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# Berea teachers moving students beyond the classroom with C.L.O.S.E. science program



The C.L.O.S.E. science program positively impacts students of all ages, including the Titan upperclassmen and teachers (pictured above) who make up this year's class. *(John Deike/special to cleveland.com)*



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BEREA, Ohio -- Berea-Midpark High School's C.L.O.S.E. program, in part, teaches upperclassmen how to educate their elementary school peers about science, but in doing so, the teens are taught a higher lesson—empowerment.

Coe Lake Outdoor Science Education – taught by veteran BMHS educators Mary Draves and Steve Blatnica – ushers in new sets of juniors and seniors each year and enables them to learn in outdoor environments and get their hands dirty with restoration and cleanup, erosion protection and wildlife projects at the nearby lake.

Following weeks of outdoor learning mixed with teaching preparation, the students are then tasked with educating kindergartens, third and fourth graders about rudimentary astronomy, energy and matter, and erosion, respectively.

"The program is about problem solving, critical thinking, learning about the earth, but it's also about social growth."

"(C.L.O.S.E.) is actually pretty cool," said senior Kristin Slovick, of Middleburg Heights. "I love working with kids, and that's mainly why I took this class."

The real dynamic is watching the lengths the high school students – who, like any teen, can be stifled by social identity – will go to teach the children about science.

"Over the course of the program, you can see the (high school) student's confidence and self-efficacy expand, " said Blatnica. "The program is about problem solving, critical thinking, learning about the earth, but it's also about social growth."

Draves seconded Blatnica's insights.

"We get our students out of their comfort zones and put them in leadership capacities that they really haven't experienced before," she said. "The younger kids see the older students as these larger-than-life rock stars, so the learning and growth is definitely mutual."

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