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MOBILE CAREER EXPLORATION

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In 1970, the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) began a program on its Ankeny campus known as Career Exploration. The idea was to allow people to explore a career by performing representative work samples. For example, a person exploring Medical Laboratory work would have the opportunity to do blood typing, prepare slides, do urinalysis, and prepare smear cultures. These experiences coupled with information about training requirements, job prospects, and salaries, provided a background on which a career decision could be based.

At first the program was aimed at high school graduates who may or may not have enrolled at DMACC. As time went along, the Career Exploration Center began to serve secondary school students (initially those identified as potential drop-outs) but later it included students from a wide variety of career awareness programs.

From the student acceptance, it was apparent that the concept was valid. The problem was how to get more students involved. The DMACC district encompasses eleven counties so it was impossible to try and bring all students to the Ankeny campus. The solution seemed to be to take the center to the student and thus the Mobile Career Exploration Center (MCEC) was born.

The MCEC was staffed by four persons – three facilitators and a counselor. Three general occupational areas: Business Occupations (Jan Springmier, facilitator); Industrial Occupations (Rich Horney, facilitator); and Science Related Occupations (Steve Halstead, facilitator) were established. Jim Bishop served as the counselor and on-site administrator.

Four schools (Carroll Kuemper, Knoxville, Guthrie Center, and the Boone Campus of DMACC) agreed to provide space for the center so we were scheduled to spend eight weeks at each of these schools. Surrounding schools were then invited to bring students to the center. It was found that it worked best for students to spend about three hours (uninterrupted) per session. More time than this caused the students to become too tired and less time made for an unrealistic exploration.

Equipment included a lathe, twenty cement blocks, thirty bricks, five typewriters, several calculators and adding machines, fifty pounds of plaster-of-paris, and many, many boxes of materials. The moves were accomplished with the use of an 8' x 40' converted bookmobile (donated by

the Polk-Story Joint County School System), a pickup and a lot of sweat. Luckily the weather was good for each move, although Boone was struck with an ice storm the day after we moved in.

Before a student entered the center he was administered the Ohio Vocational Interest Survey. Based on these findings, the student was directed to one of the three occupational areas where he filled out an employment application.

The exploration activities made use of the materials developed by the Southwest Iowa Learning Resource Center's (Red Oak) *Project Discovery*. *Project Discovery* is a hands-on approach which uses self-contained packets. In many cases, both print and non-print instructions were given. We found that the non-print instructions were valuable to more than the non-reader because many times the students were so anxious to get into the activities that they were unwilling to read the instructions.

The Science Related Occupations dealt with the following: Conservation, Cosmetology, Environmental Monitoring, Greenhouse, Health Careers, Law Enforcement, Meteorology, Journalism, Photography, Senior Citizens, Surveying and others which require a bachelor degree as minimal training. The relationship to science is more apparent in some offerings than others.

This year, (1974-1975) MCEC dealt mostly with juniors and seniors. Many students had already made career choices and simply used the center to confirm these decisions. Others, however, had not and were frantically looking for that "something special."

As much as possible, we took the students into the community to observe the career in "real life." This led to interesting discoveries, some students were really turned-on by what they saw while others were completely turned-off and began looking for new career opportunities.

During the year, over a thousand students made use of the center. In some cases we were unable to help the student - the student who wants to become a nurse and has been a Candystriper for three years did not find many new experiences in the center. A student in this situation could explore careers he or she had never thought about, such as something in the industrial or business area.

For the 1975-76 school year, MCEC will be even more mobile. Three 12' x 60' mobile classrooms have been purchased and will be outfitted this summer. Each unit will spend a week at each school (more time at the larger schools) on a three-week, rotational basis so that only one occupational area is at a

school at a time. Between twenty-five and thirty schools will be involved in the program so the units will be moved on the week-ends. With this approach, it is hoped that more students can be served.

How did you become a science teacher? Did you even decide that teaching was what you wanted, or did you just become one? Did you ever think that some other career might fit your criteria for job satisfaction but the risk of trying it was too high? If so, think of what career exploration might have done for you. Do your students deserve less?

Dubuque Symposium

On Saturday October 25, 1975, the University of Dubuque is planning its 3rd Annual Science and Mathematics Educators' Symposium. The present plans include lectures and discussion on drugs as the main topic. High school teachers in particular are invited. For further information contact Dr. Carl Osuch, Chairman of the Science Division of the University of Dubuque.

NSTA Pit Stop

In a few precious seconds a car is refueled, tires changed, engine problems diagnosed and cured, the driver gets advice from his crew . . . he's off again — that's a pit stop! You'll be able to make a pit stop at this year's area convention in Indianapolis on October 23-25. While we hope there's no need for "major repairs" you'll be able to refuel your tank of teaching ideas as you see and hear what others are doing. Teachers and students will be in the Pit Area with pet projects from their science classes and clubs. If you have an activity "that works," write it up, make some copies, and bring it to the Pit for exchange called "Bring One, Take Some." Anyone interested in participating in the Pit Area with a display and/or with students is asked to get more information from Barbara Hagerman, 8196 Old Farm Lane, Indianapolis, Indiana 46224.