

Summer STUDI teachers test their brain power

by **Tim Holdsworth - Wednesday, August 01, 2012**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/20196/video-summer-studi-teachers-test-their-brain-power/>

Shower caps, permanent markers, Jell-O, tooth picks and jelly beans —all useful, hands-on tools for helping elementary students learn about the human brain. Add teachers' own hands-on experiences in the anatomy lab and you have the makings for creating an effective elementary science unit.

Teams of general and special educators are developing these units—and their brain power about the brain—during this week's Science Teaching through Universal Design and Inquiry (STUDI) program at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh College of Education and Human Services.

“The program provides the teachers with inquiry-based instructional strategies for creating challenging science units that reduce learning barriers and give students of all abilities equal opportunities to learn in the same classroom,” said Stacey Skoning, associate professor of special education.

STUDI is a Wisconsin Improving Teacher Quality grant program intended to increase student achievement in core subject areas by enhancing teachers' content knowledge and skills.

Skoning co-leads the program with John Lemberger, associate professor of curriculum and instruction, and Peter Meyerson, associate professor of educational foundations.

One of the advantages of inquiry-based lessons is increased student engagement and, with that, the provision of multiple, grade-level-appropriate ways for students to discover the content that meets their individual learning styles and abilities.

So for an elementary-level lesson on brain structure, students could put on clear plastic shower caps and draw the sections of the brain on each others' heads, label the sections on a Jell-O brain molds or glue different colored jelly bean onto a printed brain diagram.

“The inquiry skills learned go beyond just one science unit. The teachers also are developing coaching and leadership skills so they can, teach other teachers in their buildings how to implement inquiry and universal design for learning into their classrooms as well,” said Skoning.

<http://youtu.be/mCEKmdspigc>

After the week-long program, follow-up projects for participants include teacher teams developing differentiated science inquiry units based on information in the program, implementing these units in their classrooms during the fall semester, developing an assessment strategy for these modules and presenting the what they and their students learned in the spring. Some participants even may have the opportunity to share their learning and that of their students at the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers (WSST) conference this year.

Learn more:

- [Science Teaching through Universal Design and Inquiry at UW Oshkosh](#)