for them to visit her class for a closer look. Additionally, Klenke sent both permission slips and letters home with each student to ensure parents understood the project and its goals, what was expected of the students and if there were questions or concerns.

"I got a bunch of positive emails and comments from teachers immediately," said Klenke, who continues to prepare students and their parents with these methods. "Most parents also thought it was a great opportunity and learning experience for their children, and some even shared their personal stories with having children as well. It really helped to open the lines of communication."

Now, Klenke incorporates these experiential learning tools and the accompanying curricula regularly, sending Babies home with students for the weekend and also using them during in-class "Baby Bootcamp" sessions. During these sessions, Klenke turns all 11 Babies to demonstration mode and students practice changing their clothes and getting them in and out of car seats while addressing their frequent needs.

"I love the authentic learning, and the reports are incredible," said Klenke. "I use the provided curriculum frequently to engage students and provide multiple means of learning. It's easily integrated into classes and provides a great variety of activities."

Klenke often uses reflection activities like journaling to help students learn from their experiences and gauge her program's success. She requires all students to complete a follow-up writing assignment after their weekend simulations, and similar opportunities to reflect are provided for those who wear the Pregnancy Profile simulator.

"Students are challenged to do this project and take of this Baby for longer than most have ever cared for a real child," said Klenke. "The experience takes them out of their comfort zone, and the learning is authentic. It really makes an impact on students now and in the future."

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To understand both the physical and social impacts of pregnancy, students in Amanda Klenke's FACS classes wear the RealCare™ Pregnancy Profile Simulator around school.



Battle High School students are required to complete follow-up writing assignments following their weekend simulation experiences with RealCare® Baby.