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A Study to Determine the Degree of Career Education Red Mill Elementary School Teachers Include in their Instruction

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE DEGREE OF
CAREER EDUCATION RED MILL ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL TEACHERS INCLUDE IN THEIR INSTRUCTION

A Research Paper
Presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies
at Old Dominion University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

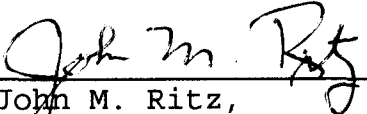
By
Ramona A. De Santis

August 1995

SIGNATURE PAGE

This research paper was prepared by Ramona A. De Santis under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in Education Degree.

Approved by:



Dr. John M. Ritz,
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6-20-95
Date

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Career choices are essential for building an individual's self identity. In order to help people make educated decisions, schools must provide guidance for students. Career education should be included as a part of the curriculum.

With the increased demand for two income families, it is necessary that career education be experienced by all students, male and female, starting as early as kindergarten. Students require such guidance, therefore, it is the teacher's obligation to create an awareness of the various fields one may choose to pursue as a lifetime career goal.

It is of utmost importance that career education instruction create an awareness of the vast array of disciplines and work areas one has from which to choose. Students must be provided with many opportunities to explore and gain an understanding of the various work areas. It is also essential that students be informed as early as possible, of important avenues they must pursue, in order to be successful in their future endeavors.

The focus of this study was to determine various

strategies and techniques teachers use in the classroom to foster their students's understanding of different career avenues. The amount of time actually spent in the classroom with the emphasis on career education will also be evaluated. It will also verify available resources for elementary instruction of career education.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine the degree of career education Red Mill Elementary School Teachers include in their instruction.

Research Goals

The research goals of this study were to determine:

1. What strategies and techniques do teachers use in their classroom to foster a better understanding of different career avenues?
2. What is the amount of instructional time spent with emphasis on career education?
3. What are the available resources for instruction of career education used at the elementary level?

Background and Significance

Congress recently passed several education bills which concern the fact that it was vital for students to be made aware of career options. The primary idea of the Education 2000 Act was to provide information on effective ways of teaching and learning so that students would gain productive employment.

An area included in career education is Career Academics. Career Academics are an integration of both academic and technical subject matter. The focus is on a career that will provide good employment opportunities for the students in the future.

When discussing career education, School-to-Work must be mentioned. The School-to-Work Opportunity Act, in essence, helps students to prepare for either a profession or to go on to a career academy. School-to-Work emphasizes career exploration and counseling.

Career exploration and development are essential parts of career education at the elementary level. Programs for career exploration and development are said to be necessary as early as kindergarten. Students must learn to connect educational activities to career pathways (Hite, 1994, p. 32-33).

Limitations

The following were limitations of this study:

1. The research was limited to the faculty population at Red Mill Elementary School in Virginia Beach, Virginia.
2. The importance given by teachers of career education at the elementary school level.
3. The opinions of the current full time teaching staff at Red Mill Elementary.

Assumptions

The assumptions of this researcher were as follows:

1. Teachers at Red Mill Elementary School were knowledgeable of career education.
2. Career education is important.
3. An instrument can be designed to allow teachers to give an accurate measure of their career education instructional time use in the classroom.

Procedures

A survey was composed of key questions concerning career education at the elementary level. The survey consisted of both open and closed questions. Each full

time teacher at Red Mill Elementary School, from kindergarten through grade five, was sent the survey questionnaire.

As the teachers responded through mail, the answers were tabulated to find the amount of instructional time, strategies and techniques used for teaching career education. Response counting was used to tabulate the responses given. Percentiles and means were calculated.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms were defined in order for the readers to gain a full understanding of the research material:

1. Career Education- This is an instructional program to develop a students' knowledge of various career options they may choose to pursue in the future.
2. Education 2000- This act of legislation provides effective ways of teaching and learning to ensure quality schools.
3. School-to-Work- A legislative act passed in 1994 emphasizing career exploration.
4. Career Exploration- Examining selected career areas during instructional time.

5. Career Awareness- Building an understanding of the world of work.

Overview of Chapter

In Chapter I, the reader was introduced to the areas included in career education. The reader is now aware of the problem of the study, the goals, limitations, and assumptions within the context of this research paper.

Chapter II examines the trends and transitions in the various areas of career education. Chapter III provides the methods and procedures used to accumulate necessary information for the research, while Chapter IV states the findings of the research. Last, Chapter V presents a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research on the topic.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The goal of this research study was to determine the degree of career education taught at the elementary level. Several areas of information were needed to properly evaluate the data reported later in this report.

The Review of Literature in Chapter II has been divided into five different areas. The first area explains career education. The second area covers Education 2000, and the third area examines school-to-work. Area four introduces the reader to career exploration. Lastly, area five deals with career awareness in the elementary schools.

Career Education

During the past twenty-five years, many transitions have taken place in career education. "The career education movement is general in its articulation and diffuse in its implementation. In fact, the initial impetus for career education did not even mention the needs of people with disabilities. The beginning of the career education movement is often identified as

occurring in 1970, when Sidney Marland, then the Commissioner of Education, declared career education to be the top priority of the U.S. Office of Education. Almost immediately following this pronouncement, a federal initiative began to emerge" (Halpern, 1991, p. 202).

Career education is an instructional program to develop students' knowledge of various career options. "It is the totality of experiences through which one learns to live a meaningful, satisfying work life. Within the career education framework, work is conceptualized as conscious effort aimed at producing benefits for oneself and for others. Career education provides the opportunity for children to learn, in the least restrictive environment possible, the academic, daily living, personal-social activities" (Halpern, 1991, p. 203).

Career education was very diverse and general, including various grade levels and ability levels. "The career education movement was diffuse in its goals, oriented to both elementary and secondary education, available to students with and without disabilities, implemented in both regular and special education

environments, and broadly structured" (Halpern, 1991, p. 203).

"Only two years after the repeal of the Career Education Implementation Incentive Act in 1982, a new federal transition initiative emerged on the scene in the form of a position paper from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). The essence of this paper involved the articulation of a transition model, which has come to be known as a bridges model. This model describes three types of services (bridges) that are needed to facilitate the transition from school to work.

The first bridge, labeled transition without special services, refers to the use of generic services available to anyone in the community, even if special accommodations are necessary within these services for people with disabilities. Postsecondary education, such as that provided in a community college, is mentioned as a prime example of a generic service.

The second bridge, transition with time-limited services, refers to specialized, short-term

services where the presence of a disability usually required to qualify a person for access to the service. Vocational rehabilitation is offered here as an example.

The third bridge has been labeled transition with ongoing services. As the model developers point out, this bridge did not in 1984 represent a widely existing service delivery system. Exemplified by supported employment, it was relatively new and had made its presence known primarily in demonstration projects that were themselves supported by federal grants and contracts. The rehabilitation amendments of 1986, however, identified supported employment as a regular program, paving the way for an increased funding level over time (Halpern, 1991, p. 203).

The focus of this transition model has been restricted to employment. Possibly awaiting some concern about the narrowness of the goal,

"Career development and transition are significantly related. Career development is the process of systematically coordinating all

school, family, and community components together to facilitate each individual's potential for economic, social, and personal fulfillment and others. Transition is the process of preparing students for a post school life and easing the adjustment from a school environment to adult life. Both concepts are being used to increase the probability of a brighter future for students and youth with handicaps by bridging the gap between school and adult life. This includes satisfactory work experiences as well as satisfactory home and community lives" (Rau, Spooner, and Fimian, 1989, p. 502).

Career education is said to be important starting during the years of early childhood.

"What is being pushed is the view that career education is lifelong, from prekindergarten years well into retirement. In elementary school, children are introduced to the idea of work and shown how it relates to what they are learning in arithmetic and reading classes. High school students are given

vocational training and helped to find jobs if they are not going on to college. In college, students are encouraged to make early career choices and acquire professionalism. Adult education is provided for older persons who want to update skills or learn new ones" (U.S. News & World Report, 1975, p. 50-51). It is important that career education be included in the elementary years.

"Career education is essentially a reform movement, developed because of widespread belief that many young people are coming out of school unprepared to deal with the practical facts of day-by-day living. Ms. Mary Jane Sheiran, a program director, said that mixing regular subjects with career training already has produced signs that some potential dropouts become motivated and remain in school. In Wisconsin, a vanguard state in career education, the Milwaukee public school system last year appointed a full-time supervisor of career education" (U.S. News & World Report, 1975, p. 51).

Career Education will be an integral part of elementary education in the future. This instructional program is important to develop a students' knowledge of various career options they may choose to pursue in the future.

Education 2000

Education 2000 is an act of legislation which provides effective ways of teaching and learning to ensure quality schools. The act creates a process to help define what students should know and be able to do in essential subjects. States can define their own standards. "The Goals 2000: Educate America Act legislation, which are passed by the House and is pending in the Senate, would establish a National Skills Standards Board to help develop and implement a national system of voluntary industry skill standards and certification. The legislation seeks to involve business, industry, labor, educators and other key groups in a long-term effort to define and certify what productive workers need to know and be able to do" (Hoachlander and Rahn, 1994, p. 20).

Education 2000 is an act of legislation which states that by the year 2000, all children will be

ready to learn when they start school. The act also mentions that a ninety percent graduation rate, with all children competent in core subjects, will occur. It is also the hope that the United States of America will be first in the world, in Math and Science, as well as, every adult being literate and able to compete in the work force. Schools should be safe, disciplined, and drug-free, with increased parental involvement, and professional development for educators.

School-to-Work

School-to-Work is a legislative act passed in 1994 emphasizing career exploration. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act was brought forth by the Clinton Administration.

"School-to-Work transition is on the top of the list of priorities for school leaders across the nation. The Act defines, for the first time in federal policy, that a School-to-Work transition system consists of in-school and work-based learning components, links to postsecondary education, and a series of connecting activities" (Warner, 1994, p. 5).

School-to-Work is basically an organized, school-community partnership that helps ensure that high school

students will graduate, and that, when they do, they enter the job market or go on to some other form of positive placement such as the military or additional vocational and technical training. School-to-Work is a process, not an event. Success requires a sustained, consistent, quality effort.

Career Exploration

Career exploration is basically examining selected career areas during instructional time. "Career exploration and development programs should begin as early as kindergarten. Students must learn to connect educational activities to career pathways" (Hite, 1994, p. 32).

The career exploration program began in the 1970's. "During the first two years of this program, mentoring, problem solving, and career exploration resulted from the direct interaction between the older and younger students" (Siehl, 1994, p. 180).

"Jefferson County Public Schools claims to be leading the way towards the introduction of the new American school. The program begins in the elementary school where career awareness is part of the curriculum and goes right through to adult education, where

retraining and basic skills are taught" (Turnbull, 1993, p. 11).

"At age 14, students are exposed to a broad range of career assessment and exploration opportunities, to include career interests, learning styles, aptitude, work attitude and work temperament" (Turnbull, 1993, p. 11). Career exploration is an essential element of education in today's world. It is therefore, vital that programs as such continue to grow in the future.

Career Awareness

Career Awareness is a program used in elementary schools to build an understanding of the world of work. "Career awareness is ongoing through interactions with inspirational speakers, field experiences and recruitments. Self esteem and goal orientation is enhanced" (Greer, 1994, p. 6).

"The Career Awareness Program, founded in 1975, offers classroom training, academic scholarships and summer employment, helps students understand the job market and develops the skills they need to find and keep full-time jobs. CAP has expanded to include 136 schools in five states; 13,910 high school seniors have completed the program and 911 graduates have been

awarded \$3.7 million in college scholarships. One-fourth of the students who participate in the summer job program, nationally, have been hired by the company for full-time permanent employment" (Los Angeles Times, 1993, p. 4).

The project officer of an allied health project grant had the opportunity to create an extremely innovative and effective program for minority recruitment and retention in medical technology. "Utilizing a four-phase design which begins with career awareness activities for elementary and middle school students, this model provides a continuum of program activities which progressively focuses upon specific identification, recruitment, retention and development needs. These program activities are designed to nurture the successful completion of a baccalaureate degree" (Harmening, 1995, p. 7).

Summary

Education 2000, school-to-work, career exploration, and career awareness are all important elements of career education. A better understanding of these areas will contribute greatly to the quality of instruction in career education at the elementary level.

The areas covered in this chapter reflect necessary and important components that impact the problem of this research paper. A thorough review of literature reinforcing the proceeding areas discussed was essential in order to establish any relevancy of results from the methods described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this chapter was to report the procedures used for gathering data to address the problem of the study. This chapter will describe the population, the instrument design, the data collection procedures, and the statistical analysis used.

Population

The population of this study was comprised of all Red Mill Elementary School Faculty in Virginia Beach, Virginia, during the academic year 1994-1995. There were forty total members of the faculty during that school year.

The average faculty member of this Red Mill Elementary School had over fifteen years of teaching experience. The total population of teachers was used for this study.

Instrument Design

The instrument used to gather the data was that of a survey consisting of both open and closed questions. The survey was used to determine the strategies and techniques teachers at Red Mill Elementary use when teaching career education. An area was also provided for teachers to list available resources for instruction of career education

at the elementary level. This survey also provided space for teachers to give the amount of instructional time that was spent with emphasis on career education, along with the teachers' perception of the importance of such an area of study. Open and closed statements were used to identify research goals. A copy of the survey is located in Appendix A.

Methods of Data Collection

The survey was given to forty faculty members of Red Mill Elementary School in Virginia Beach, Virginia. It was given to the total faculty population of the school. The surveys were distributed on May 16, 1995. The final date for collection of the survey was set for May 25, 1995. The data was then tabulated. A copy of the cover letter is located in Appendix B.

Statistical Analysis

Response counting was used to tabulate the responses to both open and closed questions in the survey. Percentiles and means were calculated from the data collected.

Summary

The information gathered through this study was obtained from a survey of the total faculty population at Red Mill Elementary School. The questions surveyed were researched

and considered relevant to elementary instruction of career education. Chapter IV of this research report will present the findings of the statistical analysis, with the conclusions and recommendations given in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The findings that were presented in this chapter are the results of a survey given to forty teachers at Red Mill Elementary School. The results of these questions list the strategies and techniques teachers at Red Mill Elementary use when teaching career education. Teachers also listed available resources for instruction of career education, and the amount of instructional time that was spent with emphasis on career education. Teachers' perceptions of the importance of such an area of study were also given. In this chapter, tabulations of response counting are provided for the open and closed questions in the survey.

Results

Forty surveys were distributed, and 100 percent were returned. The results were taken from both open and closed response questions. Results were then tabulated by means of response counting. Following, are the results of the survey questions.

1. Years at Red Mill Elementary

Mean= 5 years

2. Total Years of Teaching Experience

Mean= 15 years

3. Educational Level

- 21 Bachelor of Science in Education
- 5 Bachelor of Arts in Education
- 5 B.S. + Some Graduate Classes
- 1 B.A. + Some Graduate Classes
- 5 Master of Science in Education
- 3 Master of Arts in Education

4. Career Awareness Instruction

- Class discussions on types of jobs
- Included in the Silver Burdett Science text
- Integrated into units throughout the year
- Learn about jobs related to specific topics
- Parents do presentations about their field
- Big book unit called Just Me
- Students brainstorm career ideas
- Conduct interviews
- Guest speakers
- Videos
- Stories which include careers
- Parents come in and talk about their jobs
- Integrated curriculum relating careers to topics
- Students make career booklets
- Included in Social Studies, Science, and Health
- Careers are highlighted in each unit
- Discuss jobs people have in the community
- Unit on community helpers
- Part of the "Family Life" curriculum
- Science and Math related careers
- Discuss neighborhoods and community helpers
- Jobs that relate to the curriculum
- Individual careers and how people work together
- Books
- Pictures
- Discuss positives/negatives about different jobs
- Explore careers through literature
- Career investigation in African-Am. History Month
- Discuss the importance of different jobs
- Invite adopt-a-school partners in to talk
- An integral part of the curriculum

5. Strategies/Techniques

- 70% Job Helpers
- 30% Career Day
- 80% Guest Speakers
- 78% Book Exploration
- 40% Other

6. Strategies/Techniques Use

- Guest Speakers to make topics more realistic
- Guidance counselor does a lesson on careers
- Illustrate pictures
- Write about careers
- Dress-up Career Day
- Show items used in different careers
- Physically challenged adults speak on their jobs
- Theme centered around the Big Book
- Parents visit during the unit
- Read books on career education
- Parents share what they do on their jobs
- Write about what it's like in certain careers
- Community helpers come to share with our class
- Adopt-a-School partners invite us to work
- Read biographies about famous people
- Speakers tell how they chose/prepared for their career
- Research individual careers and educational level required for such jobs
- Unit on inventors and inventions
- Read stories about famous people
- Use special days to discuss career awareness i.e. Nurses Day, Cafeteria Workers, Bus Drivers, Secretaries Day, and Bosses Day
- Community resource file
- Reports about selected people
- Interview parents about their jobs
- Field trips to fire station/helicopter hanger
- Use Whole language and integrate careers
- Students role play jobs studied and researched
- Discuss boys and girls having non-stereotyped jobs
- Books and various media materials to enhance units

7. Begin Instruction (Grade Level)

- 58% Pre-School
- 30% Kindergarten
- 1% First
- 5% Second
- 5% Third
- 0% Forth
- 1% Fifth

8. Instructional Time
- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| - <u>2%</u> Daily | - <u>95%</u> Monthly |
| - <u>2%</u> Weekly | - <u>1%</u> Quarterly |
9. Time Amount Should Teach About Careers
- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| - <u>43%</u> More | - <u>7%</u> Less | - <u>50%</u> Same |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
10. Resources Readily Available
- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| - <u>85%</u> Yes | - <u>15%</u> No |
|------------------|-----------------|
11. What Available Resources
- Books
 - Films
 - Filmstrips
 - Guest Speakers
 - Library Books
 - Classroom Books
 - Guidance Counselors
 - Videos
 - Tapes (Audio)
 - Field Trips
 - SPSA
 - Garden Club
 - Textbooks
 - Adopt-A-School Partners
 - Parents
 - Volunteers
 - Community Speakers
 - Social Studies Books
 - Teacher Editions
 - Local Businesses
 - Computer Programs
 - Vertical files in Library
 - Movies
 - Community Members
 - Posters
 - Puppets
 - Instructional T.V. Programs
 - Librarian
 - Career Books in Library
 - Reference Books
 - Workbooks

Summary

The problem of this study was to determine the degree of career education Red Mill Elementary School Teachers include in their instruction. The results of the survey were reported in Chapter IV. Chapter V Summarizes Chapters I-IV, makes conclusions based on the results of the survey, and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a summary, conclusions, and recommendations. The summary will contain an overview of the first four chapters. Conclusions will be drawn by answering the research goals using data collected during the study. Recommendations for future research will be made based upon the results of the study.

Summary

The problem of this study was to determine the degree of career education Red Mill Elementary School Teachers include in their instruction. The study was guided by the following research goals.

1. What strategies and techniques do teachers use in their classroom to foster a better understanding of different career avenues?
2. What is the amount of instructional time spent with emphasis on career education?
3. What are the available resources for instruction of career education used at the elementary level?

By reviewing the literature, it was discovered that many transitions in career education have taken place during the past twenty-five years. Education 2000 is an act of

legislation which provides effective ways of teaching and learning to ensure quality schools. School-to-Work is another legislative act passed in 1994, emphasizing career exploration. Career Exploration is basically examining selected career areas during instructional time. Career Awareness is a program used in elementary schools to build an understanding of the world of work. Education 2000, school-to-work, career exploration, and career awareness are all important elements of career education.

This research study was limited to the 1994-1995 faculty members of Red Mill Elementary School in Virginia Beach. The instrument design was that of a survey, consisting of both open and closed items. Out of forty surveys, 100% were returned by May 25, 1995. The mean and percentages were given for responses to the survey.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this research, the following conclusions can be made.

1. What strategies and techniques do teachers use in their classroom to foster a better understanding of different career avenues?

The data indicated that teachers at Red Mill Elementary School use the following strategies and techniques for instruction of career education: job helpers, career day,

guest speakers, book exploration, guidance counselors, pictures, writing, dress-up, various items, themes, parents, read books, community helpers, adopt-a-school partners, read biographies, research careers, read stories about famous people, special days to discuss career awareness, reports, interview parents about their careers, field trips, whole language, integrated curriculum, role play jobs studied, discuss non-stereotyped jobs, and various media materials to enhance units.

2. What is the amount of instructional time spent with emphasis on career education?

The data indicated that 95% of the teachers at Red Mill Elementary teach career education on a monthly basis. The responses to the question about how much time should be spent teaching about careers were: More= 43%, Less= 7%, and Same= 50%.

3. What are the available resources for instruction of career education used at the elementary level?

The data indicated that the following resources are available for instruction of career education: books, films, filmstrips, guest speakers, library books, classroom books, guidance counselors, videos, tapes (audio), field trips, SPSA, Garden Club, textbooks, adopt-a-school partners, parents, volunteers, community speakers, social studies

books, teacher editions, local businesses, computer programs, vertical files in library, movies, community members, posters, puppets, instructional t.v. programs, librarian, career books in library, reference books, and workbooks.

Recommendations

Based on the information gathered and the conclusions drawn, the researcher offers the following recommendations.

1. Survey a larger sample, including faculty of all elementary school teachers in Virginia Beach City Public Schools.
2. Create numerous questionnaires to survey the faculty members over several months during the school year.
3. A comparison study showing possible differences from one school district to another.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A- Survey

Appendix B- Cover Letter

APPENDIX A

Survey

RED MILL ELEMENTARY FACULTY SURVEY

1. Years at Red Mill_____
2. Total Years of Teaching Experience_____
3. Educational Level (Highest Degree Earned)_____
4. Is Career Awareness included in your instruction?_____

(Please Explain)

5. What strategies/techniques do you use to foster a better understanding of different career avenues?

___ Job Helpers	___ Guest Speakers
___ Career Day	___ Book Exploration
	___ Other

6. Explain how you use such strategies/techniques.

7. At what grade level do you believe career education should begin being taught?

___ Pre-School	___ Second
___ Kindergarten	___ Third
___ First	___ Fourth
	___ Fifth

8. What is the amount of instructional time you spend with emphasis on career education?

_____/day ____/Week ____/Month ____/Quarter

9. How much time do you believe should be spent teaching about careers? (Please Explain)

____More ____Less

10. Are resources readily available for instruction of career awareness?

____Yes ____No

11. What are the available resources for instruction of Career Education used at the elementary level? (Please List)

APPENDIX B

Cover Letter

May 16, 1995

Ramona A. De Santis
3069 New Bridge Road
Va. Beach, VA 23456
(804) 721-5711

Dear Red Mill Faculty,

I am a substitute teacher at your school. I am also a graduate student at Old Dominion University. Currently, I am conducting a study to determine the degree of career education Red Mill Elementary School Teachers include in their instruction.

It is important that the study reflect the faculty opinions of career education at the elementary level. As Red Mill Elementary School teachers, your experience and knowledge is essential in providing this information.

The information received will be used to examine the significance of career awareness at the elementary level. Please take the time to complete the survey; May 25 is the anticipated return date. I can not complete the study without your valuable information. Please return the survey by the return date.

Thank You.

Sincerely,



Ramona A. De Santis

Enc: Survey