

Patricia Rowe

Patricia Rowe, a Business Concept Teacher at the Fort Atkinson Middle School. Patti earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Patti' believes that teaching students by using hands-on activities has meaning and relevance, providing students with tools that will help them be successful adults. The "hands on" project keeps the student engaged, and allows them to work at their own pace with "check-points" at crucial steps.

When asked how she works to raise achievement for all students Patti states, "All my lessons are presented using three modalities: written directions, oral instruction and "hands-on" demonstration. Patti modifies projects for students who may struggle, but she is careful to be sure they are exposed to the same learning objectives.

Patti tries to inspire creativity. Her students "create" businesses that they research and produce related documents (e.g. business cards, floor plans, budgets). This allows them to use their interest(s) and, therefore, take ownership of their projects."

When asked what innovative projects/programs she has developed for and with students that are models to emulate, Patti states six years ago, the business department started Future Business Leaders of America chapter. It fit well with the then new DPI Finance Standards. At present, all eighth grade students learn about banking and credit as well as marketing, philanthropy/entrepreneurship and business ethics.

Along with colleague Melody Wachter, she established a close partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and out of that the successful and highly acclaimed Reality Fair was born.

All eighth-grade students walk through the fair “armed” with a career choice sheet, a clipboard, and a calculator. The first stop is Uncle Sam to deduct taxes, then they move on to booths including housing, vehicle, gasoline, insurance, food, clothing, utilities, entertainment, and money management so that at the end of the exercise they readily see how much money then need to live on per the life style choices they make. Chamber members provide consultants who lend a professional – yet festive – atmosphere.

Since her children have grown and moved on, Patti’s role in community activities has shifted. From a religious education teacher, Girl Scout helper, sports booster and banquet organizer, she now finds herself supporting her favorite charities like the Relay for Life banquet, United Way, Boys and Girls Club, Food Pantry, and Coats for Kids.

When asked what unrealized goals she has for her classroom and professional development Patti replies “I now have had a SmartBoard in my classroom for several years and I now have all my lessons saved in that format. More recently, I would like to explore Google documents and how I could utilize it in my classes. Along with other teachers in our district, I am modifying my assessment tools and methods.”

Patti sees many positive aspects in education today as communication. She feels much of this is due to technology which allows very timely communication between teachers and parents. Another positive aspect that she has been a part of is the exploratory courses at the middle school that allow students to examine interest areas

that they might not normally consider. These are enhanced by a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities, in Agriculture, Art, Business, Science, Community Service, Leadership, and, of course, music and sports. She always encourages her eighth-grade students to join at least one club when they move on to high school so that they can be involved, meet new people, and share their interest(s).

Steve Zimmerman, Johnson Bank states, "Patti is always looking for way to enhance the educational experience of her students.

Shawna Dehner, a parent notes that Patti has opened up many possibilities to students by introducing them to FBLA in middle school and taking on the task of being their mentor. Patti's continuous work as an FBLA mentor has taught students: responsibility, time management, speaking skills, organization of leadership and business etiquette."

Middle School Principal, Rob Abbott, states, "In the past fourteen years that I have worked with Patti, it is apparent that she is not only committed to her students, but also the entire learning community."

With pleasure, the School District of Fort Atkinson submits the nomination of Patricia Rowe for the Kohl Fellowship Award.