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ABSTRACT

An approach to teaching career education to children in grades kindergarten through six is presented in this program. The elementary students do actual "hands-on" activities in various occupations such as working with blue prints, making floral arrangements and corsages, and working on actual engines and motors. Skills for a specific occupation are taught; then an effort is made to correlate these skills with conventional subject areas. An important objective of the program is to have children actually experience what it "feels" like to work in a particular occupation, to think about what kind of a person he is himself, and to think about what the person in a particular job is like. An entire school community became involved in this learning program. A section is presented in the report concerned with how such a program can be instituted in other school settings. (Author/BW)

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WORLD OF WORK IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Developing a WORLD OF WORK concept for students in Rankin Elementary School was no accident or "just a happening". During the year prior to this WORLD OF WORK program, the staff at Rankin had been conjecturing about what could be done in our particular school situation that would be different, exciting, and provide a good learning experience for our children. We wanted an enrichment program of interest to all ages, and most important of all - - that would give children CHOICES of areas they would like to explore.

This year, when the suggestion was offered of the possibility for collaboration with the Genesee Area Skill Center* in a CAREERS or WORLD OF WORK oriented program, we felt that we had hit the "jack-pot",

*The Genesee Area Skill Center sponsored by the Genesee Intermediate School District and Flint Community Schools, enrolls students from all the high schools within Genesee County and its business is CAREER EDUCATION. It is one of the seventy-eight high school level "skill centers" planned for the State. Their graduates actually leave the center trained for a job; most of them have employment before they graduate.

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so to speak. All pieces seemed to "fall into place" - - we were ready and eager to embark on this activity and incorporate the concept into our curriculum. The ENTIRE SCHOOL - - students, faculty, custodians, cooks, bus drivers, principal and secretary - - all were caught up in the excitement of the program.

Rankin School is one of nine elementary schools (K-6) of the Carman School District. We have eleven regular classroom teachers. Our school is in a rural non-farm community; most of the three hundred thirty students live in five neighborhood developments. The family incomes are average or above the national average. Parents are interested in a good educational experience for their children. We have some professions represented among our school population; however, most are blue-collar employees of the automobile industry. There are just one or two families who might be considered "poor".

"Hands-on" Activities

are Basic to WORLD OF WORK Understanding

The most important goal or objective of the total program - - of each teacher - - of each WORLD OF WORK class - - was to provide "hands-on" activities for every student in the different occupation classes. This meant that children were doing actual work, as they would if this were

their CAREER choice. They learned some of the skills necessary to fulfill this kind of a job contract. WE ACTUALLY TAUGHT THOSE OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS. They thought about, and discussed how it "feels" working in the occupation. They sought an appreciation for the person on that particular job.

Some students left the school and worked in a place of business. An example of this would be the Horticulture class which went to a nursery with their teachers to help a nurseryman with his tasks.

Cosmetology students shampooed hair, did curl jobs on each other, gave manicures, and learned about good grooming.

In the Small Engines Operation class, small groups of two or three students each, worked with engines - - taking them apart and putting them back together again. Real "grease-monkeys"!

Commercial Art students applied basic principles of good design in making ads and posters which were taken to public places for advertising of a school event. They prepared designs for silk screening, and used this process in printing on shirts and jackets.

Fresh flowers were used to make corsages and other floral arrangements. (Funeral director friends provided flowers for these classes.) Wrapping stems with floral tape and wire was "hard" at first, but fun for the Floral Design class.

The Electronics class, using male and female plugs, made extension cords and used electronic equipment to test them for safety.

Audio-visual students learned how to operate all the school machines and were called upon to show films, slides, etc. for special events. They produced materials such as film strips, tapes and books to use in the instructional media center.

In the House Building WORLD OF WORK class, working with blueprints, drawing to scale, "putting-in" doors and windows, and actually using specifications in making cardboard houses was different for the elementary students.

We had two Typing classes. In one, family typewriters were used; in the other we were able to get ten Selectric typewriters on loan from a local dealer. Children from grades one through six were in the typing classes. They learned the keyboard and developed some typing skills. We wanted to get as much use out of the typewriters while they were in our building as we could, so a time was "built-in" to the regular classroom programs, when these students were scheduled to be in the typing room for daily supervised practice sessions. A mother called whose first grade child was taking typing. Mother, herself, is a skilled typist. She said, "I just can't believe it. My son really knows the keyboard."

Nursing classes worked with the Health Occupations groups at the

skill center, besides the activities in the WORLD OF WORK class at Rankin. They got a "real" feel for nursing at the skill center as actual hospital rooms are set up and patient care is performed using the best in modern equipment, instruments, and procedures.

Wood Working students used various carpentry tools and materials to build bookcases and shelves for our school rooms.

The Journalism WORLD OF WORK class wrote for a school paper; the Graphics Arts students published it, using many of the facilities of the skill center.

The students in Knitting made scarves, belts, and purses; Ceramics students used slip, molds, glazes, and a kiln for firing their projects; in the Embroidery and Weaving classes, wool yarn and burlap were good materials to use for practicing stitches and creating a design or picture. Perhaps these last four classes were more hobby oriented than occupational; however, the children were delighted with the work they did in these classes, and hobbies can often lead to lifetime occupations.

Such "hands-on" activities as mentioned here, are very necessary for students to get an idea of what that work is really like - - to discover the challenges or lack of them; the glamour, fun, the pluses of that job; as well as the drawbacks - - the dirt, the drudgery, the monotony that may go along with a chosen occupation. Learning about the realness of work was basic to our whole program.

Awareness of Importance of all Occupations

A second objective of this program was to bring an early and new awareness of the many areas for careers and gainful employment as opposed to the limited, traditional ones usually thought of as the doctor, lawyer, teacher, fireman, policeman, etc. Children were not pressured into choosing a career at this time; but they did talk about, and received "hands-on" experience in many different fields of work. Those in the Look at Work Careers class started with developing an awareness of the duties and the importance of occupations closest to them - - those whose work was right in the school, such as cooks, custodians, and the secretary. One little boy told his teacher,

"Boy, those guys sure do work hard for us at school."

They then explored some of the occupations in the neighborhood with visits to the local grocer, a radio transmitting station, a carpentry shop, a farm, a garden center - - all just a few blocks from school. Next they went to a little town nearby; then to a big city, Flint, Michigan. They compared the numbers of choices of occupational areas that can be found in each of the three types of communities and the numbers of workers in each occupation. They discovered that occupations vary in purposes - - all necessary and dependent upon one another for us to live in the present day society. Hopefully we have stirred up some feelings of pride,

understanding, and awareness of the importance of all work whether in the trades, service areas, or in the professions. An effort was made to reach all segments of the school population, not just the college bound children.

Pre-Planning

Early in January, 1972, the staff of the Rankin Elementary School met with personnel of the Genesee Area Skill Center to discuss the development of this WORLD OF WORK curriculum for elementary students. Before the afternoon was over, several Rankin teachers had chosen an occupation or work CAREER they would like to explore with elementary classes. As the Rankin teachers chose a particular field of work, they were assigned a skill center staff member to work with them in determining goals, objectives, and a work outline for that class.

Also, two or more skill center students were carefully selected by the skill center instructors to work with Rankin teachers. They were excused from their regular work at the skill center to come to the elementary school for the ten sessions to be the experts in the WORLD OF WORK classes. They made quite a commitment when they agreed to help us: they had to find their own transportation to the elementary school; they helped develop lessons and prepare materials for those lessons; their regular attendance was necessary to carry out the program. Sometimes

we had as many as twenty-two skill center students in Rankin at one time; they made a real contribution to the success of the activity.

In return, working in our program gave the skill center students a feeling of success and worthiness which some of them could not find in other educational experiences. The Rankin students really made them feel needed. In fact, they became real-life heroes and idols for some of our children. Also, another experience could be added to their work record which was helpful when they made applications for employment.

Teachers Learn a "New Occupation"

Preparing for the WORLD OF WORK sessions was quite a "learning" experience for the teachers at Rankin. Each individual teacher had to "learn" how to work in an occupational area new to him or her. As an example, the teacher who chose to work in Floral Design with our elementary students knew nothing about flowers except "Aren't they pretty!" and "Don't they smell nice!" As she worked in this area, she became really excited. She said,

"Gee, maybe I'd like to go into floriculture myself." Using floral tape, wire, clay, oasis, learning the names of flowers and greens, creating floral designs, using imagination in selection of containers, developing skill and dexterity of fingers and hands, making corsages - - all this was an unknown world to her. She worked several hours with the

skill center instructor before she was ready to meet the elementary class. This learning process had to be undertaken by most of the Rankin teachers; it was an individual "in-service" effort for each teacher and much of it was done on the teacher's "own" time. Classroom management and discipline were the responsibilities of the regular Rankin teachers.

Organization of WORLD OF WORK Classes

We were able to recruit five other teachers (itinerant teachers, the librarian, the principal) to help with the WORLD OF WORK classes. By doing this, we could reduce the numbers of students in a class. Most had twenty students. In order for "hands-on" activities to be effective, smaller numbers is desirable. When the teachers had determined the content to be included in their "new" class, we sent a sheet home listing the classes with a short statement describing what each WORLD OF WORK class would offer. Children were instructed to go over these with their parents and together decide in which of the "new" classes they would like to work. There were no names of who would be the teacher, so choices were based strictly on content and interest. At school the next day, students were given a chance to check their first, second, and third choices for this program. We tallied these selections - - eighty percent of the students were placed in their first choices. Children from all grade levels were in most of the classes. We did limit grade levels in

Cosmetology, Audio-visual, and Small Engines to the upper grades.

The Magic Hours

Classes were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for a five week period. The Magic Hours on these WORLD OF WORK days began at 12:30 P.M. At that time, all of our students got up, left their regular classrooms, and scattered all about the school to go to their WORLD OF WORK teachers. We were surprised and pleased at the business-like and orderly manner in which this exchange took place. Going to work in another room, with a different teacher, with skill center experts, "little kids" working with "big kids", "big kids" helping "little kids", "new" content in class work, being able to work with their hands - - all these things helped to create an exciting environment which brought out the best in our student body. They met the challenge of added responsibility.

It was evident in many instances that the excitement of the Magic Hours (One student named them that because he said, "They go so fast.") did carry over into work of the regular classrooms with a new awareness of self, positive attitudes toward school, a delight in knowing a teacher other than their home room teacher, and inspiration for writing, reading, talking, researching, spelling, etc. Actually, we couldn't keep them from doing some of these things - - they all wanted to write or tell of WHAT I

WANT TO BE. Sometimes these ideas changed over-night - - but that was good too.

Since this activity was for all levels, old and young children could talk to each other about what they were doing in Our school, in Our class, and with Our teachers. A feeling of closeness - - of "oneness" among the student body was quite evident to the Rankin staff.

Correlations with the Three R's

Correlation with the Three R's was not forgotten, even though it was a secondary goal in our program. Giving the children an opportunity to "work" in an occupation was definitely our first concern. However, I am sure one of the most important benefits to some pupils was the realization, perhaps for the first time, of the "WHY" of school - - that in fact, regular school activities really do help to prepare one for a life of useful work. A conversation with a father points this out. His son was working in the Small Engines WORLD OF WORK class. Father called the school and said,

"Something sure happened to my son in that class. He's enthused about school as he has never been before."

The enthusiasm and excitement generated from these classes and the obvious interest in "working" in an occupation, inspired many spirited discussions when the children returned to regular classrooms at the end

of the "Magic Hours". Remember, there were students coming back from fifteen different WORLD OF WORK classes: they simply couldn't wait to share with each other and their teacher the things they had done in those classes. They talked to the whole class, in groups, to each other - - on the bus, in the cafeteria, to the principal, on the playground, and at home. Teachers encouraged them to write stories, poems, draw pictures, etc. Our showcase, niche, the walls of the halls, and classroom bulletin boards - - were all full of the creations of our students. CORRELATIONS - - if you please - - with the THREE R'S.

Teachers Ask Questions

One technique used by our teachers was to ask thought provoking questions. There were no right or wrong answers. The intent of the questioning was to stimulate thinking in each child - - about himself, and the WORLD OF WORK in general. Teachers urged students to think of their likes, dislikes, strengths, abilities - - what they might like to do.

Are you an outdoor person? Do you like working with your hands? Do you like to work with machines? Do you like doing the same routines over and over? Or would you like to meet new challenges, problems, ideas, to find solutions and answers? How do you feel about seeing blood? (One girl in the WORLD OF WORK nursing class answered that query by deciding nursing probably was not the area for her to pursue further.

Knowing what you do not want to do is pretty important in determining a CAREER goal.) Do you have allergies to plants or flowers? Are you clever with your hands? Could you learn to work fast enough in this area to earn a living? Do you like to create - - a story, a poster, an ad, a new arrangement? Do you get along with people? Or would you rather work alone? Do you like animals? Do you like adventure? Will you be an explorer? A traveler? Can you speak another language? Do you want to be a boss? Would you like to have your own business? WHAT KIND OF A PERSON ARE YOU - - WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE - - COULD YOU LEARN TO BE GOOD AT THIS WORK?

Our WORLD OF WORK Fair

We wanted to share the excitement and the learning of our students with the parents and others in the community - - so we held a WORLD OF WORK fair in the evening of the last day of our CAREERS session. Our guests visited in all the WORLD OF WORK classrooms, where students were actually working, demonstrating, and displaying their skills. For example, in the Small Engines room, children took turns explaining how a two-cycle and a four-cycle engine work. They discussed such topics as internal combustion, carburetors, spark plugs, ignition systems - - and were quite technical and definitely knowledgeable in these areas. Children were engaged in activities of this kind all over the building, in each of

the WORLD OF WORK classes. Many, many people came. This was a very satisfying culminating activity that brought our first occupations WORLD OF WORK session to an end.

Future of Career Education at Rankin Elementary School

Because of the tremendous interest and evident success of our first WORLD OF WORK session, we know this actual TEACHING OF OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS is an excellent "way to go" to effectuate CAREER EDUCATION in an elementary school. Children must have choices, must have "hands-on" activities, must get a "feel" for a variety of occupational areas, of occupational clusters, and of inter-relationships between occupations.

At Rankin, we plan to have at least one session each year, similar to our first WORLD OF WORK program, where we TEACH OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS. At the end of the elementary school experience, a student will have had at least six choices of areas with directed explorations of occupations. We will also strongly encourage students, especially in the upper grades, to do individual, indepth research into other occupations; to share this research in the regular classrooms; and to make arrangements to spend at least one school day away from the school actually working on that job.

Career Education must not be limited to just a five week period of TEACHING OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS as we have outlined in this paper. Every lesson, every day, for every elementary student must be relevant to Career preparation. Rankin teachers will develop this concept into the entire curriculum.

To Start This Program in Your School

The only really necessary, vital factor in any school that wants to implement a CAREERS program to TEACH OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS is just ONE teacher with enthusiasm who will "simply get at it." Or - - - several teachers of ONE GRADE LEVEL could develop a program for their grade level. Our entire school was involved, and this was good, but not absolutely necessary. We know the excitement from this type of activity will spread to other teachers, to other grade levels, and soon the entire school will become involved.

We had help from the skill center; however, Rankin teachers are confident that when this assistance is no longer available to us, we will be able to continue TEACHING OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS. Several parents and others from the business and industry communities have expressed a willingness to assist with our next session.

Money should not be a factor in starting, or not starting, this program. We spent less than sixty dollars - - from our local school treasury.

Federal funds are available for these types of programs; however, you need not wait for funding to implement a good program.

In-service is necessary; our teachers organized their own. A good program can be presented by anyone who really wants to JUST GET AT IT. Good luck!

Michigan Education Goals

The objectives and goals which we tried to develop in our program are in line with planning by the Michigan State Department of Education, which is encouraging schools to provide all students with a salable skill upon completion of high school.

"In addition, each individual should be exposed, as early and as fully as possible, to the adult working world and to such adult values as will enable more thoughtful and meaningful decisions as to career choice and preparation." Goal 3 - - from Common Goals of Michigan Education.

A Giant Step Forward

We feel we took a giant step toward reaching this goal in CAREER EDUCATION as we implemented this concept into our elementary school curriculum. It is a personal goal of each of our teachers to help the individual student find himself so that he won't be stripped of his imagination, his creativity, his dreams, his own personal uniqueness as he prepares

to participate in a CAREER. We hope he need not view work as mindless, exhausting, boring, hateful, something to be endured while life is confined to time off. This can be quite a challenge.

Included here are examples of two different plans which teachers used for the WORLD OF WORK classes; one is very brief, one details objectives and skills more completely; both very workable. The skill center experts with Rankin teachers, prepared materials and lesson plans each week as they followed the course outlines.

I. HORTICULTURE

The objectives of this course are to give students an understanding of what horticulture is, and give students a chance to grow plants. They will continually care for them from seeds to flowers. They will learn responsibility in completing a project and in working together in a group.

Course outline

First week:

- Containers
- Media (soil)
- Two kinds of propagation

Diseases

Fertilizers

Take several flats and seeds to plant

Take flats with seed up

Take flats with disease

Take flats ready to transplant

Second week:

Buying seeds

Structures

- a. Hotbeds
- b. Coldframes
- c. Greenhouses

Waterings
Kinds and varieties
Seed more flats - - several varieties
Tour skill center - - emphasis on Horticulture dept.

Third week:

Transplanting into containers (everybody)
Transplant
Diseases
Bedding plants in Michigan
Two kinds of propagation
Pot rooted plants

Fourth week:

Transplant again
Fertilizers
Weeding
Buying seeds
Kinds and varieties
Transplant if necessary
Talk on landscape design

Fifth week:

Pot rooted cuttings
Transplant
Talk about gardening
Scheduling
Arranging for displays
Labeling
Weeding
Watering
Fertilizing

II. FLORAL DESIGN

A. Philosophy

The need to provide meaningful educational experiences for all students is becoming more obvious as the complexity of occupations within industry and business increases.

This project is designed to give the student learning by doing

experiences and to make the student aware of the concept of work as it relates to income producing activities.

B. Course objectives

1. To develop group understanding of the art of flower arranging.
2. To describe the qualities of good containers and holders.
3. To teach the basic principles of balance and stability.
4. To teach mechanics of corsage making.
5. To have each student complete a corsage.
6. To teach mechanics of tissue paper flower arranging.
7. To have each student complete a tissue paper flower arrangement.
8. To take a field trip to a flower shop.
9. To have each student complete a vertical or horizontal flower arrangement using fresh flowers.
10. To encourage students to exhibit their floral arrangements.

C. Basic Skills to be developed

1. Develop orderliness through a systematic process by using a step-by-step procedure.
2. To develop the ability to complete a project.
3. To develop the ability to listen to and follow directions and follow a plan.
4. To develop the ability to work in a group with other students.
5. To develop the ability to share ideas.
6. To develop the ability to arrange flowers in a systematic order.

7. To develop the ability to use small pruning shears.
8. To develop the ability to use florists tapes and wire.
9. To develop the ability to use florists clay.
10. To develop the ability to use spray paint.
11. To develop an awareness of the floriculture profession.
12. To develop the knowledge of colors as they relate to flower arranging.

D. Materials needed

1. Three small pruning shears.
2. Two sharp knives.
3. Three half inch rolls of florist tape.
4. Twenty pieces of number 18 florist wire.
5. Twenty pieces of number 22 florist wire.
6. Twenty pieces of number 26 florist wire.
7. Five pair scissors.
8. Three rolls of half inch scotch tape.
9. Oasis - fifteen blocks.
10. Tissue paper.
11. Florist tissue paper.
12. Corsage pins (twenty).
13. Fresh flowers.
14. Ribbon for corsage bows, eighty feet, half or three-fourths inch ribbon.

15. Three cans spray paint.

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Reusch and Noble - Corsage Craft

Squires - The Art of Drying Plants and Flowers

F. Course Outline

FIRST WEEK - Basic Arranging

February 22 - Bring containers to be used in flower arranging
Spray paint containers
Watch film: Why Father Works

February 24 - Demonstration of flower arranging and explanation
of basic principles in flower arranging.
Arrange fresh flowers in containers.

SECOND WEEK - Corsage making

February 29 - Make bows for corsages

March 2 - Wire and tape flowers
Complete corsages

THIRD WEEK - Tissue Paper Flowers

March 7 - Demonstrate tissue paper flower making.
Students will prepare the tissue paper flowers.

March 9 - Continue and complete tissue paper flowers.
Arrange flowers.

FOURTH WEEK - Ribbon Flowers

March 14 - Make ribbon flowers

March 16 - Arrange ribbon flowers

FIFTH WEEK -

March 21 - Field trip to Skill Center

March 23 - Make arrangements for exhibit.
Exhibit floral arrangements at World of Work Fair.