

Abstract:

The Practicum program serves as a capstone experience, providing students with the opportunity to engage in classroom settings prior to completing their associate degree. This course requires participants to complete 50 hours of observation and teaching under the guidance of a mentor teacher within the community over a 12-week period. Throughout this capstone class, not only do aspiring educators gain relationships and mentorship from exiting teachers but also develop hands-on experience by developing lesson plans, managing classroom environments, and interacting with students.

In the Spring semester of 2025, Northwest's education department advanced the capstone experience by launching an Agricultural Enrichment Program at Cody Middle School in Cody Wyoming. In this initiative, two sophomore and three freshman students from the Ag Education program dedicate approximately two hours every Friday to teaching lessons to middle school students. These students are fully responsible for designing their own curriculum and delivering their lessons. Through this process of trial and error, Northwest College students have enhanced their understanding of how to effectively implement activity-based learning, as well as other teaching methods in their future classrooms.