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**ABSTRACT**

Based on the personal experiences of individuals familiar with the day-to-day operation of experience-based career education (EBCE) in several states, the essays in this monograph are presented under three headings: (1) deciding to offer an option, (2) gathering community support, and (3) building an institutional framework. Part 1 includes articles by a school superintendent dealing with EBCE as a part of the educational mainstream, a school board member who describes EBCE as a part of general education, and an assistant school superintendent who discusses EBCE as a next step for schools to take in making education a comprehensive experience. Part 2 presents articles written by a labor leader who sees EBCE as a way to help young people understand the contributions of labor, a business manager who believes EBCE will pay off in terms of contributions to industry and society through better prepared and more satisfied job-holders, and a mother who discusses the impact of EBCE on her child. The third section includes articles written by a county career education coordinator who discusses blending EBCE into the school district program; a high school principal who discusses contributions of EBCE to the students, faculty, parents, and community; an EBCE staff member who discusses converting traditional teachers to EBCE; and an EBCE learning coordinator who describes daily tasks of an EBCE coordinator. (LRA)

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# INSIDE EXPERIENCE-BASED CAREER EDUCATION



## Personal Reactions to Non-Traditional Learning:

- An EBCE graduate
- A chief state school officer
- A school board member
- An assistant superintendent
- A union organizer
- An employer
- A parent
- A curriculum specialist
- A high school principal
- A former teacher
- An EBCE learning manager

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## FOREWORD

Too often in education, promising ideas flourish awhile only to be forgotten after the trial period is over. The national spread of Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE) has been a different story, however.

In 1971, with initial direction from the U.S. Office of Education, four educational research and development laboratories each began to build a totally new approach to secondary education. Since the creation of the National Institute of Education in 1972, the EBCE models have been thoroughly tested, evaluated and gradually disseminated to communities large and small.

Experience-Based Career Education involves young people and volunteer adults in a different kind of learning process:

- Students move off campus for first-hand experiences in everyday community places: offices, stores, hospitals, factories, churches, government agencies and the like.
- Off-campus sites become the setting for the curriculum rather than a brief diversion from standard lesson plans. A student who plans for and speaks before a civic organization earns credit for firing-line application of those skills.
- Individual planning of how academic and personal needs, interests and desires will be satisfied is guided by staff members who have been trained themselves in this new way of teaching.
- Policy directions for the programs are provided by an advisory board that includes individuals from business, labor and other community interests (including parents and students).
- Neither students nor cooperating employers receive any payment whatsoever for the time and effort put into each learning experience.
- All learning activities lead directly into a regular high school diploma that is valid for typical post-secondary education and job-entry opportunities.

The four EBCE sites in Oakland, California; Tigard, Oregon; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Charleston, West Virginia proved that EBCE would work. At the end of school year 1976-77 five graduating classes had completed EBCE requirements in those districts, with each local school system now footing the operational bills after federal research and development needs were met. EBCE has now spread to all but two of the remaining states and its variations are becoming recognized as viable alternatives that are withstanding the test of time.

The essays contained in this monograph are the personal stories shared by persons familiar with the day to day operation of EBCE in several of those states. These are key people who helped clear the way so EBCE could begin, or who have been district participants in an actual program. Both groups have been amazed at the successes of the programs as they have been implemented.

The programs they represent feature EBCE integrated into a large, comprehensive high school in a major city; EBCE as the focus of a magnet high school in a city system that operates on the same campus but separated physically from the traditional program; and still other variations that operate from their own facility in another part of the community. Each approach maintains its own integrity within the broad framework described above.

How EBCE will spread to new communities and open up greater horizons for youth is a story that is just beginning to unfold. State departments of education, colleges and universities are among the key actors whose leadership will be crucial. Non-educational interests such as chambers of commerce, labor organizations and work/education councils now being shaped in some communities should be involved in planning and implementation.

More important, however, is the role EBCE has played in the experiential education movement itself. Perhaps for the first time, EBCE has proven that non-classroom activities can be planned and measured systematically to meet community standards.

The essays that follow are evidence that something good indeed is happening.

**Ronald B. Bucknam**  
**EBCE Program Manager**  
**National Institute of Education**

# CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	iii
<b>An EBCE Graduate's Advice: Do It</b>	vii
<b>Part I Deciding to Offer an Option</b>	1
State Superintendent Endorses EBCE Concept Daniel Taylor, West Virginia	3
School Board Member Points to EBCE Successes Peggy Stinnett, California	9
Assistant Superintendent Supports EBCE as Natural Step Roy Brown, Pennsylvania	13
<b>Part II Gathering Community Support</b>	21
Union Organizer Helps Students Understand Labor Marilyn Alexander, Pennsylvania	23
Employer Sees Long-Term Benefits Bill Lehnert, Oregon	27
Parent Says Yes—and Is Glad She Did Hilda Via, West Virginia	33
<b>Part III Building an Institutional Framework</b>	37
Curriculum Leader Blends EBCE into District Program Robert Blum, Colorado	39
Principal Learns About EBCE from Ground Up John Pitts, Florida	51
"Traditional" Teacher Converts to EBCE Carnetta Britton, West Virginia	55
EBCE Learning Manager Enjoys Challenge Kathy Wischer, Alaska	59
<b>For More Information</b>	63

**Randy Roberson was a member of the first graduating "class" from the EBCE program in Tigard, Oregon. He served on a student planning team that helped design the program and after completing requirements in June, 1973 entered the Air Force specializing in electronics. After two years, he transferred to the Air National Guard so he could be released from active duty to further his education. Randy entered Portland Community College where he was elected student body president and was appointed to the Oregon State Board of Education representing students in twelve community colleges. He remains an active member of the Air National Guard and has long-range plans for a degree in economics and public service.**

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## **AN EBCE GRADUATE'S ADVICE: DO IT**

**Randy L. Roberson  
EBCE Graduate  
Tigard, Oregon**

It was near the end of my junior year in high school when I heard an announcement about plans being made for some kind of alternative program. Anyone interested could attend a meeting about it and since it got me out of a class I didn't like, I went.

We heard a guy talking about EBCE, a new idea being tested in our community. He said we would spend much of our time out of the classroom and in the community. This was a language I understood so I signed up, checked with my folks, went through an interview and managed to be chosen.

Even though EBCE was just being developed at that time, we knew what was supposed to happen. The first thing I had to do was develop the self-discipline to structure my time and then use it to my best advantage. This took me all year to learn and I'm still working on it four years later.

My next painful experience was at an employer site. I call it the "If you're supposed to punch in at 8:00, punch in at 8:00" story. I had a tendency to arrive at a manufacturing plant I had selected at various times, but they soon made it clear this wasn't acceptable in the real world.

The people in the community and the EBCE staff members I came in contact with were one of the richest rewards of EBCE. I don't remember anyone being as deeply interested in me before in my earlier school years. Some of the staff are still my close friends and I wouldn't give them up for anything.

The community experiences were also invaluable. EBCE gave me insight not only into what it's like to do hard physical work but also what it's like to be an attorney, politician and corporate executive. These were particular points of interest to me and I got a great deal of information as to prerequisites, salaries, and what it means to be on the job. While working with an attorney, for example, I researched an actual case.

EBCE has a profound effect on my life and I can't praise it enough. The only thing I can say to any student contemplating EBCE is—DO IT. Take the opportunity to find out about yourself, about the careers you have considered (and some you haven't) and about some community people you might not otherwise have a chance to meet.

## PART I: DECIDING TO OFFER AN OPTION

Support from policy makers is critical if EBCE is to become a viable learning opportunity for more than a handful of students in a few experimental programs. *Daniel Taylor*, State Superintendent of Schools for West Virginia and president of the Council of Chief State School Officers, believes EBCE must become part of the educational mainstream. Dr. Taylor has created a favorable climate in his state for the adoption of EBCE variations as part of regular school programs.

Local districts most inclined to try EBCE are often already involved in unique efforts to utilize community resources and to provide for the career development needs of students. One such district is the Washington, Pennsylvania Public Schools where *Roy Brown* is assistant superintendent responsible for curriculum and instruction. Dr. Brown saw EBCE as a logical next step for his schools to take if they were truly committed to making education a comprehensive experience for young people.

How each school board approaches EBCE provides still another clue to the success it may enjoy as an enduring innovation. *Peggy Stinnett*, a school board member in Oakland, California, is a strong advocate of EBCE as part of general education. She hopes EBCE does not become labeled as just another alternative program since it offers a solid structure and tested system other innovations have often lacked.

*EBCE is now more than an experimental test of a good idea; it is opening up doors for youth in isolated towns, suburban communities and large cities all across the nation. Thanks to quality evaluation, documentation and training assistance, school and community leaders know what to do each step of the way. Capacities for most states to keep the innovation alive with their established leadership is an eventual goal.*

*Still, the chief school officer of a state must be cautious about jumping on a bandwagon. Leadership and services for communities facing widely varying problems requires a cautious stance. From its earliest development, however, EBCE has enjoyed high visibility and favorable reviews. Dozens of studies and blue-ribbon panels were saying it was time to re-examine some of the cherished assumptions about traditional schooling. Yet, they were wary of some of the responses that seemed to lack form and substance—without guaranteeing, for instance, the delivery of basic skills that are essential in daily living. EBCE quickly caught on.*

*EBCE is the kind of research and development product that state departments of education and local districts appreciate. It is the kind of approach Dr. Daniel B. Taylor believes will move EBCE into the mainstream.*

*Dr. Taylor has been serving as state superintendent of schools in West Virginia since 1970. He earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Iowa and advanced degrees at West Virginia University with further studies at Harvard Graduate School of Education. He was a secondary school teacher before holding top administrative jobs in several local school systems.*

*Dr. Taylor's post in West Virginia has also given him policy input in areas other than elementary and secondary school leadership: higher education, educational broadcasting, the state commission on aging, and the state commission on mental retardation are several. Nationally, Dr. Taylor is currently chairing the Council of Chief State School Officers and is also an active leader in Education Commission of the States' activities. He is married and the father of three children.*

## **STATE SUPERINTENDENT ENDORSES EBCE CONCEPT**

Daniel B. Taylor  
State Superintendent of Schools  
Charleston, West Virginia

At a time when diverse groups are besieging Congress, state legislatures and state and local district boards of education for the limited tax resources available for public education, it behooves professional leaders more than ever before to make a herculean effort to budget wisely so that the end product of schooling will be competent, productive citizens.

Charles E. Silberman, in his widely read and much discussed book, *Crisis in the Classroom*, says "... what is mostly wrong with the public schools is due not to venality or indifference or stupidity, but to *mindlessness* . . . it simply never occurs to more than a handful to ask WHY they are doing what they are doing—to think seriously or deeply about purposes or consequences of education."<sup>3</sup>

Thoughtful, serious inquiry concerning the importance of career education began moving forward rapidly during the incumbency of Dr. Sidney Marland, U.S. Commissioner of Education, during the early 1970s. During this period various commissions, panels and committees were making in-depth studies, all of which supported the thesis that reform is greatly needed in secondary education. *Youth: Transition to Adulthood* prepared by the President's Science Advisory Committee is one of five such studies.

Experience-Based Career Education had its genesis in 1971 in the U.S. Office of Education as one response to these kinds of recommendations. Now under National Institute of Education sponsorship, the concept calls for intensive student involvement in the community with direct interaction with adults, work and careers. Academic requirements were to be integrated with community experiences, based on comprehensive and individualized programs designed for each student.

Since my office is in Charleston, West Virginia, where Appalachia Educational Laboratory is located, my comments and observations will be confined largely to the EBCE model developed by that laboratory. Since 1971, AEL has expended approximately five million dollars developing and field testing its EBCE model, which has now spread to states beyond West Virginia.

The original model developed in our state has involved over 200 high school students ages 16 to 20 on more than 200 job sites. These students were drawn from all of Kanawha County's 11 senior high schools

Each student was assigned a learning coordinator and a job site for a period of three to nine weeks, four days per week, from three to six hours per day. During the course of a school year, each student chose a minimum of five job sites. Students were not paid for their participation at job sites.

Dr. Harold Henderson, director of AEL's EBCE program, sees eight essential ingredients in EBCE:

1. Community experience sites proposed for the program are thoroughly analyzed to identify the kinds of things students might learn there and under what conditions (for example, level of involvement, hours, dress codes, etc.).
2. Students' needs, interests and abilities are individually probed, both initially and throughout the year, to find out the kinds of learning and experiences that are most appropriate for that student.
3. Standard high school courses have been reworked into multiple concepts and objectives that a student can tackle in many different ways, depending on overall program needs and choices. There are five program areas—natural science, mathematics, social studies, career education and communications—organized into 28 secondary level courses.
4. Information on sites, assessment of student needs and the concept-oriented curriculum have been systematically cross-referenced so that the ingredients can be mixed and matched to meet the unique needs and desires of each student.
5. Each student's specific learning activities are carefully described, followed, and evaluated.
6. The student uses the community to investigate individual values, what the adult community offers, and how to deal with the life-long series of vocational, avocational and personal choices that constitute a career.
7. Special career development materials have been custom-built so that planned occupational experiences in the community are carefully evaluated by the student in terms of self-awareness and vocational awareness. Options, decisions and—when appropriate—commitments are up to student choice.
8. Finally, the traditional "teacher" has been replaced by a "learning coordinator" who has full responsibility for coordinating, guiding, counseling, and evaluating all aspects of a student's program.<sup>2</sup>

Although the EBCE model developed by AEL is now in operation, some

20 states with more than 700 students enrolled, EBCE models developed by the four educational laboratories are now being operated in nearly all states.

The AEL model was largely completed and field tested by the fall of 1974. At that time the Kanawha County Board of Education here in West Virginia agreed to institute the program in one of its larger high schools. The results of the 1974-75 experience were so favorable that the program is now being operated in four additional Kanawha County high schools with a learning coordinator employed in each school. About 80 students are now participating in the program on more than 100 job sites.

Let me emphasize that EBCE is a program for the merit scholar, the average student and the potential dropout, and for both boys and girls. Following a highly individualized approach, the learning coordinator uses a basic skills inventory to provide the opportunities, the needed instructional materials and the human resources to help the student overcome learning deficiencies.

Before communities adopt EBCE as a viable educational alternative, they should examine evaluation findings on the program's effectiveness---particularly reactions from students, parents and community resource persons. On a scale from 1 to 5 (five being the top rating), the average score of students, parents and site supervisors in Kanawha County was well above 4.

James S. Coleman, who chaired the committee which produced *Youth: Transition to Adulthood*, underlines the basic premise of EBCE in another book as well:

A second point that shows the avenues of promise is the fact that in our society today, these skills and some ability to transmit these skills are widespread outside the confines of school walls. In societies of the past, where information and knowledge were scarce, the school was a repository and transmitter of this scarce commodity. Now we are an information-rich society with many more educational resources outside the school than within.<sup>1</sup>

Without a doubt then, Silberman's major criticism of public schools in 1970—*mindlessness* about the real purposes of education is still valid as we approach the 1980s. However, a careful examination of EBCE convinces me that this program represents not only a complete break from the *mindlessness* described by Silberman, but also offers a viable, field tested alternative that must become part of our educational mainstream.

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*School board members typically reflect the sentiment of local citizens: some will be cautious, others eager to make changes; some will be concerned about curriculum and what students learn, others will spend most of their time keeping tabs on how dollars are allocated. Yet, all are interested in the educational well-being of persons given the constraints of limited resources.*

*By and large, schools today try to respond to the individual interests and abilities of all learners. Yet, because of the large numbers of students served by public school systems, options to groups of 20-30 students in separate rooms seem difficult to arrange. On the other hand, more and more communities are pushing hard for educational change with school board members taking their rightful lead in reform efforts.*

*Peggy Stinnett is a member and current vice-president of the Oakland, California Board of Education. She sought election to the school board because of concerns about elementary and secondary education from three vantage points: as a parent, active citizen and public affairs reporter for Bay-area news media. Ms. Stinnett is now a lecturer for the School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to joining the school board—itsself nearly a full-time job—she was editor of the Montclairion newspaper in Oakland for 14 years and also reported for local television stations.*

## **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER POINTS TO EBCE SUCCESSSES**

**Peggy Stinnett  
School Board Member  
Oakland, California**

The question is not why alternative education but why call Experience-Based Career Education alternative?

True, EBCE involves choice but the term "alternative" has become a suspect code word, it seems. Actually EBCE should best be termed *real* education for urban students who live and work in a city and are involved in its life.

As a member of the Oakland Board of Education where we are now in our fifth year of EBCE at Far West High School, my hope is that the program will continue to thrive. Calling Far West High an "alternative" school, however, may jeopardize its continued success.

We all know public schools go through cycles. They must be responsive to the tides of public opinion. After all, it is the public who pays the bills and sends us our students.

A few years ago the public was on the alternative education kick. Parents wanted schools to be "responsive" and "individualized." They still want those qualities in their schools. Did the educators misinterpret what was being demanded? Did they miss one of the principal concerns of students and parents—a desire for smaller, more intimate school environments? By their nature, alternative schools—breakaways from the system—were smaller and more individualized in their educational approach. In this respect, Far West High in Oakland is an example of a small high school when compared to the conventional high schools in most American cities.

Unfortunately, many programs were disappointing in their results. Graduates turned out to be well-adjusted individuals who could not read and write. Now we are feeling the backlash from parents, community and employers: "He's a nice kid but he can't even fill out an employment application." How many times have we all heard that complaint?

So, the failure of many innovative educational programs to teach the "fundamentals" soured a significant segment of community and public school supporters. All this has led to a tyrannical demand from the public for back-to-basics. It is inevitable that a new broom sweeps clean and many programs may be swept right out the schoolhouse door unless we fight to save them.

What have been the successes in Experience-Based Career Education? We need to tell the public in specific terms about the structure of EBCE. We need to tell the story of increases in student performance, achievement scores and self-responsibility. We need to point to reductions in truancy. We need to tell the taxpaying public about the program's cost-effectiveness.

Obviously, an image can only reflect what is actually there. EBCE staff must be flexible enough to evaluate the program's strengths and weaknesses and be willing to adjust the program to fit changing student and community needs.

The corps of EBCE supporters is growing. Students, parents, graduates, employers, teachers and community participants are all effective advocates in this effort. The job of implementing EBCE is not easy, however. We must persuade our fellow public school supporters that this program is too good a baby to be thrown out with the bathwater.

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*A superintendent weighs many points of view when considering the possible adoption of an educational innovation:*

- *Does the program appear to meet district goals and objectives?*
- *Is there widespread support among students, staff, parents and interested citizens? If not, can we show them it is a good, workable thing to do?*
- *How will the program affect enrollments, teaching positions and the ongoing instructional program of the building and district?*
- *What kind of legal and financial considerations will the district and school board have to reckon with?*

*In the case of Washington, Pennsylvania Public Schools, EBCE came as a natural follow-on from strides taken in the district already—programs that contained the functional elements and assumptions of EBCE. After choosing the EBCE model that fit, the district committed itself to making sure teachers were prepared for the challenges and opportunities that were to come and launched a successful program that is helping adolescents confront the realities of career choices based on personal experiences.*

*Roy A. Brown is assistant superintendent of the Washington, Pennsylvania Public Schools—a position he has held since 1973. Dr. Brown has had experience at a variety of levels in education—first as a teacher and principal then as a teacher educator (Kutztown State College, Pennsylvania) and professor of education (State University of New York-Oneonta) and as director of instructional services for the Pennsylvania Department of Education. He holds a doctorate from Temple University.*

# **ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT SUPPORTS EBCE AS NATURAL STEP**

**Roy A. Brown  
Assistant Superintendent  
Washington, Pennsylvania  
Public Schools**

In our view, education should be an evolving and broadening experience. It is growth. It is developmental. It was well expressed some years ago by Roben Maaske who said: "Education is not a destination. It is only a journey. We are enroute."

It is in this vein that Washington School District offers Experience-Based Career Education as a way for young people to explore their community through the world of work. We believe the education system and the community should cooperate in preparing all individuals for a successful life of work. Further, we believe there must be a systematic way to acquaint students with the world of work from the elementary years to the time they leave school.

## **Background**

How did we choose Experience-Based Career Education in Washington School District? It had its roots during the 1974-75 school year as a cooperative venture with two other school systems in a project titled "The Urban-Suburban Interdisciplinary Humanities-Based Project."

Some of the purposes of this project were to:

- Provide significant life-learning situations by making the curriculum sensitive to human concerns and personal dignity and to teach students to apply these by constructive involvement in community affairs.
- Demonstrate the interrelatedness of subject matter disciplines while avoiding "unplanned" overlapping. At the same time, meaningful and selective overlapping was structured for greater learning efficiency and integration.
- Fuse the various disciplines and educational resources in order to reduce insulation of the teacher in a classroom and the isolation of subject areas.

Staff on this project noted some interesting ideas taking shape. One, the Intercommunity Alternative School, became the basis for our planning and implementing EBCE.

During 1975-76, the Washington School District also received a \$40,000 grant to develop a project entitled "Developing Career Images through Guidance." While this project has since been terminated, it generated additional insights into career education. Its goals were to:

- Develop and expand occupational awareness.
- Improve pupil performance by unifying and focusing basic subjects around a career development theme.
- Provide experiences for pupils to assist them in evaluating their interests, abilities, values and needs, as related to occupational roles.

Both of the above projects were natural building blocks for the idea of merging community learning and career exploration.

### **The Plan**

A study committee drafted an alternative school plan designed to provide students with opportunities to:

1. Observe community resources
2. Research community vocations
3. Experience various careers
4. Interact with various community groups
5. Develop an awareness of various socio-economic groups within the community
6. Compare and contrast their personal values with those of the community
7. Develop community-school resource persons

This led the administration and the staff to visit the Appalachia Educational Laboratory in Charleston, West Virginia, and the Academy for Career Education at Philadelphia's Olney High School, developed by Research for Better Schools (RBS).

What had we discovered? In both settings, we found a program where

- young people were exploring and pursuing careers of personal interest.
- young people were seeing the value of academic learning and using it in their out-of-school experiences.
- learning coordinators were individualizing the "academic" program for students using careers as the focus.

We were favorably impressed and believed that several aspects could be successfully applied to our school system. Both laboratories offered training, technical assistance and evaluation services.

The failure of educational innovations quite often may be attributed to ineffective implementation rather than defects in the ideas or plans themselves. Therefore, it is our hope that by utilizing the research and experience of the educational laboratory we can avoid the pitfalls of poor planning, inadequate resources and opposition. We can thus gain by gearing ourselves into this plan and by seeking support gained from research and experience.

### **Consideration**

During August, 1975, the staff and the administration made its financial commitment to EBCE and became a pilot site for the use of the RBS model. The affiliation with the Research for Better Schools provided us with the technical assistance to develop a workable plan.

The concept of exploring careers is reasonably new in our curriculum. The school board supported EBCE's basic premise that learners should function in the role of "actors" rather than "observers." They agreed that EBCE should be open to learners at all levels, providing direct experiences in the "real world" environment. Basic outcomes were to include:

- Knowledge concerning career possibilities and career ladders.
- Attitudes conducive to career responsibility.
- Knowledge and abilities related to general employability.
- Competency in specific occupations or other areas of career interest.

### **Staff Concerns**

Naturally, in any new endeavor, there are "fears" about how it will work, who will do it, how it will affect the academic program and other anxieties.

Thanks to existing positive feelings about the two federal projects and a vigorous ongoing program of in-service education, we were a long way toward our goal. Two additional steps were taken, however: (1) eight in-service sessions with emphasis on career education were scheduled throughout the school year and (2) a professional course on career education was offered with credit for certification.

Topics explored included:

1. What is career education?
2. What shall career education do?

3. What are occupational clusters?
4. What are some of the major concepts which career education attempts to achieve?
5. How do we plan for implementing career education?
6. Where do we start?
7. What are some suggestions we can use?

### **Implementation**

What did this mean? It meant that the district agreed to accept and use the staff training and other technical services provided by Research for Better Schools. It also meant that we had to build an organization. The next step was to appoint a person who could effect such a program. A job description for a person to lead the effort was developed. We wanted someone who would:

1. Extend learning beyond the classroom by:
  - arranging with community, business, and professional persons for pupils to observe and to explore the nature of service and work in each employer or business site
  - developing programs of learning in each of the job sites
  - coordinating learning activities between the student's classroom and the community and/or career program
2. Facilitate implementation by:
  - informing and working with the coordinating committee on the development of the program
  - moving the program from board approval to operation
  - assisting and organizing learning situations for the job site or resource person
3. Provide coordination for the program by:
  - assisting in the student selection process
  - serving in a guidance capacity with students
  - developing a resource center
4. Assist in the evaluation of the program by:
  - working with Research for Better Schools in determining how well objectives are being met
  - securing feed-back from community resources, agencies and job site personnel.

A coordinator with experience and background in community learning was appointed in August, 1975, to begin the process of working with staff, students, and community resources. During this period of time, a survey of students who would be interested in the program was made. Students were selected by the time the doors opened and the program began in February, 1976.

During this period, technical assistance provided by RBS proved to be very helpful. It included:

1. *Staff Training*—specific training for administrators, teachers and community participants in the operation of part or all of the RBS program or in the use of RBS techniques; assistance to supplement and/or adapt RBS materials.
2. *Consultant Services*—assistance in translating RBS career education into a local program; advice or assistance in dealing with particular problems relating to program planning and/or implementation.
3. *Evaluation Services*—assistance in tailoring the RBS evaluation package to local career education programs: machine scoring, data analysis and reporting services.
4. *Staff Development*—workshops designed to improve the professional skills of administrators and teachers involved in RBS program implementation, particularly with respect to program planning, project management and evaluation.
5. *Demonstration Network*—conferences and communication among participating districts concerning local adaptations, new EBCE approaches and materials, evaluation findings and further extension of EBCE programs.

In addition to the above services, RBS offered various support materials for staff reference both before and after the program was underway.

One of the first endeavors of our continued in-service effort was to effect a community-school program. This was a shared Career Day co-sponsored by the local chamber of commerce. The purposes were to acquaint both the staff and the community with how mutual involvement can affect learning through career education.

Student interest was solicited and their preliminary career interests were identified. Parent approval was secured. This was followed by meetings with business, commercial and professional agencies in the community that would serve initially as career cluster sites.

The initial clusters to be available for exploration were: health services (the

local hospital), financial services (banks, savings and loan institutions and real estate agencies), manufacturing (steel, electronics, etc.), law and justice (the state police, attorneys-at-law, magistrates, city police and the judicial-court system), and social services (United Way, welfare offices, clinics and public library).

Direct contact with each of the agencies was made and the site resource person was oriented to the nature and need of the program. Each site was monitored and supportive help given. Students and parents were also oriented to the program in small group sessions in the month preceding the beginning of the program.

### **Progress to Date**

What have we learned after this two-year venture? Obviously, every community that implements EBCE will modify the program in its own unique way. And even after it is in operation, changes will continue.

Based on formal and informal data gathered so far, our program is meeting most of the goals we first delineated:

1. A majority of students participated in the programs primarily to find out about careers. The second-ranked reason for enrollment was to receive counseling about what to do after high school. Together, these two reasons accounted for 65 percent of the primary reasons for joining the program.
2. Available evidence supports in part an increased level of career skills by the program group when compared to a comparison group. Growth in career knowledge was not shown within the program group or compared to the comparison group. The relatively short period between pretesting and posttesting could account for these results.
3. Students, parents and community leaders have shown favorable reactions to career education and endorse its continued operation.

The students' own opinions may be a more useful way to measure the endeavor, however:

*I like this program so far, except there is too much writing and too many reports and not enough time to do it. This program has shown me many interesting things about careers that I wouldn't have known if I hadn't joined. I also like small classes and open classes. You can learn faster with individual help. The first nine weeks I went to the education cluster at the new elementary school. This cluster taught me that I can work well and enjoy working with children. Teaching gives me a feeling of authority.*

Freshman

*I find that the program has helped me motivate myself. I have been trying a lot harder in school. It means a lot more to me now and I am thinking seriously about college. I am not a straight "A" student, but I feel trying your best is just as important as good grades. As far as specializing is concerned, I've learned and observed different things in advertising. I really enjoyed the people the most. With each person I've worked with, we ended up getting into a deep talk, and I feel I learned just as much if not more from that.*

Junior

*This program has helped me become aware of the opportunities out in the business world. As a person, I am now investigating a career that I had never considered before. I think this program has given me a little more confidence in greeting people.*

Senior

Students in their own way and style can succinctly reveal what EBCE is all about. Here are some anonymous comments from an informal survey:

1. What are some of the purposes for this kind of program?
  - *To give you the opportunity to know what's going on in the world.*
  - *To help find yourself in the business world and to give yourself a chance to find yourself.*
  - *To prepare yourself for the working world . . . (and) to find out what careers you are and are not interested in.*
2. Why or why not is this a good way of learning?
  - *Because you learn more about the "working" world; more than you probably would learn about in school.*
  - *I think it is. We learn from observing and asking questions of the people who do this job for a living and not from one of those "career" books. . . .*

If we restate the goals in the form of questions, I am certain students have answered "yes" to each one of them. Here they are:

1. Does it provide experiences to test "book learning" against the "real world" outside the classroom?
2. Does it provide for the college-bound student who wants to explore a tentative career before setting out on a post-secondary program of study?
3. Does it provide information and know-how needed to pursue career interests, to meet basic job prerequisites, to acquire entry-level skills, or to take the next step in career preparation?

4. Does it permit the student who has only vague notions of the "real world" to explore careers through direct experience?

### **Conclusion**

Overall, as we assess our program at this time, we recognize that career education with an appropriate mix of academic and career-exploration programs structured around occupational clusters will provide new and saleable skills to every student. It points our high school toward a more comprehensive educational experience. On balance, this is an idea which will permit a new flexibility and attention to individualization—a plan which permits some young people to learn in a way that is better for them.

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## PART II: GATHERING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

EBCE cannot operate without the commitment of students, parents, community workplaces and various interest groups in a position to either make or break the program.

Union officials have been involved in the planning and implementation of EBCE since its inception. Labor leaders like *Marilyn Alexander*, an organizer with the Pennsylvania Social Services Union, see EBCE as a way to help young people understand the contributions of labor and its concerns about work and education.

Employers are the ones who must decide if the staff time will be given to students in EBCE programs. Managers like *Bill Lehnert*, a product development official with Georgia-Pacific (the international building materials manufacturer), have voluntarily opened their offices, laboratories and factories to young people interested in how the adult world functions. Despite the many hours his company gives, Lehnert knows the payoff in terms of contributions to industry and society via better prepared and more satisfied job-holders.

For parents who are products of traditional educational systems, EBCE is a daring step to take. *Hilda Via* was both enthusiastic and reluctant when her high school daughter, Marilyn, asked if she could apply to a Charleston, West Virginia EBCE program. Even though she is an innovative educator herself, Ms. Via was worried about the credibility and impact of a program that guides young people away from the sheltered classroom toward student self-initiative and responsibility. She is now convinced she made the right decision after seeing the difference EBCE made for Marilyn, who is presently enrolled in a four-year college program and majoring in speech and hearing disorders.

Labor organizations have long been concerned about education and the rewards it offers to individuals as they carry out various life roles. Unions have traditionally supported efforts to improve educational opportunities—particularly when it comes to helping individuals find, hold and succeed in a job, and to take advantage of off-hour educational and leisure-time opportunities. It was only natural that EBCE benefit from the advice and participation of labor leaders—particularly as members of program advisory committees and as resource contacts for students.

Unions have had cause for concern about certain community-based educational practices, however. Questions often raised include:

- Are there safeguards for the health and safety of students and workers?
- Will the productivity of a student (even though in a learning situation) at the same time provide an obvious economic return for the employer? If so, the student should be paid.
- Is there absolute certainty an adult worker's job will not be threatened by students involved at this work place?

On the other hand, union leaders are eager for young people to gain a true picture of the contributions of labor to the well-being of today's labor force. They want to make sure students in EBCE (some of them their own children) understand the role of unions by visiting and becoming involved at union worksettings.

Likewise, unions themselves are employers offering a wide range of career possibilities in the field of labor-management relations.

**Marilyn Alexander** is a local organizer for the Pennsylvania Social Services Union, Local 668, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union, AFL-CIO. She takes every opportunity she can to help young people at Philadelphia's Academy for Career Education understand the labor movement and its contributions to the free enterprise system. At the same time, she can point out the career opportunities she and others have found within organized labor. Ms. Alexander earned a BA in speech and drama from Fisk University in Nashville and later was awarded a master's degree in student personnel administration with emphasis on guidance and counseling from Howard University in Washington, D.C. Before joining the Pennsylvania Social Services Union she was an academic advisor for students enrolled in an educational opportunity program at Clarion State College in Clarion, Pennsylvania.

## UNION ORGANIZER HELPS STUDENTS UNDERSTAND LABOR

Marilyn Alexander  
Organizer  
Pennsylvania Social Services Union  
Local 668, SEIU, AFL-CIO

Most high school youth enter the labor force today with very little knowledge about organized labor. Only one-fourth of the working force in the United States belongs to unions or other collective bargaining associations; however, employees are joining unions at an average rate of 100 people a day. Theoretically speaking, while only one out of every four high school students may work at a unionized institution, the other three students may have contact with labor activities—even if an initial organizing campaign.

Indeed, if education is to be truly comprehensive, it must include exposure to the history and functions of the labor movement. As misconceptions are dispelled and more employees join unions, a greater job market is created for our youth with careers in organized labor. Without accurate information about unions, most students will only hear about strikes and other confrontations when in fact only one percent of all contracts negotiated across the country actually end in strikes or lockouts.

It is also important for youth to understand that careers in the labor movement itself provide both stimulating and interesting work as well as challenging opportunities and upward mobility. Students involved in EBCE programs are in an ideal position to learn firsthand about these possibilities. Just as the range of jobs in a business varies by size, so do union careers vary as membership and services grow. In some small unions, a business agent may also be an organizer, contract negotiator, labor attorney representative and editor. The following jobs illustrate the diversity of jobs young persons interested in labor careers might consider:

- *Business agent* or field representative are usually elected offices, requiring no college degree and consist mostly of filing grievances, coordinating labor-management meetings and making sure employees receive benefits.
- *Contract negotiators* are responsible for negotiating contracts and doing research on economic trends. Persons in these roles usually hold a college degree and may be hired by the international organization.
- *Executive directors or presidents* are usually elected officers and must coordinate staff, maintain cross-union contracts and recom-

mend policy and procedures to the executive board. No college degree is required.

- *Assistant/associate directors* coordinate arbitrations and grievances, do research on specific programs and investigate various benefit programs. No college degree is required.
- *Editors* are usually hired because of their journalistic background and are responsible for all union news, press releases and public relations.
- *Secretaries* for unions have the same kinds of skills all office workers need.
- *Labor attorneys* are responsible for representation hearings, arbitrations, and may conduct labor law seminars and handle some negotiating as well. They must have a law degree and are hired rather than elected.
- *Mediators/arbitrators* make determinations for contract negotiations and grievances and are hired by state and federal agencies. They must usually have a college degree.
- *National directors of programs* work for international associations and handle functions like (a) organizing, (b) research and (c) political education. They coordinate national programs by sending information to local unions and frequently traveling to locals. The work usually does not require a college degree but it helps.
- *National Labor Relations Board (NRLB)* representatives handle representation hearings, investigate unfair labor practice charges and conduct elections. Many of these persons hold master's degrees.
- *Directors of labor-related groups* such as CLUW (Coalition of Labor Union Women), the Committee for Full Employment, and joint union councils are usually elected but may be appointed by an elected committee. These persons coordinate efforts of members through various campaigns and community support activities. College degree would not be essential.

Salaries from one union to another vary depending on the size and needs of membership. Qualifications for many of the above positions may differ as much as the salaries. Ultimately, a person must have a dedication and commitment to helping others, an ability to relate well to employees as well as management, usually an ability to travel and a willingness to devote some evenings to meetings.

Generally, union staff are hired from within the ranks of the represented membership. Very often a person who has been a shop steward begins to take an interest in helping more employees or serving employees better. Every position in the union is geared toward servicing the member, so it is relatively important those staff members understand the fundamental needs of the general membership.

Rewards for these positions are often intangible, the personal satisfaction of knowing you saved a job or helped someone resolve an unfair treatment. A union staff person must meet challenges ranging from one individual with one small problem with a supervisor to totally redesigning a structure to make an institution run more effectively for management and employees alike.

Most of this paper has been devoted to positions in unions; however, management provides career opportunities in labor areas also. Management hires labor relations specialists, contract negotiators and/or labor attorneys depending again on the size of the company. More detailed information on labor-management careers should be available from larger companies.

By coming into contact with persons in union-related careers through EBCE, students will recognize the skills they would need: English, speech communications and problem-solving math (as opposed to algebra and geometry). Social science-related experience should give students a background in helping others and understanding economic principles that explain general societal trends. It would be useful for students to examine labor history, collective bargaining, personal rights and political trends.

There are 70,000 local labor unions throughout the entire country. Each union is as different as the employees it represents. Career education needs to open more informational doors about labor opportunities not only for the benefit of the student but for the entire democratic system.

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*EBCE asks employers to participate in ways they probably never considered. Schools traditionally call a community resource person to speak in classrooms and host field trips, but sending students off-campus for extended observation and experience is an idea whose time has come.*

*The results have been surprising: employees look forward to sharing information and insights about their work with curious young people. These adult-student interactions have nontangible benefits as well. Students learn things about themselves and adults that textbooks don't teach; at the same time, resource persons discover some things about youth that seldom match the stereotypes.*

*Yet, perhaps the most surprising reaction employers have to EBCE is the learning opportunities that are part of their everyday tasks—how to apply reading and math skills, resolve complex problems in human relationships, use scientific principles and understand political processes are examples.*

*EBCE tries to take the fullest advantage of the "hidden curriculum" in average community situations. The discovery is often amazing for students, employers and EBCE staff alike.*

**C. W. (Bill) Lehnert** is manager of product development and technical services of the Georgia-Pacific Corporation's Gypsum Division in Tigard, Oregon. Georgia-Pacific is an international building materials enterprise with headquarters in Portland. Mr. Lehnert's major work is research and development on the manufacture and use of gypsum—activities which have been of high interest to EBCE students visiting his site. Since 1972, he has also been a charter member of the board of directors for the original EBCE program operating in Tigard. Mr. Lehnert has been with Georgia-Pacific for 25 years, entering his career after earning a degree in chemical engineering. As a professional in his field, he is a representative of the American Society of Testing and Materials and chairs the technical committee of the Gypsum Association.

## **EMPLOYER SEES LONG-TERM BENEFITS**

**Bill Lehnert  
Manager, Gypsum Division  
Georgia-Pacific Corporation  
Tigard, Oregon**

The need for a better method of education became apparent to me years ago as I embarked on my own professional career. The large number of students who accepted jobs out of high school or college only to leave after a year or so was astonishing. It seemed that for every person who remained with their first employer, there were at least a dozen who changed jobs—some of whom went into completely new fields. Even among those who became permanent employees, there were many dissatisfied persons who probably should have made a change. It seemed to me there must be some form of education, other than the conventional system, that would enable people to make better occupational choices.

About that time, the company I was working for engaged in a cooperative program with a local engineering college. Students alternately attended classes for six months and spent six months in industry, requiring about five years (no summers off) to complete a bachelor's degree. The student could choose industry experience from a number of participating companies and was compensated at a standard rate set by the institution. This permitted the young adult to gain experience with three or four different companies while still enrolled in formal education. The advantages for the student were: (1) a pay check, (2) a chance to make coursework more meaningful by seeing classroom learning used in real settings, (3) an opportunity to evaluate several different employers and (4) impressive work and education experience to include on job applications. The advantages for the employer were at least two in number: (1) inexpensive technical assistance and (2) the chance to "look over" prospective candidates for employment and make comparisons so hiring could be more selective.

Such cooperative education programs arose because of weaknesses in the conventional college education system. First, there is little or no contact between the schools and the business community. The student must guess what kind of work might be satisfying later on with the choice depending on job availability, salary, advancement opportunities or employee benefits. While these are logical factors to consider, there is little firsthand information about the really important question: Is this the work I am best suited for and will enjoy doing?

A second weakness is that education tends to be theoretical rather than practical. Many college instructors seem to believe they are preparing students to become college professors rather than practitioners. Their prim-

ary message to the best students tends to be "pursue higher degrees and follow my footsteps." This isolation between education and business hurts both communities and can cause education to fall behind technology while the industrial community becomes rusty in the basics.

A third weakness of the conventional system is that the abrupt change from sheltered classrooms to an industrial situation is a psychological shock for many students. Cooperative education programs lessen the adjustment required for the transition from school to work.

As a concerned parent, taxpayer and employer, I took every opportunity to talk to educators and businesspersons like myself to explore ways to unite business and education in a system that would better meet the career needs of all students. In early 1972, I was approached by staff from Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and Tigard, Oregon public schools to consider the possibilities of developing an EBCE program in our community. I immediately expressed interest and later found that my company management was also supporting career education in a somewhat different form through the Portland, Oregon school system. Our suburban Tigard experiment became known as Community Experiences for Career Education, Inc., or (CE)<sub>2</sub>. It progressed through four years of development and operation within the community and is currently offered by the Tigard school system as a permanent educational alternative for high school students. Since (CE)<sub>2</sub> has been in existence, we have had about 40 students in our Product Development Laboratory of Georgia-Pacific; yet, students have had experiences in other corporate divisions and departments of the company as well.

Students come to us with either of two purposes in mind: to explore the work we do in general or to complete a more in-depth learning project. The exploration involves about four days to gain an overview of an employer site to see what kinds of jobs are performed there and to determine whether the student has potential interest in learning about any of these positions more closely. The learning project may involve several weeks of carefully planned learning activities. In both cases, students are assigned to an employee who coordinates the student's experiences. These resource persons are almost always anxious to explain and demonstrate their job functions to students. Some say they wish they could have had a similar opportunity when they were in school.

We are often asked if students actually contribute to the work we do. (CE)<sub>2</sub>'s policy is that students are never compensated financially and are not to be commercially productive. We encourage students to become involved in whatever job function they are monitoring because we feel this is the best way to familiarize them with the job. Any employer who hopes to gain commercially will be disappointed. This is a major difference

between EBCE and the college-sponsored cooperative education program described earlier.

In my judgment there must be a willingness on the employer's part to make a contribution to career education without expecting short-term benefits. While it is true that in the four years of my participation in EBCE, our laboratory has gained one part-time employee and another full-time employee who were former (CE)<sub>2</sub> students, training prospective employees has not been our goal. As an employer, I must realize that the ultimate benefit is helping students identify careers that are appropriate and productive for them personally—whether those careers are in our laboratory or in an entirely different setting.

As a resource person for many students myself, the most notable change I saw in students was their ability to make commitments and keep them and a better appreciation of the time and effort required to accomplish a task. For the most part, students beginning the program were directionless and lackadaisical in their approach to projects. They also placed little value on their employer's time or their own time. During a conference before agreeing to accept a student for in-depth learning activities, we insist on certain commitments. The student must be punctual, advise us of anticipated absences and stay on schedule in completing the learning project. In every instance, the students have accepted this challenge and followed through. In some cases, they need to be reminded of their commitments but this is part of their learning experience.

As more students came to our site, we learned how to accommodate them. In several cases, we arranged special interviews with employees in our legal and personnel departments so they could get more exposure. One of the most rewarding projects involved a student who asked to investigate a career in management. The student was very bright but unmotivated and was struggling through activities built around the work of a product development engineer. I agreed to the management exposure if the young man would "shape up" and complete all present assignments. His attitude began to change because there was something to work for.

When he started the management emphasis, we set some standards. He had to begin to look and act like a manager, he had to complete his reports on time, he had to devote whatever time was required to follow-through on learning activities. It would involve a lot of my time and I wanted assurance that he would be accountable. We gave him management tapes to listen to, written reports to read, interviews to conduct and reading and research on all aspects of management. He was to submit a monthly report for one department and take a management test which we prepared at the conclusion of a one-month period.

While I spent more time than I planned, the results were gratifying. At the

conclusion of the project, the student had a good concept of the basic principles of successful management and passed our test with flying colors. He is in college now and I am confident that at least some of the benefits of the experience will be retained and eventually help him make a career choice. Of course, this was an exceptional case, but it does illustrate what can be accomplished through EBCE.

The long-term career education goals for both educators and employers are the same. Both parties should be willing to wait for the long-term benefits: graduates who are better prepared to take their places in the community. Students involved in EBCE should be better able to make job decisions and better prepared for the adjustment in the world of work. There should be less attrition as a result of job changes. If the impact of EBCE is eventually large enough, it could significantly help our national unemployment problem. The alternative is an ever-widening gap between the education and business communities and increasing differences of opinion about whether we are getting the best value for our education dollar.

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To agree that their child will enroll in an alternative educational program that gives credit for non-traditional learning is seldom an easy decision for many parents: "If classrooms, textbooks, tests at the end of the chapter and bells ringing every 40 minutes were good for me they were good for my kids too."

Yet, when concerned parents take a good look at EBCE, they like what they see. Most say, "I wish there had been something like this around when I was in school," knowing how useful it would have been to explore several fields of work before settling on one.

Right up until their son or daughter enrolls, however, most parents wonder if the education their child will receive in EBCE will be truly comprehensive in scope, if it will be fully sanctioned by employers and post-secondary institutions, if being enrolled means missing out on the fun of high school and its many opportunities for social and academic development.

What surprises most parents after their children are involved in EBCE is the new outlook on life students bring home. There's much more to talk about and dream about. There's much more understanding about why reading, math, writing and speech skills are important. Parents, in turn, have more opportunities to get involved with their youngsters' learning and talk over progress with school staff.

Most of them, in fact, try to make sure that siblings who follow can also enroll.

**Hilda B. Via**, former teacher and currently principal of Kanawha City Elementary School in Charleston, West Virginia, received a BS degree in education from Morris Harvey College and an MA from Marshall University, Huntington, West Virginia, and has participated in continuing education programs at the University of North Carolina and Virginia Polytechnic Institute. She is a strong advocate for the continuous-progress, non-graded approach to elementary education and has chaired committees exploring these innovations in Kanawha County.

Mrs. Via is a member of county, state and national principals' associations, having served as president of the county organization in 1973. She is an active member of Phi Delta Kappa (Kanawha Valley Chapter) and Delta Kappa Gamma Society (Beta Chapter). In 1976 she was named "Boss of the Year" by the American Business Women's Association, Charleston Chapter.

## **PARENT SAYS YES—AND IS GLAD SHE DID**

Hilda B. Via  
Mother and Educator  
Charleston, West Virginia

As a mother of three, the last of whom was an EBCE student and now a college freshman, I can now reflect on their high school years more objectively. The pleasures I shared with my high school senior daughter were very gratifying. Not long before, however, two sons had graduated from high school—each often unhappy and discouraged about learning experiences there.

The apparent goals of the teachers in those traditional classrooms were three in number: (1) attend class, (2) respond to questions with factual answers, and (3) score well on the next test. They were less concerned about motivating students to become involved in more innovative learning experiences that encouraged them to function as the mature individuals most students are. Their desire to attend technical school was thwarted because they also wanted college experience; consequently, both were completely frustrated when they began to make decisions about college-related careers. A general studies approach seemed to be the only alternative open.

So, just one year later, was my daughter going to have to choose either a college, vocational or general studies track as well? Was she to rely on a guidance counselor's suggestions? Must she pursue the general studies approach until her mind was made up?

As with most parents, we continued to ask Marilyn, "What career do you want to work toward when you enter college?" We obtained the usual literature from various colleges and talked about all the possibilities. But how could she really know that any particular career was the one for her?

Late in Marilyn's junior year, she was introduced to and learned more about the EBCE program, which was to be available to seniors the following year. She was immediately pleased at the thought of a program that was geared to a student's academic needs and would provide an opportunity to go into the work world for actual job experiences alongside admired adults whose career she might like to follow. She learned that EBCE was for any student interested in a different approach to learning regardless of ability.

Being a school administrator and having provided a job site and served as resource person for students in EBCE already, I was aware of some of the advantages the program provides—seeing students grow in self-confidence and responsibility, gaining and sharing experiences equally with an adult,

making decisions and, most importantly, being accepted as an adult making a worthwhile contribution. I was certain that such a program was a great step forward, whether students planned to enter college or work after leaving high school.

During the summer we had a chance to inquire more about the program. We talked to several students and parents who had only good reports to give. Yet, when September neared and her decision to accept her slot in the program was to be made, we each became somewhat apprehensive. As an educator, I had tried many innovative programs in my classrooms. Yet, with my experience and background in traditional education and as a parent, I was skeptical. I wondered if this program would really prepare her for college. Could she possibly learn without being in a classroom daily? What would she miss if she were not on the high school campus all day with her friends? Would she feel socially cheated of extracurricular activities by choosing an alternative program?

Then we gave consideration to some of the apparent outstanding differences in the EBCE program as compared to a traditional one:

1. The prospect of having a learning program planned to meet her individual needs, based on her ability and interests.
2. The freedom to approach the academics through different activities, being relieved of the pressures and often boredom of the textbook-oriented traditional classroom.
3. The opportunity to explore a variety of careers through job site assignments and to be able to evaluate each experience under the guidance of a learning coordinator.

In addition, EBCE staff assured us she would be able to return to the campus for chemistry and to follow through with her volunteer assignment as a gym assistant. She also would have time to satisfy her love for sports as a member of the girls' basketball team.

The merits of the EBCE program won out. It seemed a dream come true for Marilyn and her decision to participate in the program was definite.

It would be misleading to say there were no obstacles to overcome. The beginning weeks were successful, but the adjustment to doing "school" work without class periods was not easy. Time management was essential and so were a whole set of new study skills. However, under the guidance of her learning coordinator, Marilyn began to develop reading and writing skills and the power to express herself creatively and to think critically, all of which made learning more meaningful. She was enthusiastic. She began to grow in self-discipline and confidence. Her entire attitude was more positive. Shortly after her learning program was designed, she began to

explore community experience sites. She had previously thought about many careers and eliminated only one—teaching. The months ahead were to give her the tools to eliminate others and reinforce those that were more interesting and realistic.

EBCE was to help Marilyn avoid uncertainties in her career decision making through a process of elimination. She thought she wanted to go into social work and psychology; however, after job site experiences in these areas, she knew she probably couldn't leave others' problems at the job site but would likely worry about them at home. While she still wanted to work with people, the reality of a social work career let her know this was not for her.

It was apparent that the resource sites were carefully chosen and did provide students with experiences which developed self-confidence and a sense of responsibility. That time shared with working adults helps students strengthen communication skills and gain an appreciation, trust and respect for working adults. In return, I think that many adults also became more positive in their attitude toward youth. Throughout the year, then, each carefully chosen site and resource person was to influence Marilyn's decision about various careers until now she knows why she is in college majoring in speech and hearing disorders. She felt no need to enroll in general studies to pass time before making a career choice.

Long before her graduation, any doubts I may have had about EBCE vanished. Her individualized instructional program was comprehensive and challenging.

Written progress reports and parent teacher conferences were more meaningful than any traditional grade card. Encouragement of staff was a very strong and supportive part of the program.

I'm confident that without EBCE Marilyn would be a struggling college freshman. Instead, she is a confident student able to cope with the problems and challenges that face every beginning college student—yes, even to appreciate the position of the professor.

Certainly, my experience with EBCE indicates that it does provide quality education and incentives for learning for students who want to leave the structured traditional classroom and become involved in a different approach to education. However, students should make their own decisions about participation after careful orientation. Students must accept responsibility for fulfilling obligations according to guidelines agreed on through a contract with a learning coordinator. They must be willing to become involved in each job site to improve skills and explore career values. As in traditional schools, parents also have an obligation to become involved in

their youngster's education by demonstrating interest in the program, providing encouragement and taking advantage of parent-teacher conference opportunities.

To evaluate the future acceptance of EBCE, I could only say that any school program is only as successful as its product. If a program provides quality learning experiences and skills that are measurable by parents, then parents will be supportive of the program—whether their youngsters are immediately college-bound or job-bound after leaving secondary schools. As EBCE programs expand and the public becomes more aware of their real advantages, it has the potential to modify the values and attitudes of not only educators but the general public who support our schools.

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## PART III: BUILDING AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

After policy-level and community support is assured, someone has to carry the ball. In larger school systems responsibility for EBCE coordination may be handed to a full-time specialist who pulls ideas and people together. *Robert Blum* has been providing that kind of leadership for the Jefferson County Public Schools in suburban Denver, Colorado, where EBCE is taking several forms as part of system-wide commitment to career education.

The final go-no go decision still rests with the building principal, however. In Orlando, Florida *John Pitts* took over the reins of a large, comprehensive high school as it completed planning for an EBCE program. After participating in staff training and observing the effects EBCE has had on students, faculty, parents and the community at large, he has given the program his full support.

At first glance, long-time teachers in public schools may write off EBCE as another passing fancy. A closer look reveals that EBCE is vastly different from regular classroom instruction. *Carnetta Britton* had logged 11 years in the Kanawha County Schools of West Virginia before becoming an EBCE staff member. She is now convinced that EBCE is filling a void that has been missing for a long time in American schools—indepth field experience. She has been impressed with student growth in independent judgment and self confidence.

*Kathy Wischer*, involved in EBCE from the initial planning stage through three years of successful operation, tells how she applied for learning coordinator for an EBCE program in Kodiak, Alaska. She describes some typical daily tasks faced by a staff learning coordinator and foresees a time when all teachers might try EBCE techniques to help young people look ahead more confidently to adulthood.

*Top administrators in school districts are sensitive to the ebb and flow of good ideas in education. They receive advice from taxpayers, parents, teachers, students, consultants, professional journals, popular books, television talk shows and college professors to name a few. Every curriculum change has to be analyzed carefully to assess its viability and cost-effectiveness for that particular district at that particular time.*

*Career education and experiential learning using community resources are powerful and complementary concepts that are wedded in EBCE. Pilot programs developed in districts across the country have been impressively effective to date—even if only for a fraction of the school-aged population. Now, with programs spreading to all states and with hundreds of students enrolled, decisionmakers have solid, operational models to follow. The task is easier, of course, if a base of support and commitment has already been established.*

*Robert Blum has been associated with a school district identified nationally as one of the "doers" in career education. Jefferson County, Colorado has moved forcefully to implement career education in all grades. EBCE is one of the avenues used at both the junior and senior high school levels—with more and more youngsters involved each year. Before his appointment as career education coordinator in the district, Dr. Blum was an assistant junior high principal, a vice president for development in an educational systems firm, and an assistant professor of education at the Ohio State University. His early teaching career specialty was industrial arts, a field that has benefited from his considerable research and writing contributions.*

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# **CURRICULUM LEADER BLENDS EBCE INTO DISTRICT PROGRAM**

**Robert E. Blum**  
Career Education Coordinator  
Jefferson County Public Schools  
Lakewood, Colorado

Before describing how Experience-Based Career Education is becoming an ever more significant part of the Jefferson County, Colorado public schools, a brief description of our community and school system seems useful.

## **Jefferson County and the Jefferson County Public Schools**

Jefferson County (Jeffco) is a rapidly-growing, suburban Denver county covering some 783 square miles with a population of over 300,000. The area includes moderately dense population areas that border on the city of Denver. Jeffco—while including semi-rural, isolated mountain communities—is primarily a bedroom community for Denver but is actively building a business base of management, retail trade and light industrial establishments.

The Jefferson County Public School District is a county-wide consolidated school system with over 80,000 students, approximately 120 schools and nearly 6,000 certified and noncertified employees. The school district is the largest in Colorado and is divided into six geographic areas for administrative purposes. Program development in areas like career education is coordinated centrally through a cooperative arrangement between curriculum directors and coordinators and area and building personnel. In order to accommodate a relatively large growth in student enrollment without building new schools, the district is moving toward full implementation of year-round schooling. Over the past several years, the Board of Education has had a high priority on improving achievement in basic skills areas, including math, language arts and reading. Having seen dramatic improvements in these basic skills, the board is now beginning to establish new priority areas, including career and vocational education.

## **Career Education in Jefferson County**

Jefferson County became involved in career education in 1971 through a state planning contract. The purpose was to plan for the implementation of career education at the high school level. As work on the planning contract evolved, a proposal was prepared and submitted requesting that Jefferson County be selected as one of the national school-based career education models funded by the U.S. Office of Education. As a result of this joint state/local effort, Jefferson County was selected as one of the six Com-

prehensive Career Education Model (CCEM) project sites. Work on the CCEM project began in September of 1971. For the next two years, Jefferson County and five other sites in cooperation with the Center for Vocational Education at The Ohio State University worked at a furious pace to develop and implement career education programs. The CCEM project ended in August, 1973, prior to completion of a comprehensive program. Jefferson County had gained a great deal of experience in preparing and delivering career education experiences and had available a large number of curriculum units for use within the district. As the CCEM project ended, the National Institute of Education funded each of the six participating school districts to prepare a plan for implementing a comprehensive career education program within their own districts. The duration of the contract was one year and the expected result was a comprehensive plan for implementation. The Prospectus which resulted calls for full implementation of a comprehensive career education program. It has been fully discussed by educators and local patrons alike, approved by the Board of Education, and now serves as a plan for all work we do. All activities included in the plan are supported with local funds.

We believe career education should be implemented in grades K-12. Most of our early efforts were devoted to establishing a career education program at the elementary level. During the past two years, the emphasis has gradually changed to the secondary grades. While our plan suggests several approaches at both the junior and senior high school, the strategies may be divided comfortably into two categories—in-school and out-of-school. The in-school portion includes counseling services to facilitate self-assessment and career planning, experiences that facilitate student use of a career center, and activity-oriented explorations in 12 career clusters. The out-of-school category as originally conceived was to include a wide range of techniques for putting students in contact with adults in a variety of community settings. Techniques such as a day-on-the-job, shadowing, short-term explorations, and 9-12 week internships were to be included. The goal was to provide a full range of experiences in the community to meet the needs of secondary level students having a full range of interests and abilities.

While both in-school and out-of-school segments are being developed simultaneously, priority has now been given to development and testing of the community-based portion using Experience-Based Career Education as the primary framework. The district's career education staff, top level management team, Board of Education and citizens at-large view the community as a primary resource for the educational process and further view career education as the vehicle through which school-community cooperation should be established.

### **Development of the Community or Experience-Based Segment**

The Jefferson County Public Schools have established a process for de-

veloping new or changing existing curriculum. The process is rather typical of curriculum development efforts and includes the following main steps:

1. Needs assessment
2. Goal setting and program development
3. Pilot testing, evaluation and revision
4. Field testing, evaluation and revision
5. Districtwide implementation

Development of the community/experience-based portion of the career education program is following the steps outlined above. The first step was to conduct a needs assessment regarding community/experience-based career education. The overall purpose of this needs assessment was to provide recommendations relating to the need for and the nature of community/experience-based strategies for career education in Jefferson County. The needs assessment was divided into three parts so that data would be collected from the three populations to be involved in this portion of the program: community resources, students and school staff.

### **Community Resources Needs Assessment**

We felt we should first determine the capability and willingness of business, industry, the professions, and private and public community agencies and organizations to support the goals of career education and become involved in the community experience portion of the program.

Using a carefully tested and revised questionnaire, a sample of 390 area community resources representing 12 career clusters was drawn from the rosters of the six area Chambers of Commerce. The instrument (See Fig. 1), a brochure describing career education in Jefferson County, a business reply envelope and an explanatory letter were sent to each person included in the sample. Letters of explanation were cosigned by presidents of the various Chambers of Commerce. A telephone follow-up was conducted within a week of the mailing to increase what turned out to be a 47 percent return.

Very strong general support was given to the career education concept, with a particularly strong willingness to participate considering that many respondents had little or no direct knowledge of career education. High support was given to various types of community/experience-based career education activities that made only small demands, and nearly 25 percent responded positively to items demanding considerable effort on the part of community resources. Many respondents indicated instances of career-related activities already ongoing at various community resource sites, particularly cooperative vocational education programs. Most respondents

felt senior high school students would benefit most from career-related experiences at community resource sites. Overall, the survey reinforced the notion that community/experience-based career education activities were both needed and possible.



## Community Experience Survey

Please check the appropriate responses to the following questions. (N.B. Your answers do not represent a commitment on the part of you or your organization.)

	Yes	No	Not sure
1. Do you favor a career experience program for students that includes a number of career related experiences in the community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you favor career related experiences in school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Would your organization be willing to participate in a career experience program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Assuming adequate organization and supervision of students by school personnel, which of the following types of experiences do you think are possibilities?			
A. 1-3 hour visitation to your site by individual or small groups of students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. 1-3 day observation of workers in your establishment by a career interested student(s).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Completing a career related classroom assignment at your site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Short term observation for a career interested student(s) (placing a career interested student with a worker full time for 2 to 3 weeks).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Part-time observation/participation (having a career interested student(s) work and observe at your place of business periodically, 3-5 p.m. one day per week for example, for several weeks).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Long term non-paid observation/participation (placing a career interested student with a worker in your place of business for a period of 8-12 weeks).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Sending persons from your organization to schools to talk with groups of students, put on career related demonstrations or conduct career related seminars.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Employing a student(s) part-time for pay in cooperation with organized vocational education programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Do you have materials describing your organization and the career opportunities found there that you would be willing to make available to the schools?

8. Would you like more information regarding the Jefferson County Public Schools Career Education Program?

Name of Business/Industry \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Kind of Business \_\_\_\_\_

Fig 1: Community Experience Survey Instrument

## **Staff and Student Needs Assessment**

Assessing staff needs took an entirely different format. On the advice of senior high school principals, small group discussions were held at each of the district's 12 high schools with more than 120 department chairpersons participating.

The same approach was used with groups of 8 to 10 students from each of grade levels 10, 11 and 12 at each of the twelve high schools. Approximately 360 students participated in these discussions.

The top priority concern of both staff and students was attendance. There seemed to be a deep concern, especially on the part of students, regarding missing classes for the purpose of participating in community/experience-based career education activities. The second highest priority concern related to the existing curriculum. Students expressed concern as to what courses should be required and what should be electives. Most students felt that career education experiences should be elective. Students also pointed to the need for earlier planning for high school. They suggested career exploration should start at the junior high school level. They also stressed the need to make any experience very practical. A third concern related especially to the identification of a person who would coordinate the use of community resources by students and staff. School staff members were especially concerned about having a responsible person, student/teacher ratio, and additional tasks to be undertaken by teachers. A fourth concern centered on the existing school schedule and staff structure. Many staff members felt any major changes to the school scheduling or staffing patterns could be destructive to the good of the order of the school.

The second major grouping of student and staff responses was related to the need for career exploration. Generally, the responses reflected overwhelming support for career exploration activities involving the use of community resources.

The third major grouping of student and staff responses provided suggestions on implementation of a career education program. The highest priority item was the amount of time allocated and whether it should be during school hours or on students' out of school time. Suggestions in this area ranged from having career club activities to block scheduling and included use of formal summer time in order to provide community/experience-based career exploration programs. The second highest priority response concerned observation and participation experiences. Most wanted experiences in the community related to the courses they were taking. A third priority area involved suggestions that more flexible scheduling be accomplished, allowing students to challenge required courses and use adult education offerings for required courses in order to allow more time during the day for community/experience-based career education experiences.

The fourth major grouping of responses related to the identification of existing career-related activities that presently use community resources—primarily speakers, tours, career fairs, college nights and visitations. The most active use of community-based experiences was in cooperative vocational education programs that provide on-the-job training and supervision. Some students have become involved on their own through employment at community resource sites.

The faculty and students alike felt young people are receiving inadequate career direction and career-related experiences. The majority of students indicated no firm career plans or directions. The few who did possess firm career directions had completed career-related experiences.

### **Program Planning**

The next step toward a pilot test of the community/experience-based portion of the career education program was to draw up a tentative design for the community/experience-based portion of the career education program. A two-day conference included an area superintendent, a senior high school principal, a high school counselor, three teachers representing different subject areas, two high school students, two representatives from community resource sites and career education department personnel. Participants reviewed the needs assessment data and drew up a tentative program design (Fig. 2).

After staff spent long hours reviewing EBCE and related community-based programs, a presentation of the EBCE programs was made to the Division of Instructional Planning and Development directors and a decision was made to use variations of EBCE developed by two laboratories as the basis for the Jefferson County community/experience-based program. It was also decided in this meeting that pilot tests would be conducted in three schools, one junior high involving 8th and 9th grade students, one senior high involving 10th grade students and one senior high involving 12th grade students.

### **Pilot Testing Exploring Careers in the Community**

Special attention was given to naming the community-based portion of the career education program in Jefferson County. *Exploring Careers in the Community* (ECC) seemed to be the most descriptive title.

Having made a decision to proceed with pilot testing, school selection became the next task. The primary consideration in establishing any new program is willingness of the school and area staff to support the new program. The introduction of the program was first made to junior and senior high school principals. Every principal had the option to apply as a pilot site. Once initial interest was indicated by the school and principal, discussions were initiated with the area superintendent to determine the

## EXPLORING CAREERS IN THE COMMUNITY GRADES 8-12

### PROGRAM PURPOSES:

- **Individualized** - Designed to meet individual students' career needs by identification of student awareness of interests, values, abilities by means of structured interview techniques and paper and pencil testing. (CVS, CMI, SMI, etc.) in preparation for community career experiences.
- **Flexible** - The proposed program is flexible in that the student would be able to choose full or part time involvement according to individual needs.
- **Students are Accountable**
  - Program forces student to be accountable regarding his or her career exploration performance, objectives and goals.
- **An Interdisciplinary program**
  - The program is interdisciplinary in that it will encompass all school courses as they relate to activities in the world of work and careers.
- **Compatible** - Program utilizes school structure and schedule.
- **Meets Credit Requirements**
  - Students will be able to satisfy graduation requirements as well as entry requirements for future career pursuits. In view of these considerations the following credit recommendations are suggested.
    - **Full-time participation (Per Quarter)**

Language Arts	.25
Social Studies	.25
Others according to program (Math, Science, etc.)	.25
Career Education	.50
Total	1.25
    - **Part-time participation (Per Quarter)**

Career Education (Additional options depending on schedule and needs)	.50
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- **Combines Community and School Resources**
  - Community and school resources will support the development of basic skills, life skills and career development through learning strategies.

- **Selection** - In order to determine student readiness for active participation in the career exploration program the following steps would be followed:
  - **Retrosive Interview** (staff representative) standard interview to determine student's attitudes, scholastic record, CVS evaluation, values, abilities, career interests, etc.

that the space assigned to the program be appropriate to the nature of the enterprise, that is, attractive and reflective of the real world of work.

Possible sites for a career exploration center:

- Area designated within a high school (or junior high).
- Use of attractive temporary buildings adjacent to the school.

- **Transportation Insurance** - cover students/staff enroute to program-related activities (if not by district transportation).
- **Personal Injury Protection** - for students at learning sites.

Fig. 2: Prospectus for Program

possibility of hiring a community resources specialist within area staffing limitations. Staffing of the program, with the exception of the community resources specialist, was to come from the local school staffing ratio. Another consideration was whether or not schools had adequate space to house the program. Classroom space as well as a career resource center space would be needed. Three pilot test sites were eventually chosen.

Approximately 75 students and three staff persons were to be involved in each of three buildings. Orientation of building personnel and staff selection was handled by building principals with the assistance of the career education staff. A full summer plus fall semester provided ample time to think about and plan for the pilot test.

Because of the differences in schools, students, staff and program design, staff training was conducted separately for each school with the help of regional laboratory staff. The junior high school program would last nine weeks with emphasis on group explorations, group guidance and individualized skill development. One high school elected to work with 10th grade students in a transitional program that moved students from group explorations and guidance toward more of an individualized program. The third school offered EBCE to seniors on a completely individualized basis. All staff including teachers, community resources specialists and administrators had the opportunity to participate in the full training program. Program adaptations were made for each building's unique situation.

Near the end of the first nine weeks period of the 1976-77 school year, student selection was undertaken. Each of the schools proceeded in a somewhat similar fashion. Leaflets describing the program were prepared and distributed to students in the grade level or levels to be included in the program. Students were asked to consider enrolling for the program during the second semester and were asked to take the descriptions home to their parents and discuss the program with their parents. The schools also gave presentations on the program to class size groups of students in the appropriate grades. A third student recruitment technique was to conduct parent coffees. During the coffees, the program was described and parents along with their children had an opportunity to ask any questions pertaining to the program.

Student selection went extremely well in all three schools. The junior high school ended up with approximately 65 students, the high school dealing with 10th grade students enrolled approximately 70 students and the high school offering the Exploring Careers in the Community program to seniors enrolled approximately 45 students. Each school was satisfied with enrollment for the pilot test.

While staff training, student selection, program planning and administrative arrangements were being taken care of with school building and dis-

trict personnel, the community resources specialists were beginning site development. The first wave of contacts was for the purpose of informing community persons about the program and preparing them for future recruitment visits. School community advisory committees were established to assist in this task. Techniques for beginning site development included coffees for small groups of community resource personnel, luncheons for the same group, individual contacts in various organizations and agencies and contacts through school advisory committees.

All of the details were pulled together by second semester of the 1976-77 school year. Pilot test is proceeding according to plan as this paper goes to press. Evaluation is being accomplished jointly by local district personnel with regional educational laboratory assistance.

### **The Future of Exploring Careers in the Community**

Before getting into the detail concerning the future of the ECC program in Jefferson County, it seems important to reiterate the position being taken by the district. Current thinking is that Exploring Careers in the Community will be an elective option for students in grades 8-12. It is intended to be versatile enough to attract the interest and meet the needs of all of the students in the district, including the handicapped and gifted. The program is not being devised to meet the specific needs of any particular group. The district believes that this option should be taken by all or nearly all of the students at some time or many times during their secondary school experience. It is anticipated that some students may opt into the ECC program for a major portion of their total secondary program while other students may opt in for only a short period of time.

Modifications to the program will be undertaken between June and December of 1977 based on information collected during pilot test. Modifications will also consider input from schools selected to participate in the field test. When post pilot test modifications have been made, the program will be near the final configuration. Operation of the program during field test should be smooth. Much more attention will be given to evaluation of the effects of the program on student learning during the field test than was given during pilot test. Following field test, additional modifications will be made to the program as needed to assure that students accomplish planned objectives. When field testing is completed during 1977-78, plans will be laid for implementing the program in all 32 secondary schools serving 35,000 students in Jefferson County, with full installation likely to take several years.

The potential problems of operating a program of this magnitude are great, however. Questions that remain unanswered are:

1. Will the supply of community resources be exhausted before full implementation of the ECC program is reached?

2. What will be the impact of such a program on staffing patterns, school schedules, district budget, transportation services, school building design and overall curriculum?
3. Should there be a requirement for all students to participate in the ECC program at one or more intervals during their secondary schooling?
4. What percentage of students will opt for the ECC style learning program for a major portion of their secondary schooling?
5. What type of community resources clearinghouse service will be named to maximize the use of available community resources?
6. How will the program in Jefferson County interface with similar programs that may be developed in the 13 other metropolitan, Denver-area school districts?
7. Who has the responsibility for organizing community resources throughout the metropolitan area that will be utilized cooperatively by several school districts?

The Jefferson County Public Schools have placed an exceptionally high priority on establishment of the community-based portion of the career education program. The resources needed to design the program, train staff, modify facilities and pilot test the program were made available with little limitation. The district sees this program meeting many of the needs of secondary school students. Because of excellent program design by regional educational laboratories and support assistance from the laboratories in designing our local version of an EBCE program, the current pilot test is running smoothly. Several additional schools are indicating interest in becoming field test sites. Local resources are available to modify the initial program and initiate the field test. The future of Jefferson County's version of Experience-Based Career Education depends primarily on finding answers to the larger questions posed above. We are actively working on answers to those questions.

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*Being a high school principal today is one of the toughest jobs in education. Finding ways to help students and staff alike reach their full potential is a persistent building-level administrator concern.*

*Comprehensive high schools have been viewed as one response to that goal, providing choices for students as they build a learning program that will open doors in the future. Yet, most high schools still offer students only three options: a college-bound curriculum, a vocational curriculum or a general education curriculum.*

*Many secondary schools are breaking loose from these patterns, however, recognizing that adolescents need options. Most educators know there will always be a certain number of students who learn much better when they can be directly involved in real-life situations, solving real-life problems, working independently to the greatest extent possible. EBCE is also attractive to teachers who are ready to break free of traditional molds, who are pleased to see barriers between subject matter disciplines melt, who are comfortable using community resources to the fullest advantage, who believe young people can be responsible for their own behavior if given more opportunities to be so.*

*When a secondary school principal gives the green light to EBCE, a transformation in attitudes is bound to overflow beyond the initial participant. What happens is likely to be the beginning of a building-wide revitalization of curriculum and instruction.*

*John C. Pitts is principal of Maynard Evans High School, Orlando, Florida. Evans High School is a comprehensive high school with an enrollment of 2,900 students. The curriculum includes academic and vocational-technical programs but places special emphasis on career education.*

*A "quinmester" scheduling system provides students with the option of attending school for the traditional nine-month period or year around. Course offerings are doubled in this kind of arrangement and the program of instruction is more carefully geared to the interest and aptitude of each student.*

*Mr. Pitts served nine years as principal of a traditionally-organized senior high school, one year as principal of a junior high school and one year as principal of an elementary school. His experience also includes tenure as dean of students and guidance counselor for a junior-senior high school as well as several years as a teacher of social studies at the junior and senior high school level.*

*He regards the high school principalship as the most exciting and rewarding position in American education today.*

## **PRINCIPAL LEARNS ABOUT EBCE FROM GROUND UP**

**John C. Pitts**  
High School Principal  
Orlando, Florida

I first became aware of EBCE during a summer orientation session at Evans High School, Orlando, Florida, in July, 1976. I had been assigned as principal and wanted a thorough orientation to this and other programs in this rather large and comprehensive high school of 2,900 students.

It was my good fortune to begin my assignment at Evans High just as a career education workshop was beginning for staff in our school and for representatives of certain other area schools. Participants also included representatives from the community.

This brief but intensive workshop provided me with an opportunity to learn something of the philosophy and the objectives of EBCE. More importantly, I began to understand and appreciate the enthusiasm of key staff members associated with the program. It was interesting to learn, for example, that the chairperson of our guidance department was equally as supportive of the concept program as the EBCE program coordinator.

I am presently as much involved with the EBCE program as I am with other school programs, keeping track of how it works and the opportunities it provides students. I attend as many program meetings as possible and lend my support in whatever ways I can.

My recommendation to administrators considering EBCE is to spend some time in an established program with people who are experienced. Although a review of literature is helpful, face to face questions and answers with actual program participants elsewhere is much more effective. The investment both in time and dollars is likely to pay large dividends.

Students require options and alternatives more than ever in this day and age. They need to be in a position to exercise their right to choose because of the phenomenal changes in careers and potential careers both today and in the foreseeable future. Students must have solid information in order to make comparisons and judgments. They must develop the ability to understand occupational projections in a variety of careers and where to go to find that information. The chances for students to learn the processes of career decision making are greater for students today than at any time for any other similar group of young people.

Anyone who has been in education for very long realizes that not all students are motivated by the same kind of instruction and/or instructional techniques. Some of our very bright students are "turned off" with ordinary instructional patterns. The same can be said for "average" students and those who are cast as "underachievers." If we force such students to follow traditional routines, we will lose many of them.

EBCE can and does provide a variety of learning opportunities. We know from programs similar to EBCE that there is considerable motivational value in programs that link study and work. One successful technique also found in EBCE is "job shadowing" which includes, among other things, actual "on-the-job" experience with someone in a career field of interest.

One of EBCE's greatest contributions is in the area of career decision making. Concentrated experience "in the field" can confirm whether or not a student's expectations and aspirations are realistic. The same kind of exposure can assist the student in learning that a particular career is *not* appropriate.

Most students may be unsure and totally undecided about a career choice. EBCE provides opportunities for all students to spend short periods of time in various career fields comparing, learning and seeing for themselves in real life settings how well various careers "fit."

Through such experiences, students learn to make realistic decisions based on facts and observations as well as solid information from a number of sources. Most importantly, the students learn a great deal about growing up.

I have observed that EBCE students learn to appreciate one another, with much more interaction between EBCE students than exists in other typical school groups. Another plus factor is that they understand the point of view of adults they work with and consequently become more businesslike in everyday activities. This kind of growth is especially significant when one considers that EBCE students are diverse in terms of ability and socio-economic status.

Students earn academic credit for their work and achievements through EBCE. At the same time, these students are gaining basic skill knowledge and exposure through problems in various life skills such as:

- Practice in math skills as utilized in checking and saving accounts, income tax preparation, personal finance, etc.
- Emphasis on reading both career and academic materials.
- Attention to language skills, not only in seminar work and student projects, but in special writing assignments.

- Applied skill experience geared to the student's individual career interest, including areas like science, ecology, psychology, etc.

One of the more important things learned from EBCE is an understanding and appreciation for what is taught in school, letting the students see for themselves how basic academic skills fit into future career plans as a relevant step in reaching a particular career goal. Students in EBCE say, "Now I know why I struggled through that course" or "I really know which courses I need to take in the future." They learn a host of life-coping skills. Seminar sessions, for instance, cover such topics as insurance, telephone etiquette, decision-making skills, inquiry-based problem solving, resume writing, interviewing techniques, and home owners' and renters' information.

But most of all, students start to gain an understanding of the multitude of career options open to them today. They actually experience careers by spending the majority of their time out "in the field" often participating in several related jobs in one career area.

One of the chief benefits of the program described here is the contribution it has made to the "humanizing" of our school. Some of the other new techniques and practices that have been introduced during the last decade have had an opposite effect on our students.

EBCE provides a workable model for individualized instruction and a flexible program of instruction. Personal exploration is encouraged. Students are given freedom to move in their own direction. Students in this kind of program are evaluated not only for what they know, but for what they are doing and have accomplished.

In other words, EBCE is demonstrating that the school should do far more than provide information. The student has a far greater opportunity for personal involvement in learning.

In short, our version of EBCE here at Evans High School has been accepted with great enthusiasm. The response from students, parents, teachers and members of the business community has been positive judging from formal and informal measures alike.

As I have become more familiar with this program and its ramifications, I am convinced that our school is a better school because of EBCE. Although Experience-Based Career Education, like other components of our curriculum, will continue to be subjected to rigorous examination and inspection, I am confident that many members of our student body will continue to profit educationally and in other significant ways as a direct result of this more appropriate and humanistic approach to instruction.

*Moving adolescents off-campus for individually prescribed learning activities sounds a bit radical for most secondary school teachers. Add to that a role change that asks teachers to become managers or coordinators of student learning and the responsibility sounds even more burdensome. Casting off course outlines in favor of asking community resource persons to provide the curriculum may be the last straw. It also invites the criticism of teachers who fear encroachment of "outsiders" on the professional domain of education or the "loose discipline" which individualized instruction often suggests.*

*Actual experience at dozens of sites where EBCE operates tends to show exactly the opposite:*

- *Traditional teachers notice that EBCE staff are spending more time with students and find a new excitement in what they wanted their career in education to be.*
- *Traditional teachers begin to realize that they have been overlooking valuable resources in the community that are available for the asking.*
- *Traditional teachers begin to see the purposes of education in a new light—that the basic skills need not be taught as a theoretical-exercise when practical applications are close by; that many essential life skills cannot be learned from a book or lecture; that students need to acquire confidence in learning over a lifetime.*
- *Traditional teachers begin to see that teacher education institutions will also have to change as alternative approaches to secondary education become available.*

*Actually, the concepts behind EBCE are not new. Teachers have long sought ways to bring more reality to their instruction. The research and development that has produced EBCE now offers a tested, workable structure.*

*Carnetta Britton has eleven years of experience as a high school English and language arts teacher in the Kanawha County Schools, Charleston, West Virginia. Ms. Britton launched her teaching career after her own three children were in school by first earning bachelor's and master's degrees from Morris Harvey College and West Virginia University respectively. Her decision to leave traditional classroom responsibilities to become involved in EBCE has paid off as more and more students try to enroll in this popular option at her school. Ms. Britton sees EBCE as a valuable way to challenge the best in young people.*

## **"TRADITIONAL" TEACHER CONVERTS TO EBCE**

**Carnetta Britton  
EBCE Staff Member  
Charleston, West Virginia**

During the 11 years I have been teaching, former students often come to mind—a card sent at Christmas, a familiar face directing traffic on a downtown street or a wedding announcement in the local paper. Just as it must be for all teachers, each reminder transports me back in time to a certain seat and its occupant.

Where is Julie now? Did Frank complete his education? How successful was Pam in reaching her goals? Did the time spent in my class prepare them for their futures?

A favorite assignment in my sophomore English class was an essay titled "Where Will You Be Ten Years From Now?" After revealing their hopes and dreams on paper to me and, if they wished, to their classmates, I placed each student's paper in individual envelopes for safekeeping. The night of graduation three years later I would remove the sealed envelopes from my file cabinet and distribute them to their owners.

Even though some students were underachievers or of low academic ability they wrote about the future with the greatest of confidence. Such idealists! They were sure that medicine, law or some equally prestigious career could be theirs in the coming ten years. My best wishes and high hopes always went with them. I was confident that I helped them on their way because they had completed the requirements for my class and had climbed the next step on their academic ladder. But I often wondered —how effectively had I really prepared them for the future?

One particular student, Chuck, a young man of above average ability and a high achiever, caused me a great deal of concern. He was elected president of our school's student government and was viewed as one of the most promising young men in the senior class. Everyone was sure he would become an outstanding citizen and find success in whatever field of study he chose.

Three years ago I saw Chuck for the first time since he had graduated. He was a clerk in the sporting goods department of a local discount house. Trying not to betray my feeling of disappointment, I asked why he had not gone on to college as he had planned.

He explained that he was undecided about what he wanted to study and since money was a problem, he had wanted to wait a year before making a

decision. However, after this year he had become engaged, married and was soon to be a father. Further education was now a remote dream. The aura of confidence and exuberance that had always surrounded him was now gone. He viewed himself as a failure.

Two years ago our school administrator asked me to come to his office to discuss a new program he was considering adding to our curriculum—Experience-Based Career Education. I was somewhat familiar with the program as it had been piloted by Appalachia Educational Laboratory at a remodeled school in my neighborhood. Several of my friends' sons and daughters were now students at this new innovative school and parents and students alike were very enthusiastic about the concept.

When my high school decided to offer EBCE as an educational option I decided I would take the training as a learning coordinator in the program.

We launched our EBCE program with 22 students on board. The group had only one common characteristic—they were all seniors. Every one was an individualist. Each had different interests, abilities and ideas about the world of work. Many of these students enrolled because they had not found their "niche" in the regular school curriculum. Others had a genuine interest in investigating careers and gaining insights about the "real world" they were about to enter.

Those 22 seniors were graduated in June the following year with attitudes changed and goals defined. They had experienced a wide variety of careers—physical therapy, real estate sales, auto mechanics, physician's assistant, kindergarten aide, data processing, architectural design, radiology, fashion design, forestry, government administration, public relations, law enforcement, museum curator, commercial art, social work, drafting, photography and many more.

As for myself, I experienced one of the most enlightening, satisfying and rewarding years in my teaching career. Based on my own observation I am firmly convinced that EBCE can bridge the ever widening chasm between high school and the workaday world. Observing the individual growth of the student making decisions and acting independently is rewarding. To see their maturation and confidence in meeting the challenges of the future has provided me with a new understanding about the purposes of education. I believe the curriculum of a high school should help students like Chuck define goals and provide the experience-base for achieving them and EBCE provides the means. If this provision is not made then we in education are not doing our job.

**Professional staff in EBCE are usually teachers who are ready for something new and different, who have already been experimenting with ideas and techniques that are out of the ordinary. They often display traits like these:**

- **A feeling of ease when planning learning activities with youngsters on a one-to-one basis.**
- **An "eclectic" view of education, with dexterity in more than one subject matter discipline.**
- **An ability to recognize and use non-traditional instructional resources that are found in the everyday adult world (inter-office memos, computer printouts, ledgers, laboratory test equipment, repair manuals).**
- **A commitment to involving other adults in the instructional process.**
- **An interest in alternative ways of assessing and evaluating student accomplishments and certifying results to other institutions.**

**EBCE staff may work on an extended contract basis using the extra time to arrange community sites and orient resource persons and students. They enjoy their flexibility in working with students individually, checking on student progress at learning sites, meeting parents, writing unique curriculum materials and so forth. EBCE requires a full range of skills that often get little use in traditional classroom settings.**

**Kathy Wischer had worked in a cooperative education program before moving to Kodiak, Alaska, and hearing about a new program being planned called EBCE. Her application for a position as learning manager was strengthened by a background in business education, secretarial work at a number of different types of businesses and two and a half years of substitute teaching at all levels.**

**Kathy suggests that anyone considering a staff position in EBCE be willing to put in a number of extra hours on the job working at program development and student counseling. It also helps to have a good sense of humor, patience and flexibility. "With all students working on a variety of different areas at different times on any given day, it can become very hectic," she warns.**

**As a learning manager in the Kodiak, Alaska, CE-2 program, Kathy's duties include handling basic skills (math, English, reading and spelling), as well as specialized projects and competencies for 17 high school students. Her essay that follows describes how she tries to develop "the total student and to teach them to be accountable for their actions while at the same time helping them begin to choose a career and become ready to be responsible adults when they leave high school."**

## **EBCE LEARNING MANAGER ENJOYS CHALLENGE**

**Kathy Wischer  
EBCE Staff Member  
Kodiak, Alaska**

**I feel EBCE is an extremely functional approach to the education of young people today and it is just as appropriate for the above average student as it is for the average or below average student. Our students in Kodiak find a new interest in education when they become involved with EBCE. The ability to actually participate on a learning site is very appealing. As a matter of fact, this is the big selling point. Community participation helps make students aware of the need for a background in various types of basic skills because they see these skills being used on the job.**

**The EBCE approach to education helps students grow in many areas that are hard to measure. Parents of our students indicate that communication at home is vastly improved when their children join our program. This could stem from the fact that students leave their familiar five or six class a day pattern and enter something new and exciting. The result: something worthwhile to discuss at the end of the day.**

**The most amazing thing to me is the tremendous amount of personality development that takes place in just one or two short years. Students become more comfortable around adults and more responsible and self-assured. For example, they learn to plan ahead to accomplish a number of different goals daily and become more accountable for their time. They are more comfortable with the task of calling resource persons and requesting an interview and then actually following through. They learn where and how to find all types of information by completing projects which include individualized learning activities.**

**My position as learning manager consists of handling the total learning plan of 17 to 20 students. This includes basic skills, life skills and involvement in career development.**

**In the basic skills area, our students are tested at the beginning of the school year with the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, the Strong-Campbell Vocational Interest Inventory and selected aptitude tests. From scores on these instruments, past grades and in-depth interviews, the learning manager formulates a learning plan for each student. In Kodiak, we use an individualized learning program in math, science and communications developed in Vancouver, B.C. Since all students learn in different ways, we supplement this main core of the program with workbooks, programmed**

books, tutors, college classes, traditional high school classes and individualized slide-tape workbook materials.

The life skills are used as themes in writing projects. The individualized learning activities that comprise a project help each student pursue specific learning goals and help them define career goals. These areas consist of *science*, which includes putting the scientific method to use in solving problems; *functional citizenship*, similar to social studies, with an emphasis on government; *creative development*, incorporating art and other areas; *personal/social development*, which concentrates on self-examination and self-improvement; *critical thinking*, step-by-step evaluation of a problem; and *competencies*, which are highly important skills needed as a functional adult (areas like how to handle a checking account, credit, insurance, income tax, first aid, etc.). As you can see, the goal of EBCE is to develop the total student.

Career development requires student experience on a variety of job sites during the course of a school year. Their first exposures come in the form of explorations lasting approximately 15 hours each. Students complete at least five explorations per school year. The next step is for the student to choose an exploration of particular interest for learning activities lasting 10 to 15 hours per week for up to six weeks. At this time, the learning manager will write a project dealing with skills the student will be able to learn or practice on this job site. All during the school year, the learning manager spends time counseling the student about a variety of careers that match particular abilities and interests.

A typical week for an EBCE manager is normally very hectic requiring considerable flexibility since each student's schedule changes daily. It is also very helpful for EBCE staff to have a wide variety of experiences themselves, both in education and in various careers. An EBCE staff member must have an outgoing personality because of the constant contact with parents and the community. In a typical day, the learning manager might confront any one or all the following situations: helping students with problems in their basic skills, negotiating and writing projects for students, coordinating and helping students study for competency tests, counseling on career and personal problems, calling parents if any problems arise or for general reporting purposes, evaluating student work, meeting occasionally with employer instructors to write projects for students, and helping students learn to plan time and meet a variety of deadlines.

I would like to see teachers in traditional schools recognize why students should be exposed to many types of careers before leaving the formal education system. With the rate of growth in technology today and the number of times people change jobs, it is important for young people to

have a number of different areas they might pursue. This exposure could be supplemented by slide-tapes, films, pamphlets, books, invitations to people from various career areas to speak to classes, research on a career of interest followed by an interview with a person in that field, class field trips to various businesses and any number of other ways. The key is not to be afraid to deviate from traditional instructional approaches. The point is to expose students to a number of different types of jobs. Students are naturally curious, and when put in contact with adults who enjoy discussing their jobs, great things can happen for young and old alike.

I have been impressed with the amount of time many of our employer sites are willing to share with our students. These volunteers do not get paid for their time, yet they enjoy sharing the knowledge they have of a particular job with a young person. Our competency certifiers have impressed me in the same way. These are people that certify a student in their knowledge of a particular competency—for example, a credit union manager certifies our competency on understanding credit procedures, representatives from the local fire department teach our first aid competency. These people willingly give up many hours per year to be sure these young people have at least a basic knowledge of their specialty area.

In short, I am an enthusiastic advocate of EBCE not only because it has been a rewarding experience to be a learning manager, but because of the changes I can see in young people as they look ahead more confidently to adulthood.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

A complete list of communities using EBCE is almost out of date as soon as it is prepared. For information on a program to visit near you, contact your state department of education or one of the sources listed below:

- Dr. Harold L. Henderson  
Director, EBCE Program  
Appalachia Educational Laboratory  
P.O. Box 1348  
Charleston, West Virginia 25325  
(304) 344-8371
- Dr. George P. Rusteika  
Director, EBCE Program  
Far West Laboratory for Educational Research  
and Development  
1855 Folsom Street  
San Francisco, California 94103  
(415) 565-3125
- Dr. Rex Hagans  
Director, Education and Work Program  
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory  
710 S.W. Second Avenue  
Portland, Oregon 97204  
(503) 248-6893
- Dr. Michaelita Quinn  
Director, EBCE Program  
Research for Better Schools  
Suite 1700  
1700 Market Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103  
(215) 561-4100
- Dr. Ronald B. Bucknam  
EBCE Program Manager  
National Institute of Education  
Washington, D.C. 20208

● Can provide information about materials, training and technical assistance available for any of the four EBCE models