

Floriculture CDE Practicum Preparations

Master of Arts Project Defense

Michigan State University

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Abstract

The purpose of Career Development Events (CDE) is to teach students further hands-on skills in an agricultural related field. The Floriculture Contest teaches students how to identify foliage and potted plants, recognize and describe principles in the floral industry and provides concrete experiences in floral design as it relates to the floral industry. Through this project, videos were made to describe the practicum portions of the Floriculture CDE contest. This resource was made available to allow teachers a better understanding of what the contest asks for, to prepare students for these practicums, as well as demonstrate to students some techniques that will help them succeed in this contest.

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Chapter 1: Project Goals and Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide students and teachers in agricultural education resource videos that provide a better understanding of the floriculture CDE contest. This video demonstrates how to perform the practicums in this area, and provides insight on what the contest looks like as well as how it relates to industry. Currently, there are few resources available to students and educators, which has created a high demand for a resource that will strengthen the knowledge and skills of those in the floriculture CDE.

According to an article written by Marta Rudnicka on visual learning statistics, 65% of learning groups prefer to learn visually through pictures, graphs, charts and illustrations. (Rudnicka) The goal of these videos is to provide a comprehensive explanation and visual presentation of the practicums of the contest. By observing the videos for both practicums, the copy arrangement and the corsage, students will be able to enhance their knowledge and understanding of floral design and continue to practice and reflect on their hands-on skills. Through these conversational and visual learning videos, students will define what industry standards are involved in floral design and will be able to describe the tools and techniques needed to participate in the designing process.

Definition of Terms

- Practicum - a course of study that allows students to practice through hands-on learning experiences
- Copy Floral Arrangement - students at contest are given a picture of a floral arrangement and are asked to duplicate that design
- Corsage - a smaller array of flowers put together
- CDE - Career Development Events - an FFA event that allows students to practice and perform skills that are agriculture industry related
- Conversational Learning - a combination of teaching strategies used by teachers to personalize instructional context for learners
- Visual Learning - learning through seeing pictures, charts, lists, etc.

Chapter 2: Project Importance

An article titled “Ten Rules of the Road - Career Development Events” written by M. Craig Edwards and Paul Booth (2001) offers teachers a guide for preparing students for CDE contests. While these may seem self explanatory to some teachers, the article gives really helpful tips for helping teachers prepare students for any of these contests. Key takeaways from this are to discuss with students their interests, commitments and goals for these events in order to facilitate helpful individualized skills for students. Edwards and Booth (2001) also give examples of how certain materials can be used for assisting students, but it is important to remember as a teacher that “if it is your first exposure to this material you will be a student as well” (Edwards & Booth, 2001, p. 24). I believe this practice is important in all areas of education and recommend it to all teachers. These teachers also suggest breaking each event down into the most essential parts first and “to use curriculum content to enhance event preparation, when and where it is appropriate and feasible” (Edwards & Booth, 2001, p. 24). They also suggest to “create an atmosphere in which students are teaching students.” (Edwards & Booth, 2001, p. 24) Having students learn from each other is a great way to help students prepare for contests. Sometimes students have a better understanding when they ask classmates questions because they can take a stronger sense of ownership of their own learning. The purpose of the Floriculture CDE video resource is to give an introduction to the practicums of the contest. With CDE contests, preparation by the teacher is a lot of work, but by setting goals and remembering the purpose of these events, teachers can build a community with students that encourages them to use skills that they wouldn’t normally get.

In agricultural education, we always focus on the FFA motto to guide a lot of our instruction: Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve. Ed Walker, writer of the article titled “Learning to Do; Doing to Learn...Therefore, Learning to Learn” (2001) compares learning in agricultural education to the game of baseball stating that “I [Ed] learned from experience, by making mistakes, watching (and benefiting from) other’s mistakes and by becoming actively involved in the process.” (Walker, 2001, p. 6) This is exactly what our FFA motto describes. Students learn best by practicing, exploring and questioning. Teachers in agricultural education continuously talk about offering students the hands-on learning experiences they don’t normally get in the traditional classes because most understand how important these skills and concrete experiences can be in a students life.

The article “Teaching and Learning Through the FFA” written by Allison Touchstone, Shawn Dygert and Joe Blackstock (2001) explain that the “FFA Career Development Events have well-established rules, explanations and rubrics that outline the objectives and purposes of the event” (Touchstone et al., 2001, p. 8). Through practicing, assessing, failing and reassessing the objectives, students learn skills that not only help them in the contest area, but also help them in their everyday life. They explain that “students need to learn how to deal with both success and

failure and in the context of the FFA program, not working can be a great teacher for the individual and the team” (Touchstone et al., 2001, p. 9) As teachers, we always want to see success in our students because of the excitement, but in reality, it’s more important to allow students to feel all aspects of the game. With that in mind, teachers and students should feel encouraged to set goals for themselves or for teams.

Currently, the Michigan FFA ([Skills Contests](#)) does not offer many resources to students that describe the practicums of the floriculture contest. The National FFA Organization (<https://ffa.app.box.com/s/kbw6jmo0mmujxqgc2xf4y5t6em3k784r/folder/125899632439>) does provide videos on the many principles of floral design, but none of these videos demonstrate a more simplified way of performing these practicums.

While doing some research, there are many other helpful videos that have been created by individuals in the floral industry. These videos were found helpful before proceeding with the videos for this project:

- Corsages
 - [How to make a corsage! - EASY](#)
 - This video is very helpful and similar to what I have taught in class as well as what this project’s resource will cover.
- Bows
 - [HOW TO MAKE AN EASY CORSAGE BOW-7LOOPS](#)
 - This video has no explanation, but shows a great visual of how to make a bow for the corsage practicum
- One-sided copy arrangement
 - [Back to Basics - Symmetric Arrangement](#)
 - This video demonstrates getting flowers in place first then putting greenery in last

Chapter 3: Project Creation

For this project, an outline was created that presented talking points and ideas for both the copy arrangement and the corsage in order to create the video resource. This outline was then emailed to 13 Michigan AFNR Educators who have floriculture contest experience. Comments from teachers were very helpful as they provided insight on how they teach these practicums and offered suggestions and advice for before making this resource.

Two weeks before making the video, flowers, greenery, and other supplies needed to make the arrangement and corsage were ordered through Kennicott Brothers in Saginaw. A video was recorded on my cell phone to explain the practicums as well as the terms necessary for fully understanding floral design and the industry standards. Videos were then edited in Adobe Express and then posted to YouTube for easy access for students and teachers.

Chapter 4: Project Results

See the Appendix for the video resource and the presentation slides that outline the steps for both the copy arrangement and the corsage.

Chapter 5: Project Reflection

These videos can be used for all students and teachers preparing for the Michigan FFA floriculture contest. Recommendations for the use of this video is to either share with students or to project on a screen while doing practicums in person, pausing the video while students are practicing. I also recommend this resource be used by the Michigan FFA and be placed under the contest resources section of the Career Development Event tab on their website. There are many other extensions of these videos that could be done. For example, showing an all around floral copy arrangement rather than just a one sided, visualizing a glued corsage rather than a wired and taped one, and finally, giving explanations to the floral certification arrangement for this contest would also be helpful if time allowed.

What I learned from this project most is that while putting this video together, I found myself redoing some parts because what I thought would make sense to students, I realized might be a struggle with understanding the terms I was using. So, I decided to go back through and re-explain certain terms. I also learned a lot more about the floral industry through my research of finding what videos already existed. I never realized just how many different variations of floral design there are. What I have been taught is different from what I see other people do. Not that there is a right or wrong way, but it's good to know these variations because what works for me, may not work for some students. So, by having this knowledge, it will help my future students in the long run.

The Career Development Events are all great ways to engage students in their own individual interests. Not only did preparing this resource help me better understand the floriculture contest, but it also helped me practice skills to further be able to explain and implement the objectives of the contest. Taking this skill learned, I will be able to do the same process with the other contest areas.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the 13 ag teachers that provided feedback to me for this project as well as Aaron McKim and Buddy McKendree for providing me with feedback and suggestions on this project paper.

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Appendix: Project Video Link

Video link: [📺 Floriculture CDE Practicum Preparations - Michigan](#)

Copy Arrangement: from start to 17:40

Corsage: from 17:41 to end

Appendix: Project Video Presentation Slides



Floriculture Contest

Copy Arrangement & Corsage Practicums



Copy Arrangement

Goal: Copy pictured arrangement as close as possible

Step 1: Preparations

- Define Supplies
 - Scissors/knife
 - Basic green container
 - Oasis
 - Oasis tape
- Define What to expect at contest
 - Oasis in green container
 - Oasis tape
 - flowers/greenery
 - Picture to copy



Step 2: Greenery

- Start with Oasis tape
- Baker Fern
 - Spores - commonly mistaken as insects or as a sign that it was a sick plant when actually they are used to help the plant reproduce
- When cutting any stem:
 - Cut on a 45 degree angle as this allows for greater water absorption
 - Length of stem in the oasis
- Use all of baker! - Minimal waste!
- Greenery in the floral industry: texture to an arrangement

Step 3: Flowers

- Remember the Goal
 - Follow the picture given
 - This means:
 - Same number of flowers
 - Same type of flowers
 - Same placement
 - Same size
 - NO EXTRAS
- Reminder: 45 degree angle when cutting flowers



Step 4: Final Touches

- Ensure that all mechanics have been covered
 - No Oasis showing
 - No/little Oasis tape showing
- Tip: Hold up your container and visually see if you need to add greenery

Step 4: Final Touches (Contest)

- When finished, make sure you follow the instructions given by the contest chair.
- They will most likely tell you to:
 - Take your arrangement and scorecard to a general table to be scored
 - OR
 - Leave your arrangement on the table with your scorecard
- ALWAYS CLEAN UP YOUR AREA WHEN FINISHED
 - Anything that cannot be used - throw away
 - Anything that is unused - place into a bucket for others to use if needed

Step 4: Final Touches (Industry)

- Spraying arrangement with crowning glory or some type of preservative
 - Limits water loss
- Pricing
 - Considers cost of materials and labor
- Cooler for storage
 - Helps to preserve flowers and makes them last much longer



Corsage

Goal: To demonstrate skills used by the floral industry

Step 1: Preparations

- Define Supplies
 - Scissors/knife
 - Wire cutters
 - Ribbon
 - Wire
 - Corsage Tape
- Define What to expect at contest
 - Ribbon
 - Wires and tape
 - Flowers and greenery



Step 2: Types of Corsages

- Wired and Taped - Pin on Corsage
 - Wiring Mini Carnations (stick through the calyx)
 - Wiring Daisies (stick up through the receptacle, make a hook then pull back down)
 - Taping (pull & twist)
- Adding greenery
 - Use of baker fern
 - Industry will use other filler flowers
- Industry: some florist will do glued wristlet corsages for many of their orders

Step 3: Bows

- Different ways to making bows
- It just takes a lot of practice!
- Layering flowers and taking
 - Usually odd numbers work best

Step 4: Final Touches

- Ensure that all mechanics have been covered
 - No wires showing
 - Tape is tight and not loose around the flowers
- Tip: curl the end of your corsage to finish it

Step 4: Final Touches (Contest)

- When finished, make sure you follow the instructions given by the contest chair.
- They will most likely tell you to:
 - Take your corsage and scorecard to a general table to be scored
 - OR
 - Leave your corsage on the table with your scorecard
- ALWAYS CLEAN UP YOUR AREA WHEN FINISHED
 - Anything that cannot be used - throw away
 - Anything that is unused - place into a bucket for others to use if needed

Step 4: Final Touches (Industry)

- Spraying corsage with crowning glory or some type of preservative
 - Limits water loss (especially since stems are not sitting in water)
- Pricing
 - Considers cost of materials and labor
- Container or bag and put in the Cooler for storage
 - Helps to preserve flowers and makes them last much longer