Breeding and collecting eggs

One of the reasons these fish are good fish for student investigation is it is very easy to get the fish to breed and collect the eggs.

Breeding is prompted by an increased photoperiod. 16 hours of light and 8 hours of darkness. About 2 weeks before you want to begin this study, use a timer to establish this photoperiod.

To make collection of the eggs easier, set the timer to begin the light period 1-1.5 hours before you come to school. The female releases her eggs about an hour after light and will carry them for 30-60 minutes before she releases them into the tank.

Gently netting the female you can remove the eggs by simply pulling the cluster from her abdomen. (You can cup her in your hand with a little water and slide the eggs off of her into your palm.) This seems to cause the least amount of stress to the female. There are other published collection methods that you can research.

Once the eggs are collected, they are attached in a clump. I have found that if you use glass or plastic droppers, you can pull the clusters apart and place individual eggs into each student's petri dish. The embryos are affected by metals so I prefer the glass droppers to the metal forceps.

Because students will be paired to compare different temperatures, it would be recommended that pairs of students should have eggs from the same female/cluster. This will ensure consistent gestational age.