

Michaela Bengtson

7th-12th grade teacher
DREAM Technical Academy
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Where and what level do you currently teach and why did you choose to become an educator?

I teach at DREAM Technical Academy in Willmar Minnesota. I teach grades 7-12 in a project based learning environment! I became a teacher because I love helping students discover their passions and learn through exploring the world around them! I truly enjoy going to my career everyday, knowing that I can help a student thrive and achieve wonderful goals and dreams!

How has agriculture and the Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom Program and resources impacted your students and instruction?

Agriculture is a wonderful format for my students to explore the world. They are able to connect things that they love like food and animals in order to learn science, math, English, and so much more! I am able to use MAITC materials to give them resources for their projects! I especially love using the Minnesota School Garden Guide.

Describe your experience as a participant in the 2015 Agriculture in the Classroom National Conference.

My experience was absolutely outstanding. By being able to participate in the conference, I was able to make so many connections with teachers from all over the country. I was able to get great ideas from so many talented teachers. Also we were able to learn about the wonderful agricultural industry in Kentucky. I am able to use this experience and incorporate it into my classroom to enhance my students' learning!

What experiences, resources, contacts, etc. gained at the AITC National Conference do you plan to implement into your curriculum and classroom?

I found a wonderful resource on English language arts and reading. There are many wonderful books that are centered in Agriculture and some group reading strategies that will definitely help my students with their reading skills.

Why do you believe it is important for agriculture to be embedded in your curricula?

I believe it is important for Agriculture to be embedded in our curricula because everything is centered around agriculture - whether we realize it or not. We are constantly using or doing something that can be tied back to agriculture. Many people now are 3 to 4 generations removed from the farm and don't know about the processes that happen there. Everyone should know where their food, fuel, and fiber come from so that they can make informed choices as consumers. I think that having agriculture in our curricula is the first step. Also because students are constantly using things that tie back to Ag, they are able to relate abstract concepts, back to something that they already know. This helps them to have a stronger learning experience and make more connections. Agriculture also often times provides an interactive way to learn. This helps students to be creative and also encourages spontaneous learning!