

DFS Student Learning Plan

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Submitted For BHO 4999

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Introduction and Narrative:

Olds College is a Canadian recognized agricultural college that has been teaching students of all ages since 1913. They have been a huge influence in the horticultural, landscape, and agricultural communities in Alberta. They are recognized throughout North America as an accredited academic institution. My name is Andrew Steel and I have been a student at Olds College since 2018, completing my first year certificate and second year diploma in Horticultural Science. I am currently at the end of my third year of study for my Bachelors of Applied Science Degree Majoring in Horticulture and starting my directed field studies this May .

The directed field study program along with some extra online courses, constitutes the fourth year of study for the BAS Horticulture Science Degree. It is an eight month work placement study and must be completed within 16 months of being started. Its main focus is to direct the student to recognize and develop learning based goals with specific outcomes and the ability to validate whether or not these learning goals are being met while on the job.

My background before going into the Olds College program was a combination of three different industries. Landscape maintenance, landscape construction, and hardscape construction. I spent over a decade learning these jobs and I feel very confident with all three. The reason I decided to pursue a career in Horticulture at the academic level was because I wanted to gain a degree that

would validate my career in the field and add any missing components of the knowledge in the horticultural arts. The career that I would like to pursue is fertilizer and weed control specialist. I would like to apply my student learning plan to this end. I am looking for not only a position in a business like this, but also a position that puts me into a management or leadership role.

I have secured employment this summer with Greener Grass Ltd as a maintenance, fertilization and weed control technician. It is a long standing business in the heart of Calgary Alberta that services all areas of the city. The business operates from mid April till mid October and conducts a short three week stint of spring cleanups that include lawn aeration, power raking and first round granular fertilization. This prepares its customer base for the fertilization and weed control packages that they market. The rest of the summer is made up of four rounds of fertilization and weed control. The fertilization program can be standard liquid, premium granular or organic granular. The weed control program starts early in the spring with spot treatments moving to a more blanket treatment as summer goes along. They also offer spray treatments for mosquitos and chinch bugs. They offer overseeding as well but do not do any cutting or routine maintenance of lawns.

My main duties during spring cleanups were aeration of lawns, power raking, cleaning up of debris, spreading of fertilizer and quality checks. I now as of last week am operating a spray truck on my own. I am given a list of 25 properties a day and must use logistics to reach these properties. I then spread granular fertilizer either synthetic or organic and spray for weeds either spot treatment or

blanket treatment. Occasionally I will be sent to acreages or commercial jobs to perform these tasks. If I am able to complete my granular tasks before the next round of fertilizations I will be put on a liquid fertilizer program to help the other dozen or so trucks catch up on their work as we must maintain our schedules.

Another aspect of my job will be demonstrating safety and leadership to some of the younger employees. Teaching and training when asked to do so will also be an important part of my job as new employees can come on during the season. An important part of my job is customer service and education as I am having to talk to customers all the time while working. The customers sometimes have concerns about the products I am using and it is my job to reassure and educate them. Learning the marketing aspect will also be important as I am paid commissions on any new customers I am able to sell to.

The last three years of my life at Olds College have been spent learning all the skills necessary to work in the plant sciences industry and I am now ready to put that theory and those skills into practical applications. The following are a list of learning goals that I wish to pursue during my directed field studies practicum this summer.

A: Learning Goal #1: Lead a crew for increased productivity and worker relations.

Learning Outcomes :

What specific skills/knowledge/attitudes do I need to learn to meet this Learning Goal?

- Ability to get up on time, be well rested and ready for work.
- Ability to see strengths and weaknesses in co- workers.
- Ability to know my own strengths , weaknesses and limitations in myself.
- Ability to take direction from senior staff and mentors.

How am I going to learn this Outcome?

- Talking to senior staff. (guys that have been there for multiple seasons.)
- Following the lead of senior staff.
- Listening, observing and asking questions to my mentor.
- Being critical towards my own actions and behavior.
- Ask for feedback.

Learning Activities and Strategies:

What activities, resources, or tasks do I need to complete to reach this Learning Outcome?

- Ensuring I am prepared for work every day, setting alarms, washing work clothes, vehicle maintenance.
- Taking pride in my work vehicle, cleaning it everyday, washing it once a week, making sure it has a full tank and all supplies stocked.

- Greeting co-workers in the morning, helping others with their own tasks if needed.
- Doing extra tasks around the shop if I am finished early.
- Properly and neatly filling out paperwork.

Standards/Criteria:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark?

- Have a daily schedule and journal to document the activities for the day.
- Keep feedback reports filed from upper management and workers.
- Review any incidents and disputes at the end of each month.
- Discuss with a mentor to see if there can be improvements made or if things are out of hand.

Validation Methods:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark? What verification methods can I use to prove to others that I have learned this outcome? What evidence of accomplishment can I collect?

- Take daily performance sheets and at the end of each week compare the performance of other teams or crews.
- Get written feedback from workers to see if they are happy with the task placement you've delegated.
- Chart out production on a chart over the period of the directed field study.
- Get video and written testimonials from crew members.

- Mentor Validation.

Mentor name: Parker Girodat

B.Learning Goal #2: Operate all equipment in relation to the job.

Learning Outcomes :

What specific skills/knowledge/attitudes do I need to learn to meet the Learning Goal?

How am I going to learn this Outcome?

- Get trained on proper maintenance and use of the larger equipment.
- Get Trained on the proper maintenance and use of the smaller hand held equipment.
- Demonstrate safety practices when using equipment.

Learning Activities and Strategies:

What specific skills/knowledge/attitudes do I need to learn to meet the Learning Goal?

How am I going to learn this Outcome? What activities, resources, or tasks do I need to complete to reach this Learning Outcome?

- Read through the operating manuals of each piece of equipment provided by the company..
- Learn from a mentor.
- Proficiency through repetition and practice.

Standards/Criteria:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark?

- Performance reports from my mentor.
- Maintenance records

Validation Methods:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark? What verification methods can I use to prove to others that I have learned this outcome? What evidence of accomplishment can I collect?

- When my mentor has validated my proficiency.
- Having no safety write ups.
- Mentor validation.
- When I am proficient in the maintenance of the equipment.

Mentor name: Parker Girodat

C.Learning Goal #3: Fertilize and spray turf to industry standards.**Learning Outcomes :**

What specific skills/knowledge/attitudes do I need to learn to meet the Learning Goal?

How am I going to learn this Outcome?

- Assess the difference in turf health among fertilized lawns from non fertilized lawns that show damage, disease and death.

- Compare the different effects of the different products ie: liquid premium and organic.
- Learn about the different weeds and when during the season they are a problem.

Learning Activities and Strategies:

What specific skills/knowledge/attitudes do I need to learn to meet the Learning Goal?

How am I going to learn this Outcome? What activities, resources, or tasks do I need to complete to reach this Learning Outcome?

- Seeing the effects of over fertilization and under fertilization.
- Learning proper application rates of fertilizers and sprays.
- Weed identification skills.
- Care and courtesy when working around peoples yards, houses, and gardens.

Standards/Criteria:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark?

- Observational skills.
- Customer feedback.
- Feedback from Mentors
- No complaints or positive feedback from customers.
- Use software and literary resources to identify comparable products.
- Research how environmental factors can influence product success.

Validation Methods:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark? What verification methods can I use to prove to others that I have learned this outcome? What evidence of accomplishment can I collect?

- Keeping journals.
- Using digital written grow journals.
- Video and picture side by side comparisons.
- Documenting growth, color and thickness of each test group.
- Use my own research methods to compare results via internet video and pictures.

Mentor name: Parker Girodat

D. Learning Goal #4: Learn chemical weed control products and how to use them safely:

Learning Outcomes :

What specific skills/knowledge/attitudes do I need to learn to meet the Learning Goal?

How am I going to learn this Outcome?

- Demonstrate the care and maintenance of spray equipment.
- Identify proper spraying frequencies and proper spraying techniques.
- Document all the different spray products we use.
- Document safety protocols for products.
- Document Laws and regulations concerning products.

Learning Activities and Strategies:

What specific skills/knowledge/attitudes do I need to learn to meet the Learning Goal?

How am I going to learn this Outcome? What activities, resources, or tasks do I need to complete to reach this Learning Outcome?

- Learning how to clean containers and lines and nozzles.
- Have the spray equipment working without any major hiccups.
- Identify proper spraying frequencies and proper spraying techniques.
- Learn hazardous effects of the chemicals used and the safety equipment needed to stay safe.

Standards/Criteria:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark?

- Learning from a mentor.

- Observation of lawn health and weed wilting or death.
- Read product warnings and risks of the product.
- Following the industry approved safety standards.
- Using appropriate safety gear.

Validation Methods:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark? What verification methods can I use to prove to others that I have learned this outcome? What evidence of accomplishment can I collect?

- Verify through picture and video evidence.
- Verify through performance feedback by a mentor.
- Use the internet to fully understand and document risks of products.

Mentor name: Parker Girodat

E. Learning Goal #5: Use logistics to organize work and production loads.

Learning Outcomes :

What specific skills/knowledge/attitudes do I need to learn to meet the Learning Goal?

How am I going to learn this Outcome?

- *Explain the program we use for logistics and production.*
- *Explain work booking and protocols.*
- *Explain non negotiables when dealing with job bookings.*

Learning Activities and Strategies:

What specific skills/knowledge/attitudes do I need to learn to meet the Learning Goal?

How am I going to learn this Outcome? What activities, resources, or tasks do I need to complete to reach this Learning Outcome?

- Read through online tutorials.
- Listen to mentors.
- Stay organized at all times.
- Time management.
- Knowledge of local roadways and traffic patterns.

Standards/Criteria:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark?

- *Daily journals.*
- *Keeping all door hangers and signs stocked up.*
- *Keeping track of time on jobs and in between jobs.*

Validation Methods:

How will I assess myself? What is the industry-accepted proficiency level or benchmark? What verification methods can I use to prove to others that I have learned this outcome? What evidence of accomplishment can I collect?

- *Record Keeping.*
- *Mentor Feedback.*
- *Customer Feedback.*

Mentor Background:

Greener Grass is a family owned business that has been around for 43 years. My mentor Parker Girodat is the son of company owner Craig Girodat. Parker has been the head foreman of greener grass for 20 years under his father Craig. Just this year Craig has decided to step back from head owner and management to let Parker be fully in charge of the business. Parker has a wealth of knowledge in the fertilization and spraying business, not only in the execution of the business but in the rules and regulations that govern the practice. I have no doubt that Parker will be a great mentor and a wealth of information over the coming season.

Name of Practicum Location: Greener Grass Ltd

Name of Supervisor: Parker Girodat

Name of Mentor: Parker Girodat

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