

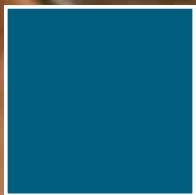
Concordia St. Paul

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Developing Students

College of Education graduates take traditional and non-traditional approaches to working with students





DEVELOPING STUDENTS

Concordia has a tradition of educating future teachers. But as society evolves, so does the way teachers are interacting with students. Seven College of Education graduates share how they are impacting students in traditional and non-traditional ways.





See Michele and her students do an Equine Assisted Learning activity and hear their feedback on ave.csp.edu/magazine.

DR. MICHELE PICKEL '76

For a few days each semester, Dr. Michele Pickel's ('76) horse arena serves as her classroom. Pickel, associate professor of Education at Concordia, uses Equine Assisted Learning (EAL), a revolutionary strategy for teacher education, to provide useful lessons for future teachers.

Two years ago, Pickel was trained to do Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP), a cutting-edge therapy method using horse activities to help those with mental health and human development issues. Pickel's passion for horses and students led her to adopt and mold the concept to fit the learning needs of education students.

Students travel to Pickel's homestead in Lino Lakes, Minn. where her and her husband, Steve '76, live and keep their four horses. With limited or no knowledge of horses, groups of students must maneuver a horse through an obstacle course or complete a task. The activity elicits metaphors for the types of challenges the future teachers will face with students.

Pickel recalled one "ah ha" moment a student had during an EAL exercise. Her team was having trouble getting the horse

to move through the obstacle. That student picked up the obstacle and moved it closer to the horse telling her team that activities need to be adapted to meet the needs of the student. "This is exactly the kind of thinking teachers must learn in order to meet the needs of struggling students and fix our ailing educational system," Pickel said.

Pickel said the activity challenges students to think outside of the box and pushes them beyond their comfort zone. "They have to figure out how to find answers," said Pickel. "They need to know that if one thing doesn't work, they have to find something else, and in so doing, they begin to make those metaphors."

Pickel said there are a lot of parallels between teaching horses and teaching students. "What I've learned about teaching I have learned from my horses," she said. And she hopes in some small way, her students can say the same.