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An interdisciplinary activity: Murder mystery

Deanne L. Ulrich
University of Northern Iowa

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An interdisciplinary activity: Murder mystery

Abstract

Do interdisciplinary activities provide students with an understanding of how skills learned in different subject areas are interrelated in the real world? Do teachers feel that interdisciplinary activities are a necessary part of the regular curriculum? To gather information on these questions, a study was planned to focus on the murder mystery activity that was conducted over a four-week period at Bunker School of Technology in March and April of 1996

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITY:
MURDER MYSTERY

A Research Paper

Presented to

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

by

Deanne L. Ulrich

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This Research Paper by: Deanne L. Ulrich

Titled: An Interdisciplinary Activity: Murder Mystery

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the
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Sharon E. Smaldino

July 29, 1996
Date Approved

Graduate Faculty Reader

Leigh E. Zeitz

7/30/96
Date Approved

Graduate Faculty Reader

Peggy Ishler

7/31/96
Date Approved

Head, Department of Curriculum
and Instruction

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Introduction

Background

Bunger School of Technology, a high school in the Waterloo Community School District, was designed to be a “Tech Prep” high school. Tech Prep focuses on career education and applied curriculum. During the 1995-1996 school year, our enrollment consisted of approximately 220 ninth and tenth graders. Because of the small size of our school, one of the faculty’s building goals for the 1995-1996 school year was to provide the students with a variety of integrated activities. Throughout the year, many of the faculty members included integrated activities in their curriculum including the following: a Roaring '20's unit between social studies and physical education; a stock market unit between social studies and business; a unit including script writing and videotaped production of commercials for designed and manufactured products involving technical design and promotion, English, commercial art, photography, and theater arts classes; an historical newspaper unit between social studies and newspaper; a 1940's unit between social studies and radio/television club, an Odyssey unit among theater arts, art, and social studies; a MayaQuest Internet project between social studies and Spanish; a funeral and funeral directing unit between government and health occupations classes; and a World War I unit between art and social studies. Our culminating activity was a murder mystery that was designed to be integrated into all the subject areas in the building.

Statement of the Problem

Do interdisciplinary activities provide students with an understanding of how

skills learned in different subject areas are interrelated in the real world? Do teachers feel that interdisciplinary activities are a necessary part of the regular curriculum? To gather information on these questions, a study was planned to focus on the murder mystery activity that was conducted over a four-week period at Bunger School of Technology in March and April of 1996.

Significance of the Study

The Tech Prep concept is a vital part of education today. The focus of Tech Prep is to raise students' career awareness by combining vocational education with the core curriculum areas (math, science, English, and social studies). One of the key components of Tech Prep is integrated curriculum. This type of curriculum provides students with problem-solving skills that will give them the competitive edge in today's workforce. Many times I have heard students say, "This is keyboarding; it's not an English class," or "I shouldn't have to use math in computer applications." What students don't realize is that in the real world there are no definitive subject areas; they all meld into one. The separate-subject approach offers little more than a disconnected assortment of facts and skills.

This particular study explores teachers' and students' reactions to the Bunger Murder Mystery—an interdisciplinary activity. The merit of these types of activities will also be examined.

Limitations of the Activity

All teachers and students at Bunger were involved in this activity. Because of this experimental design, there was no randomization or selection possible. There also was

no control group to test against. Because no other school in the Waterloo Community School District has ever done an activity like this, there is no comparison group to test the success of this activity. However, students do come from all racial, ethnic, and religious groups. All socioeconomic levels were also represented. The subject areas that participated included industrial technology, art, English, social studies, business, Spanish, math, science, and health occupations. Not all subject areas were represented in the planning committee. The subject areas represented were math, science, social studies, Spanish, English, and business. Industrial technology, art, physical education, and health occupations were not represented.

The effect of integrated curriculum on the students' achievement and future career success will be almost impossible to determine because Bunker School of Technology will not exist next year in its present form. Since the students are only ninth and tenth graders, they will not be out in the working world for several years to determine their career success.

Definition of Terms

Tech Prep Education Act of 1990: A program intended to provide direction and funding for new, local tech prep programs.

Tech Prep: Educational reform designed to raise academic standards and motivate students not only to stay in high school but to continue on at the postsecondary level (Bragg, 1995).

Interdisciplinary/Integrated: Applying skills from more than one discipline to a theme, topic, or problem.

Review of Related Literature

The inclusion of Tech Prep programs and school-to-work programs in schools has become an educational focus in the 1990's. These programs are designed to raise academic standards and offer students a hands-on, integrated curriculum that focuses on career awareness. Many people say the goal of these programs is to declare tech prep a comprehensive educational reform that spans academic and vocational education. Secondary educators who support this goal talk of eliminating the "general track" in favor of a more relevant and integrated curriculum that ties in academic studies with career-oriented education (Bragg, 1995). Designing a tech prep or school-to-work program without a place for students to see how academics ties together with vocational education and the workplace is leaving out a major link (Conroy, 1995).

What does integrated mean? Curriculum integration is sometimes referred to as thematic instruction (Lasley, Palermo, Joseph, and August, 1993). This approach is commonly found at the elementary level when teachers focus on a specific theme such as kites. Three forms of curriculum integration have been identified: (1) interdisciplinary curriculum; (2) integration around skills; and (3) integration between students' experiences, internal life or affect, and the school's curricula (Martin-Kniep, Muxworthy Feige, and Soodak, 1995).

Interdisciplinary curriculum occurs within a classroom or across different classes. When the students do grammar exercises in keyboarding, this is an example of within a classroom or what is also called nested or connected curriculum (Fogarty, 1991). Shared and integrated curriculum incorporates a theme-based curriculum. The Bunger Murder

Mystery is just such a curriculum.

An example of integration around skills includes writing across the curriculum or efforts to promote critical thinking skills across the curriculum. This is also known as threaded curriculum.

Integration between students' experiences, internal life or affect, and the school's curricula is referred to as immersed curriculum (the integration between self and school). This theory is supported by Beane (1995) who states the goal of integrated curriculum is to integrate activities that use knowledge without regard for subject or discipline lines. This view focuses on life rather than on the mastery of information within subject areas.

Why should curriculum be integrated? When curriculum integration is successful, students use knowledge from one area to enrich their understanding in another. Students' problem-solving abilities are increased because of interdisciplinary education (Impson, Lynam, and Reiter, 1995). Integration brings students together to work in groups to solve problems that none could solve alone (Olds and Lightner, 1995). The Eight-Year Study of the 1930s involved 30 schools in which "fused" or "correlated" courses were attempted (Aikin, 1942). The results from this study indicated that students involved with the integrated curriculum demonstrated better attitudes toward learning, greater intellectual curiosity, and higher achievement in college than other students who were exposed to the traditional curriculum. Other studies have found that students exposed to integrated curriculum lose ground academically. In this particular study; however, only the lower ability students were given the integrated curriculum rather than the whole school (Kain, 1993).

Reports also show that teachers become better communicators and their level of satisfaction increases as a result of interdisciplinary teaching. According to Martin-Kneip, Muxworthy Feige, and Soodak (1995) integration helps teachers deal with the inherent complexity of the world, overcomes rigid perceptions of subject boundaries, supports the claim that most knowledge is interrelated, and promotes greater curricular efficiency. Both students and teachers benefit from integration. Curriculum integration is an integrated whole—“an intricately woven tapestry or a beautifully choreographed dance” (Martin-Kneip, Muxworthy Feige, and Soodak, 1995).

Six fundamental concepts in Tech Prep that lead to success are the following (Bragg, 1995): (1) Tech prep must be grounded in integrated curriculum that creates student-focused, experiential instruction; (2) Formal articulation must connect secondary programs to postsecondary programs; (3) School-to-work opportunities and tech prep must be linked; (4) Tech prep should be outcomes-focused to ensure graduates have the competencies needed; (5) Tech prep should be for all students; and (6) Tech prep requires that responsibilities be shared by educators, employers, workers, parents, and students.

Effective curriculum integration requires teachers to have a willingness to use approaches other than traditional methods such as applied academics and a willingness to work with other teachers to develop and implement integrated curricula based on all occupational areas (Conroy, 1995). Communication between teachers and administrative support are critical components if integration is going to be successful (Schmidt, 1995). Tech prep programs can only be successful if teachers are given frequent opportunities for planning and assessment and if teachers receive administrative support in establishing

the schedule and school culture (Rugen and Hartl, 1994). Using the community as a resource can also be a great asset in integration.

Integrating the curriculum can create problems. The two most prevalent problems in curriculum integration are limited class time for inclusion of new ideas and limited planning time for designing integrated activities. Meeting after school is not the best time to meet to plan an integrated activity. Teachers are involved in other activities that take precedence or are worn out by the end of the day. Not all teachers are committed to the cause. Other major challenges include continued resistance to career-oriented concepts; lack of clear policy; waning support from students, parents, and employers; too little resources (money, time, people); limited curriculum reform at the postsecondary level; too little emphasis on teacher pre-service and in-service; addition of work-based learning; and lack of program evaluation and student assessment (Bragg, 1995).

Many at Bunger feel integration is an important part of education. Despite the lack of planning time and the challenges faced, the teachers continued with the Bunger Murder Mystery. A similar activity was done previously using the software program *Where In the World is Carmen Sandiego?* This software program has students trace the steps of Carmen and her gang of thieves through different continents, obtain an arrest warrant, and make an arrest within a specific period of time. The objectives of the activity were to improve map and globe skills, thinking skills, study skills, comprehension skills, writing skills, vocabulary skills, research skills, and to be able to locate and gather information (Carroll, Knight, and Hutchinson, (1995). Our purpose for the Bunger Murder Mystery was to challenge the students to use their problem-solving skills to catch the murderer and to see how different subject areas are interrelated.

Design of the Activity

Procedures

Teachers from business, English, math, science, Spanish, art, P.E., and social studies met for an hour after school every Tuesday for four weeks to plan the murder mystery. At the first meeting, the activities that could be integrated into each subject area were decided. An investigator from the Waterloo Police Department attended the second meeting and assisted the planning committee on the proper procedures that take place after a murder occurs. At the next meeting, the committee divided into three groups to develop three possible murder scenarios/suspects. At the final meeting, the scenarios were combined so that a murder scene could be established that would fit all three scenarios. A timeline for the various classroom activities was also developed. After school one day, the crime scene was set up and videotaped for the students. Over the weekend of March 1 and 2, the crime scene was again set up so that the students would see it on Monday morning.

At 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 2, Bunger's driver's education instructor, David Swick, was found murdered at the T-intersection in the hallway by the janitor, Alice Behrends. Evidence found at the crime scene was a piece of camouflage material, a partially-burned IOU written to Richard Morgan, an empty rubbing alcohol bottle, a deck of cards, and a bloody latex glove. In Mr. Swick's classroom, tables were overturned, a bloody hammer was found on the floor, blood was found on the edge of a desk, a computer laptop and a computer diskette were found on the floor, along with Mr. Swick's tape recorder. When the students arrived on Monday morning, the only remaining

evidence of the murder was the taped outline of the body and the “DO NOT CROSS” roped-off area where the body was found.

One of the murder suspects was Krista Platte, a math instructor at Bunger. The drivers’ education program in the Waterloo School District is being privatized. Mr. Swick’s other area of teaching certification is math. Because of the imminent layoffs of first-year teachers, Mrs. Platte thought she could save her job by murdering Mr. Swick. Mr. Swick and his wife had gone out for dinner with Mrs. Platte and her husband on Friday night, March 1.

The second murder suspect was Richard Morgan, the science teacher at Bunger. Mr. Morgan and Mr. Swick participated in a poker game late Friday night, March 1. Mr. Swick lost his cabin in Wisconsin to Mr. Morgan and decided to renege on the deal. Mr. Morgan is a member of the National Guard so he has access to many different kinds of weapons.

The third murder suspect was Tim Flodeen. Sue Flodeen and Mr. Swick shared a classroom. Mr. Swick had discovered some love letters written to Sue and threatened to tell her husband. Mr. Swick had also “accidentally” deleted all of the files from Mrs. Flodeen’s computer. Tim Flodeen is a carpenter for the Waterloo Schools and has access to many different kinds of tools. His wife feared that her husband had killed Mr. Swick with the hammer found in the classroom. On Thursday, April 30, Sue Flodeen and David Swick had a huge argument regarding their sharing a classroom. Many of the students at Bunger witnessed this event.

Students questioned all of the faculty and staff on their whereabouts on the

evening of March 1 and the morning of March 2. Students were provided with the security alarm system information. The security alarm system records who the first person to disarm the alarm is each day. On Saturday, March 2, the alarm system was disarmed by Mr. Swick. As long as the security alarm system is disarmed, there is no way to record who enters or exits the building.

The radio/television club started off the day with a special news bulletin regarding the murder. Every student at Bungler is enrolled in English. The videotape of the crime scene was shown to each English class. Each class completed a police report of the crime scene.

The health occupations completed the coroner's report which stated that Mr. Swick had received a blow to the head but died as a result of a puncture wound to the neck. Traces of poison were found in his blood. Blood typing was performed. Mr. Swick was found to have O-type blood. A-type blood was also found at the murder scene. The students were provided with a list of all of the faculty and staff's blood types with the exception of the industrial arts teacher who refused to submit to a blood test.

The radio/television club interviewed individuals and provided the students with new evidence found in the case each day. The theater arts class was responsible for recreating the murder. The art classes created sketches of all of the possible murder suspects. The industrial arts classes collected data from the security alarm system. The driver's education classes drove all of the possible escape routes. The physical education classes practiced their orienteering skills in case the suspect fled on foot through the wooded area behind the school. The diskette found at the murder scene was found to

have love letters written in Spanish. The Spanish classes interpreted the love letters. The business classes talked about life insurance and inputted the information regarding the murder suspects into a database. The math classes created flowcharts on the sequence of events that led up to the murder. The newspaper class devoted a whole edition of the school newspaper to the murder mystery (see Appendix C). Finally, the science classes did blood typing and looked at DNA fingerprinting. The DNA fingerprinting pointed to Alice Behrends, the janitor.

After all of the evidence was collected, the students decided the best way to decide on whom to arrest was to take a popular vote. The person who received the most votes was Richard Morgan, the science teacher. The theater arts classes selected a couple of students to act as police officers and “arrested” Mr. Morgan. The *Waterloo Courier* covered this event and published an article regarding the murder mystery (see Appendix A).

After spring break the social studies classes participated in a mock trial. Judge Briner, Black Hawk County District Court judge, came to Bunker to talk about courtroom procedures. Students were selected for the jury, the defense team, and the prosecution team. A judge and bailiff were also selected. Students were given planning time during the last period of the day for several days to prepare their cases. The mock trial took place over the lunch hour for one week. Witnesses were called and the evidence was presented. After a 10-minute deliberation, the jury found Mr. Morgan not guilty.

After the trial was over, the real story was revealed to the students (see Appendix B).

Evaluation Instrument

The Murder Mystery Evaluation - Students (see Appendix D) was used to measure the students' reactions to the murder mystery. The Murder Mystery Evaluation - Teachers (see Appendix E) was used to measure the teachers' reactions to the murder mystery. These instruments were created by the business education teacher and were edited by one of the English teachers and one of the math teachers.

Evaluation Methods

Since all students are enrolled in English, the students were given the evaluation in their English classes following the murder mystery. Each teacher received an evaluation in his/her mailbox to complete.

Analysis of Data

The results from each question were tabulated and graphed to show the students' and teachers' reactions to the murder mystery.

Results

All students at Bunger take an English class. The evaluations were handed out to all of the students during English over the course of two days. One hundred and seventy-one student evaluations were received. This was approximately an eighty-one percent return.

Question 1 asked the students whether or not they enjoyed the Bunger murder mystery. The results for Question 1 are found on Table 1.

Table 1

Did you enjoy the Bunger Murder Mystery?

Yes	No	*Sort of
91	64	16

*Although "Sort of" was not one of the options, several students wrote this in.

Fifty-three percent of the students liked the murder mystery, thirty-seven percent did not like the murder mystery, and nine percent of the students "sort of" liked the murder mystery.

Question 2 asked the students to rank in order their favorite parts of the murder mystery. The choices included: mock arrest, television broadcasts, mock trial, and classroom activities. The results for Question 2 are shown in Figure 1.

Ranking of Favorite Parts

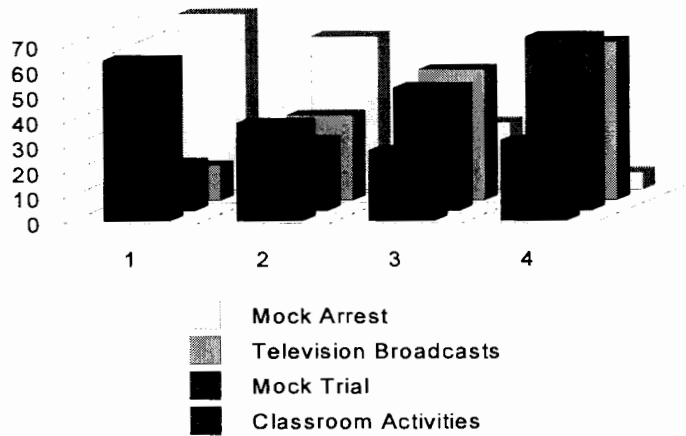


Figure 1. Rank in order your favorite parts of the murder mystery, with 1 being your favorite and 4 being your least favorite.

A blank was provided next to the classroom activities choice for the students to specifically identify the classroom activity. Many students left it blank. For those who did fill this out, see the results in Table 2.

Table 2

Specify the activity.

Activity	Number of Responses
Interpretation of Spanish love letters	10
Flowcharting in math	7
DNA fingerprinting	14
Police reports in English	8
Coroner's report	5

The results to the question “Were you given enough information to solve the murder case?” are included in Table 3.

Table 3

Were you given enough information to solve the murder case?

Yes	No
87	84

The results were split about the sufficiency of information provided. Of the students who answered no, most felt that there was not enough information given about Mrs. Platte poisoning Mr. Swick and the actual murder weapon was never revealed.

Question 4 asked the students to identify whether or not they were given the opportunity to participate in one or more classes. The results to Question 4 are included in Table 4.

Table 4

Did you feel that all students were given the opportunity to participate in the murder mystery in one or more classes?

Yes	No
122	49

Seventy-one percent of the students felt they were given the opportunity to participate in the murder mystery in one or more classes. Of the students who answered no, most felt that not all of the students got to participate in the trial.

The final part of the evaluation asked the students to provide comments on the murder mystery. Some of the comments included making the murder mystery simpler to solve with more clues, while others suggested making it more difficult. Approximately five percent suggested making the mystery easier, while about three percent wanted it more difficult. Other suggestions included better planning and organization. A few of the students felt like they didn't really get a chance to participate. Some of the students who said they did not like the murder mystery said not to have another one. Others felt that four weeks for the whole activity was too long.

Seventeen evaluations were distributed to teachers. The evaluations were placed in the teachers' mailboxes. Twelve evaluations were returned. This is approximately a seventy percent rate of return.

Question 1 asked the teachers if they enjoyed the murder mystery. The results for Question 1 are found in Table 5.

Table 5

Did you enjoy the Bunger Murder Mystery?

Yes	No
12	0

The response was unanimous; all of the teachers who responded said that they enjoyed the Bunger Murder Mystery.

Question 2 asked the teachers if they felt that the students were given enough opportunities to participate in the activities. The results for Question 2 are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Do you feel the students were given enough opportunities to participate in the activities?

Yes	No
12	0

The response from the teachers was again unanimous. All of those who responded felt that the students were given enough opportunities to participate in the activities.

Question three asked the teachers to list the activities they did in their classes to incorporate the murder mystery. Activities included hair and cloth science labs, creating flowcharts in math, writing police reports, coming up with a list of suspects, translating Spanish letters, discussing the connection of visual information and perceptual information, blood typing labs, DNA fingerprinting demonstration, blood typing, discussing the correct medical terminology, fatal injury discussion, discussing the coroner's job, jury selection, mock trial, and writing newspaper articles.

Question 4 asked the teachers whether they believed integrated activities are an

important part of the curriculum. The results to Question 4 are listed in Table 7.

Table 7

Do you believe integrated activities are an important part of the curriculum? Why or why not?

Yes	No
12	0

The teachers' responses were unanimous. All of those who responded believe integrated activities are an important part of the curriculum. When teachers answered the second half of the question, "Why"; the comments included "students realize that all subjects are interrelated," "students utilize their problem-solving skills," "students realize that what they learn in class is not isolated within that one discipline but can be applied to a wide range of 'real-world' activities," "integrated activities are more like real-life jobs," and "activities like this promote learning by doing."

Question 5 asked the teachers if they would participate in an integrated activity again. The results to Question 5 are given in Table 8.

Table 8

Would you participate in an integrated activity again?

Yes	No
12	0

The teachers who responded all said that they would participate in an integrated activity again. Several commented that they would do another murder mystery.

The final question asked the teachers to list any suggestions or comments they might have about the murder mystery. Suggestions included providing more time for the radio/Television club, improved coordination between teachers, shortening the time allotted to the murder mystery, and selecting mock trial participants from a list of volunteers rather than appointing students. Some of the teachers commented that they really enjoyed the activity, the activity went well, the students did a great job with a high amount of participation, the activity was well done considering it was the first try at something like this, and the murder mystery should be done again.

Discussions and Conclusions

Do interdisciplinary activities provide students with an understanding of how skills learned in different subject areas are interrelated in the real world? Do teachers feel that interdisciplinary activities are a necessary part of the regular curriculum? The murder mystery activity at Bunger was designed and implemented to answer these questions.

From the student evaluations, the reaction to the murder mystery was mixed. The biggest complaints from the students were the lack of information to solve the case, and several of the students felt left out of the mock trial. It might have been better if students volunteered for the various jobs rather than teachers appointing them to positions. When dealing with students in this age group, however, complete participation is limited. One of the things that might be considered is voluntary participation by the students rather than mandatorily making them participate in all of their classes.

Another problem that caused some of the negative student reactions was that the students did not seem to know the right questions to ask. It may have helped lead the students in the right direction if a police investigator had come out to talk to the students.

It would be nice to try this activity annually so the students could practice the skills they had learned. Since Bunger's students are only ninth and tenth graders, their reactions to the murder mystery may differ as they get older.

Due to the fact that Bunger is now closed, the value of this activity was difficult to determine. The impact that the Bunger Murder Mystery had on the students' academic profile and future career success is something that would have to be studied over time.

Further study in this area is needed.

From the teachers' perspectives, they unanimously felt that integrated activities are an important part of the curriculum and enjoyed the murder mystery. Most of the teachers generally felt that integrated activities showed students how subjects are interrelated and provide more real-world applications. The murder mystery utilized the students' problem-solving skills. Many teachers already have made plans for future integrated activities.

The biggest problem identified by most of the faculty was the lack of planning and coordination. The project started out with grandiose ideas, but not all of them were implemented. Most of the planning was done after school after teachers had completed a full day of teaching, and they had other commitments. The preparation for the murder mystery would have gone better if the planning could have been done during the school day. The feasibility of this is questionable considering all teachers have their planning periods at different times. The possibility of the administration paying for substitutes while the teachers plan the activity is an idea that should be explored. Not all of the teachers included activities in their classrooms and not all subject areas were represented on the planning committee which also took away from the activity somewhat.

The school is unique in that most of the teachers are willing to put in the time to try something new. This type of flexibility from teachers is not found in every school. The activities performed in the individual classrooms are only successful if the teacher is committed to the overall integrated activity or theme. Total teacher participation is probably not possible.

Integrated curriculum is a critical component in the tech prep or school-to-work concept. Activities that promote integration improve students' problem-solving skills and show students how different subject areas are interrelated in the "real world." The majority of the teachers at Bunker want to continue to participate in integrated activities, and most would be willing to participate in another murder mystery.

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Appendix A

“Killer of a Course” - *Waterloo Courier* Article

Killer of a course

Bunger students pick up knowledge during course of school murder investigation

By **JIM STANTON**
Courier Staff Writer

EVANSDALE

secret love letters, a fight over a gambling debt, poison in the bloodstream — a bloody glove.

Clues were piling up in the death of Richard Swick, a Bunger School of Technology teacher, who investigators said was killed when struck in the head with a hammer.

On Friday, Bunger biology teacher Richard Morgan was charged with the actual slaying, which apparently stemmed from a dispute over a poker game.

While clues also seemed to implicate other staff members, Bunger County deputies cuffed Morgan during class, escorted him from the building and loaded him away in a squad car.

"He just seems like the kind of guy who'd do it," freshman Matt Frerichs said disgustedly.

"He obviously wants Swick's wife," sophomore Hope Lange said.

"None of this is real, if you were wondering. But the bogus murder mystery supplied Bunger students with plenty to think about over the past few weeks.

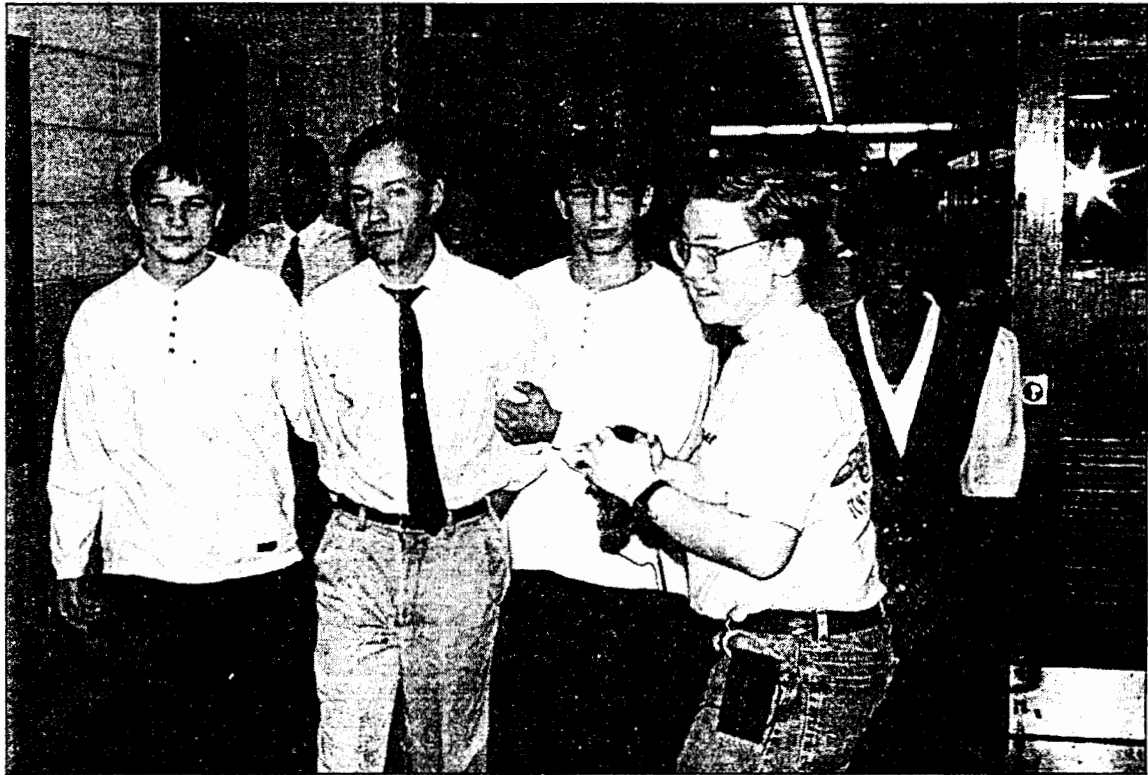
In each class of students handled one aspect of a murder investigation, from fingerprint testing to the accompanying forensic analysis.

Clues trickled out daily, leading to a "whodunnit" vote by students. A television jury trial will occur the week after the break.

"We've had a lot of fun with it," Bunger teacher Carolyn Cowell said.

In a science class, students compared fingerprint samples from the crime scene to those of staff members. They also discussed about DNA evidence.

"It wasn't real DNA fingerprinting, but we walked them through the process,



JIM STANTON / Courier Staff Writer

Arresting "officers" Nate Helgeson, left, and Charlie Barfels escort biology teacher Richard Morgan from the Bunger School of Technology as student Ricky Mott tries to get a picture. Morgan is the suspect in a mock murder mystery at the school.

and showed how they match up to the end product," said science teacher Martie Heath Sinclair, who worked the past six years in genetic crop research.

Bunger's Radio & TV Club broadcast daily newscasts over the schoolwide network, interviewing witnesses, the coroner and the judge.

The English class worked up police reports, while math students calculated the most likely suspects.

"We're doing a unit on logic and probability, so it fit in pretty well," Frerichs said.

Students in Dave Nichols' social studies class will serve as prosecutors, defense lawyers and jury members for the trial. A real judge talked to students about trials and criminal justice.

Early in the investigation, suspicion focused on several other staff members.

Custodian Alice Behrends, for one, found the corpse in a hallway during her normal nightly check of the property, about 7:30 p.m. The coroner later put the time of death at 7:30.

Also, blood from a latex glove found at the crime scene matched Behrends',

DNA tests showed.

Teacher Susan Flodeen was a suspect after the Spanish class decoded secret love letters from her husband, suggesting that "Swick won't be around to bother you anymore."

"The person that we, as a staff, picked for the suspect was not the same one that the students picked," Heath Sinclair said later. "But police don't always arrest the guilty person.

"More evidence could come out during the trial. There could be a mistrial. Who knows?"

Appendix B

The Actual Murder Story

On Saturday, March 2, Mr. Swick was dropped off at Bunger by his wife at 6:30 a.m. to pick up papers. He also needed to leave instructions for his substitute. His wife left him at Bunger while she left their children at the babysitter's home. During dinner Friday night, Mrs. Platte had slipped a slow-acting poison into Mr. Swick's drink. Mr. Swick was working on his computer when the poison given to him on Friday evening started to affect him. He became woozy and fell backwards in his chair, hitting his head on the desk, knocking over the tables, and knocking the hammer off of the desk onto the floor. Mr. Swick, still groggy, wandered into the hallway. The hallway was still slightly dark. Alice Behrends, the janitor, had come to do her usual cleaning, and saw a shadowy figure stumbling around in the hallway. She became afraid and grabbed a screwdriver from her cart and threw it at Mr. Swick. The screwdriver was the weapon that killed Mr. Swick.

Appendix C

Bunger Online - Student Newspaper

BUNGER ONLINE

BST

BULLDOGS

APRIL, 1996

CRIME OF THE YEAR

by: Tony Camarata,
Kimberly Helmrichs
Fred Weber

On March 3, 1996 **Alice Behrends** found the body of David A. Swick Jr., as she was doing her regular building check.

"I was very shocked, you just don't find a body everyday," Alice stated. There appeared to be a scuffle in room 111.

District Attorney officers **Emily Kafer** and **Sam Yim** reported that David Swick's death was unnaturally caused.

On March 5, Alice Behrends was interviewed by **Sara Fass**. In that interview Alice stated, "I have never seen any thing like this before in my life."

Later that day, she was questioned by the police. The coroner's report and the blood analysis was released on March 8th.

The crime scene was littered with debris. A scuffle between **David Swick** and his unknown assailant created a very messy classroom. The following is a description of the crime scene found in room 111: a row of turned up tables, a chair turned up, bloody hammer on ground, blood on the end of the desk, a laptop on the floor, Swick's tape recorder on the floor.

In the hall at the T- intersection they found unknown substance, and an IOU written out to **Dick Morgan**.

The victim's body was found face down in the hallway. The Murder Mystery had many questions but very few answers.



PRIME SUSPECTS

by: Sara Steimel
Jenny Wood
Racheal Bergmann

Prime suspects were chosen by the students of BST by voting.

After all the tallies were counted, the people most suspected of murdering Dave Swick were: **Tim Flodeen**, **Carrie Even** and **Alice Behrends**. However, the most suspicious character (received the most votes) was **Richard Morgan**.

The least amount of votes were given to Tim Flodeen. He was suspected because of the love letters he wrote to his wife, **Susan Flodeen**.

Carrie Even received third place in our tally. She was suspected purely because of the position of the body. It was found close to her room.

Alice Behrends was suspected because her blood type was found at the crime scene, she arrived early in the morning and had time she couldn't account for. She received the second most amount of votes.

The one at the top of almost everyone's list was Richard Morgan because of the poker game and the "IOU" that was left close to the body.

Richard Morgan was placed under arrest and the murder trial began.

Dave Swick took students on the road during instruction. **Katie Thompson** makes sure she has her safety belt on before starting the car. Mr. Swick's obituary can be found on page 5.

GETTING CLOSER EVIDENCE RELEASED

by: Dennis Nance
Ann Darragh
Rachel Miller
Devon Scroggins
Stephanie Avis

David A. Swick Jr. was murdered between Friday the 1st and Saturday the 2nd of March. The body was found at 8:00 Saturday morning. The coroner's report indicated that the body had a wound to the head 3" deep. There was extensive swelling; the possible weapon was a rusty hammer. Another puncture wound on the right side of the neck approximating 2" deep was found, this weapon was unknown.

Nine letters in Spanish were found at the crime scene signed by Teo or Tim. These letters expressed love for "My Dearest" and hate for Dave Swick.

When the body was given a blood test, the blood alcohol level was found to be .06, which measures out to be about three beers. There was also a trace of poison, the product was unknown. His blood type was found to be O, his estimated time of death was 7:30 a.m. Saturday morning.

Results from blood testing were released this week. The blood found in room #111 was type O. This blood was found on the corner of the large desk, on the hammer and on the floor



HERE COMES THE JUDGE

JUDGE BRINER VISITS BST

by: Andrea Schoenfield
Carrie Lentzkow

On March 13, 1996, Judge Briner, Black Hawk County District Court judge, came to Bunker. He talked about court procedures and what goes on in a courtroom.

He talked to the members of the jury, alternates, the judges, and the attorneys selected for the mock murder trial. He noted that jury members take orders and dictate order.

Three states use cam corders which are voice activated.

The defense is on the left side of the courtroom and the prosecution is on the right side. The camera is behind the jury box and is never allowed to show members of the jury. If the camera shows the jury, the judge can throw the camera out of the courtroom.

Media are allowed in the courtroom at certain times and/or when the judge allows it. They may not have cameras and if they do, they may not do a live report inside the courtroom. It is against the law to do a live report in the courtroom. They have to follow the same rules as do the other cameras in the courtroom.

Judge Briner was very informative to the jury members of the mock trial. They now have some background and will be able to do a better job while the trial is taking place.



DUTY

CALLS

JURY SELECTED

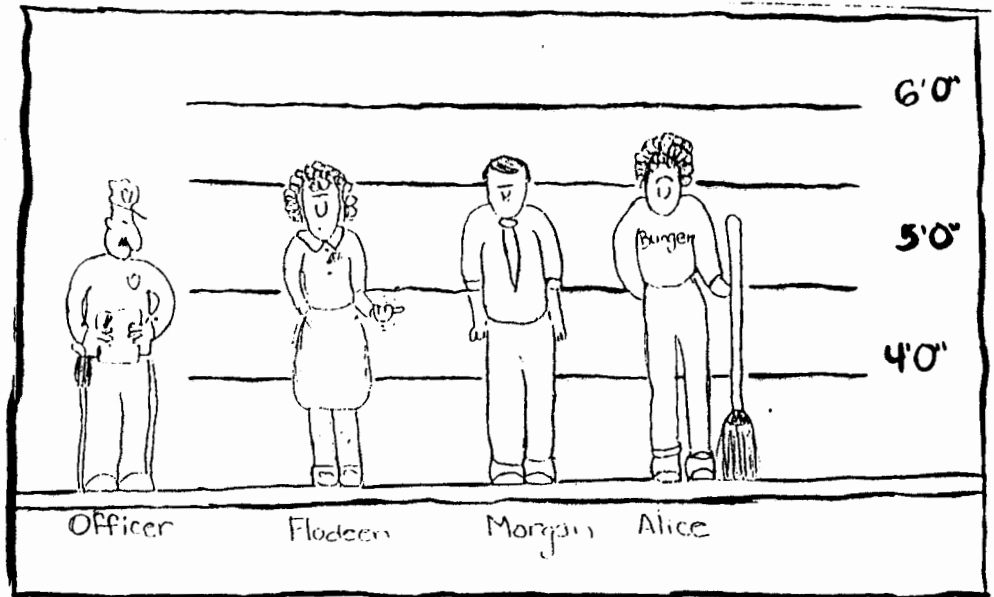
by: Robyn Westervelt
Lyndsey Eldridge
Tessa Seitz
Heather Newhoff
Sara Spence

On March 13 student jurors were selected by teacher's for Bunger's Murder Mystery. The following students were chosen at random for duty: Willie Timm, Stacey Moore, Robyn

Westervelt, Nichole Ambrose, Tammy Schroeder, Heidi Trent, Aaron Nugent, Kodie Flaig, Leon Adams, Jenny Bruns, Deanna Evans, Faith Chamberlin, Lonnis Jordan, Kim Helmrichs, Jesse Huntley, and Jessie Johnson. The judge was the Honorable Carrie Weekly.

They were sworn to give a verdict on the mystery case. The jurors listened to both testimonies, looked over evidence, and were presented with suspects and witnesses. The court took a recess and the first ten jurors listed above, then gathered to come to an agreement on the Murder Mystery.

The trial began on March 27 and continued through the first week of April with a non guilty verdict for Richard Morgan.



“Who Dun It?” At one point everyone was a suspect.
Artist: Tessa Seitz

COURTROOM STAFF CHOSEN

Courtroom People

by: Rickey Mott, Sara Albert, Tyler Young, Matt Robbins

The Bunger Murder Mystery trial was held the week of March 25, and it lasted 4 days.

The Judge was the Honorable Carrie Weekley and as her assistant, the Honorable Ben McBride.

Justin Mattson, Brad Meron, Erin Maiden, and Shateisha Bruce made up the prosecution team. They were the ones to prove the defendant guilty and bring him to justice. The support staff behind the prosecution lawyers do the research on the trial. The support staff for the prosecution team were: Victoria Hamilton, Sam Hopper, Josh Kennegeiter, Katie Oldfather

and Ann Darragh.

“We have to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the suspect is guilty,” said Ann Darragh.

The defense team is the team that tries to prove the suspect is not guilty. The defense team consists of the following: Chuck Means, Justin Morris, Rachel Kuehl and Joe Glessner. The support staff for the defense team is as follows: Libby Frerichs, Adam Clark, Jenny Hansen, Erica Eickhoff, Katie Thompson, and Jason Henderson.

The bailiff was Tony Camarata. The assistant bailiff was Chad Bigler.

The court camera/recorder was Rickey Mott.

AN ARRESTING SITUATION

Bighouse Takes Morgan

by: **Shateisha Bruce**
Malcolm Thomas, guest columnists

It was an exciting day in Bunger County on March 15th. There was a lot of commotion. At 9:05 a.m. Richard Morgan, Bunger's biology teacher, was taken into custody for the murder of David Swick.

The arresting officers were: **Nathan Helgeson**, **Charlie Barfels**, and **Kamanicha Gamblin**, who read Morgan his rights.

The arrest took place in Morgan's classroom. **Officer Helgeson** cuffed and frisked him as **Officer Barfels** assisted in the arrest. He was taken out to **Officer Carrol Keinol's** police car and to the Bunger County Police station.

"I was glad that they (police officers) got him out of here. Mr. Morgan has been acting strange lately and I was afraid that he might come and get me!" **Sara Faas** said nervously.

"There was so much commotion, I couldn't tell who they were arresting!" **Abby Benz** explained.

Richard Morgan, for now, remains in the Bunger County Police lock up.



Charlie Barfels and Nate Helgeson arrest Morgan for the murder of Dave Swick. News Photographer Rickey Mott tries to get a good "shot."

KILLER TRIAL

by: **Carrie Weekley**, guest columnist

Richard Morgan's trial began on March 28th and ended with a non guilty verdict.

The prosecution team consisted of the following members: **Shateisha Bruce**, **Erin Maiden**, **Justin Mattson**, and **Brad Meron**. The defense team consisted of: **Chuck Means**, **Justin Morris**, **Elizabeth Frerichs**, and **Joe Glessner**.

The trial began with the prosecution team calling their witnesses to the stand. Then the defense team called their witnesses.

Many people were called to the witness stand to testify concerning their knowledge of the incident.

Alice Behrends testified to the fact that she had trouble seeing the murdered victim on

the floor that Saturday morning.

Mrs. Heath Sinclair explained the blood analysis as she is an expert in DNA.

Mrs. Kriege, assistant coroner, related to the jury the cause of death.

Officer O'Hara explained what he found when he was called to the scene of the crime.

Mrs. Swick was called to the stand to relive that morning for the jury.

Mr. Bock related how the security system for the building worked.

Mr. Wolfe was called to the stand to relay any anger during the poker game in which Dave Swick lost his cabin to **Rich Morgan**.

Mrs. Platte told the jury that she and her husband had

Continued on Page 5

Obituary

DAVID SWICK

by: Abbey Sires
Nate Helgeson

David A. Swick Jr., a 38 year old Caucasian male died March 2, 1996. He stood 5'7" tall and weighed about 175 pounds. He was born in Sault St. Marie, Michigan, and lived here until age 6, then moved to Waterloo.

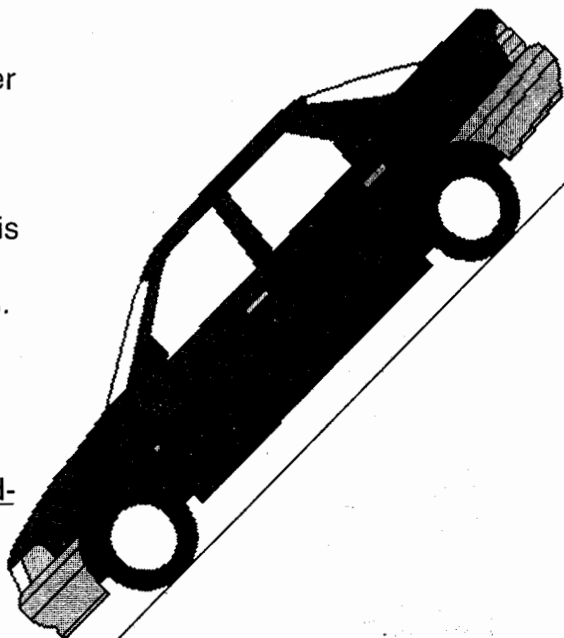
During his teenage years, he washed dishes for Schoitz hospital. After he graduated from West High School in 1976, he went on to college. He worked at Morris Printing for a year. He then went on to work at H & H Machine and Tool for 4 years while he

to teach in the Driver's Education program later. After teaching Driver's Ed. at East High for over a dozen years, he went on to teach at Bunger School of Technology in the Spring of 1995.

He died on March 2, 1996 while at Bunger School. He is survived by his wife, Annette, and his two young daughters.

Services: 11 a.m. Tuesday at Waterloo Memorial Park Cemetery chapel.

Memorial fund: The Laid-Off Driver's Education Teachers of Waterloo.



Continued from Page 2
EVIDENCE RELEASED
in the hallway.

Alice Behrends was found to have type A blood, which was the type found on the latex glove near the body.

It was discovered that **Rich Morgan, Carrie Even, Carolyn Cowell, Sandy Kass, Janet Mahan, Dave Nichols, Connie O'Sullivan, Sharon Porter, Dee Ulrich and Cal Wolfe** also had type A.

Investigators were puzzled by the fact that **Brian Martz** would not submit to blood typing.

"I just don't like needles, that's all," stated **Martz**.

Investigation into the murder is ongoing and more information will be released when received.

Continued from Page 4
dinner with Dave Swick that evening.

Mrs. Flodeen explained how she thought her husband couldn't possibly have murdered Dave Swick.

"I tell my husband everything, even about the time Dave and I got into an argument. However, I could never believe Tim would get mad enough to kill him!" declared **Mrs. Flodeen**.

The most damaging testimony came from **Alice Behrends**. She contradicted herself and couldn't explain her actions that morning.

The prosecution team didn't have enough information for a conviction, so the jury found Richard Morgan not guilty on April 3, 1996.

Alice Behrends was later found guilty for the murder of Dave Swick and was convicted of murder.



ended college at UNI. He graduated in 1981. He started substitute teaching in 1982 and began teaching career in 1983. He first taught math classes at West High School, but decided

PICTURE THIS.....

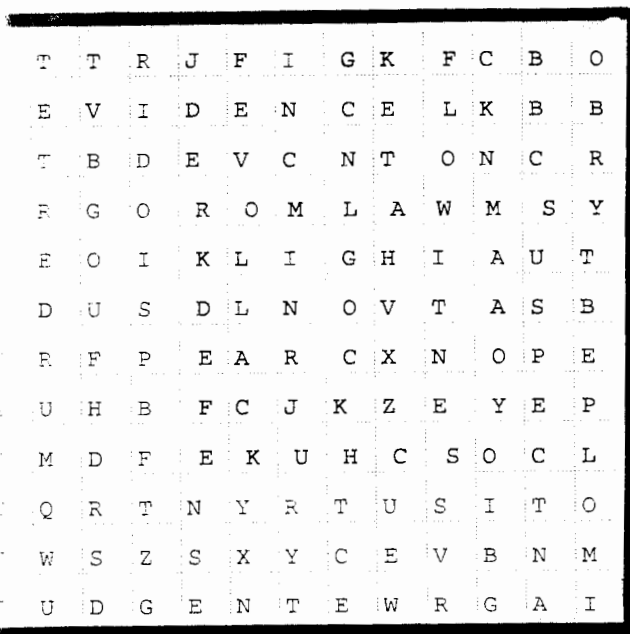


MURDER MADNESS WORDFIND

PROSECUTE
WITNESS
DEFENSE
EVIDENSE
JURY
LAW
JUDGE
MURDER
SUSPECT
FELONY

FIND THESE
WORDS IN THE
PUZZLE BELOW

The judges



and jury



Appendix D

Murder Mystery Evaluation - Students

Evaluation of Bunger Murder Mystery - Students

1. Did you enjoy the Bunger Murder Mystery?

Yes

No

2. Rank in order your favorite parts of the murder mystery, with 1 being your most favorite and 4 being your least favorite.

_____ Mock Trial

_____ Mock Arrest

_____ Television Broadcasts/Interviews

_____ Classroom Activities - Police Reports, DNA Fingerprinting, Coroner's Report, Analysis of Data, Life Insurance, Translation of Spanish Love Letters, Police Sketches, Other

Please specify which activity _____

3. Were you given enough information to solve the murder case?

Yes

No

If you answered "No", what information did you think was missing?

4. Did you feel that all students were given the opportunity to participate in the murder mystery in one or more classes?

Yes

No

If you answered "No", why not?

5. Please list any suggestions you might have if we were to have another murder mystery.

6. Other comments:

Appendix E

Murder Mystery Evaluation - Teachers

Evaluation of Bunger Murder Mystery - Teachers

1. Did you enjoy the Bunger Murder Mystery?

Yes

No

2. Do you feel the students were given enough opportunities to participate in the activities?

Yes

No

If you answered "No", what more could have been done to increase participation.

3. Please list the activities you used in your classes to incorporate the murder mystery.

4. Do you believe integrated activities are an important part of the curriculum?

Yes

No

Why or why not?

5. Would you participate in an integrated activity again?

Yes

No

If you answered "No", why not?

6. Please list any suggestions or comments you might have about the murder mystery.