

Aquaculture Studies Prepare Students For Better Understanding

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 along with it any hidden toxins, Martin also used his own money to have fish tested, before any were eaten.

Through his efforts and with the help of outside agencies, the students also have a pond on school property where they raise bass and trout. They have field plots for crop production, and they also have demonstration areas for wild-life production.

The hydroponics and aquaculture projects at the school are the result of Martin's own interest, that of former and current students, and because of real and perceived

local and global employment opportunities in those fields.

Martin said he is proud of the fact that students built the facilities. In effect, the students built the classrooms and the teaching materials from which they learn.

Rather than using strict lecturing to drill concepts into the students' heads so they can pass written tests, Martin's teaching style is to provide instruction, and to let the information sink in as the proof of the lessons taught becomes apparent through observation and work.

The potential for a student to surpass a teacher in knowledge

about a subject is much less, if the knowledge passed onto the student comes from a teacher who depends solely on on classroom lectures and tests.

The potential for a student to gain a solid grasp of a concept, and eventually discover new things, is much greater when a teacher's theory is tested through application.

"All the activities, including water quality work, calculations of feed rates, and application of scientific principles give these vo-ag students new skills and the confidence to try new things, which hopefully will carry over into their lives after graduation," Martin said.

Not only do the students get to raise fish from fry and plants from seed, but they also do maintenance work and record keeping.

There is also another reward for those involved in Martin's class — the harvest. Recently, the group held a crayfish meal, after raising them to maturity in a makeshift system.

"The culmination of this project was the cooking and eating of their

work," Martin wrote in an explanation of the student's work. "Eating the project provides a good

incentive for further study of these interesting creatures (crayfish)."

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These two semi-clear hard plastic round containers were designed and once intended for use as housing for backup telephone utility batteries. Martin heard about them through his discussions with others in aquaculture, drove his own vehicle to pick them up, cleaned and sterilized them, and now they are being used to raised crayfish in the Elizabethtown aquaculture facility. The pyramid of sectioned PVC tubing immersed in each container serves to house the crayfish and reduce aggressive behavior between the crustaceans. It was a student's idea to use the PVC tubing to control behavior.



Determining the pH of a liquid used to grow plants using hydroponics at Elizabethtown High School is part of the daily chores students perform.

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 Fax (216) 893-3317