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EXPERIENCE BASED CAREER EDUCATION:
A MODEL FOR BOZEMAN, MONTANA

by

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to design a model for an Experience Based Career Education Program for junior and senior high school students in Bozeman, Montana. Experience Based Career Education, a new approach to secondary education, was developed by the National Institute of Education and four regional educational laboratories; the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, the Far West Laboratory, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, and Research for Better Schools. Basically, it has been designed to extend the high school student's learning experience beyond the classroom walls into the career world. The four models were compared and appropriate elements were selected from each in order to create a model specifically tailored to fit Bozeman, Montana.

The model created by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory was the guide for the Bozeman model of Experience Based Career Education, since it is a full-time alternative for all students: the college-bound to the career-oriented to the potential drop-out.

Students in the Bozeman model were to create and complete individual projects which combined academic and career development components. Their learning experiences included the actual investigation of various career possibilities and requirements as well as actual hands-on job experiences at specific job sites. Other key elements of the program were guidance and counseling group experiences for students, seminars on the world of work given by community members and student development of certain "competencies" such as balancing a checkbook and opening a charge account, which would in turn be certified by qualified community instructors.

The Bozeman model of Experience Based Career Education gave students considerable individual attention, guidance and follow-up while providing them with the opportunity to combine academic requirements and interests with potential careers.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the last decade a new educational trend has emerged which is rapidly taking hold throughout the United States. While the U.S. public education system was once able to provide the student with the necessary coping mechanisms to function effectively in society, it is no longer capable of doing so. (Shrag, 1975). The demands and requirements of the modern world are quite different, and updated means of meeting them are essential. Posing a dramatic challenge to the existing U.S. public school system by providing students with modern means to meet modern demands are alternative schools, whose basic philosophy includes academic and personal autonomy for the student. (Fantini, 1976).

While the academic needs of the majority of students are still being met by the traditional school system, high school students have had little opportunity for vocational exploration. At graduation the umbilical cord is cut. High school graduates find themselves suddenly immersed in a world to which they have had little or no exposure, do not understand, and perhaps do not even

like or want. Yet they are also expected to conform, adjust, and produce. They are literally children one day and adults the next. Without any kind of exposure to the job world before graduation, students often leave high school unprepared for a career, and with virtually no idea of how to choose or pursue one.

(Task Force '74, 1975). They flounder around from job to job, or from college major to major in the hopes of stumbling upon some kind of personally meaningful career. If they are to make a smooth transition between the academic and professional worlds relying on choice instead of accident, they must be able to make an informed career decision before leaving high school.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to design a model for an Experience Based Career Education Program for junior and senior high school students in Bozeman, Montana which would assist students in this transitional process.

CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATIONAL THEORY OR PRODUCT

Currently, there are no full-time public alternatives to the existing high school in Bozeman. This full-time alternative model would give students a choice

In addition, most alternative programs at the high school level have specific target populations such as low income students, the handicapped, the gifted, racial minorities, the drop-out, and so forth. This alternative model was designed to serve the entire spectrum of students; from the college-bound to the career-oriented to the potential drop-out.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What kinds of alternative high school programs are currently available?
2. What kind of model would best fit Bozeman, Montana?

PROCEDURES

The writer collected and analyzed available information on Experience Based Career Education, an alternative program for high school students which was developed by four regional educational laboratories: They are: 1) the Appalachia Educational Laboratory located in Charleston, West Virginia, 2) the Far West Laboratory in San Francisco, California, 3) the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon, and 4) Research for Better Schools of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Appropriate elements from each of the

four models were selected and combined to create a model specifically tailored to fit Bozeman, Montana.

In addition, two existing models of Experience Based Career Education were visited and assessed through personal interviews with each of the program directors. The first, directed by David Dole, is located in Portland, Connecticut, and is operating a pure model developed by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory. The second, directed by Gary Garlock, is located in Billings, Montana, and is an outgrowth of the model developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

DELIMITATIONS

1. Since it was not possible to visit all four educational laboratories, the writer relied on information received by mail.
2. It was possible to visit only two existing models of Experience Based Career Education.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Alternative schools. Schools which operate outside the existing public school system. Typically, they de-emphasize traditional curriculum, coercive methods of

teaching, and rigidly defined age and grade level groups. They encourage individual discovery, creativity, and self-motivation.

EBCE. Experience Based Career Education

AEL. Appalachia Educational Laboratory

FWL. Far West Laboratory

NWREL. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

RBS. Research for Better Schools.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature on alternative schools uncovered three relevant topic areas as a background for this study. The first was: what is wrong with the traditional educational system and why do we need alternatives? The second area covered the types of alternative high school programs currently available, and the third dealt with recommendations for improved future models.

WHY ALTERNATIVES?

The school system as we know it today is a nineteenth century phenomenon. It was created in a time of consensus and harmony and was designed essentially to maintain the status quo. (Task Force '74, 1975). As the editors of Cracks In the Classroom Wall pointed out, the schools were expected,

"...to teach order, discipline and democracy, the virtues of cleanliness and hard work, the evils of alcohol, tobacco, and later of sex and communism; we wanted them to acculturate the immigrants, to provide vocational skills, to foster patriotism and tolerance, and above all, to produce a high standard of literacy throughout the population." (Shrag, 1975, p. 12).

According to Fantini (1976), the fundamental problem with this system is that we are trying to make

an outdated model fit an increasingly complex and pluralistic society. In its present form, it is unable to effectively respond to all the varying definitions of and demands for "quality education." Yet "quality education" continues to be a top priority in America. People without a high school diploma are confined to a limited number of options. They are restricted in their career choices, which subsequently affect their place of residence and entire life style. Under the present system, only those with a high school diploma can aspire to higher goals while those without one are immobilized.

Several authors stated that the implications of the existing school system extend beyond personal immobility into the social and political arena. Shrag (1975) pointed out that the school is the single point of entry into society. It envelops everyone, sifts through and selects those who will form an elite ruling class. This continual process not only creates but maintains the elite while making it impossible for those who were not selected to make it to the top. Yet the schools have succeeded in perpetuating the myth that opportunity and room is available at the top for

everyone. He further stated,

"Apparently it never occurred to anyone that as long as we operated by a linear standard (bright, average, slow, etc.) the system would, by definition, have to fail at least some kids. Every race has a loser. Failure is structured into the American system of education. Losers are essential to the success of winners." (Shrag, 1975, p. 15).

Fantini (1976) stated that the only changes we have made in the educational system have been updating courses, introducing new learning devices; in short, putting all of our efforts into trying to improve an outdated, ineffectual model of education. These compensatory measures are gradually being assessed as failures. Shrag (1975) also investigated this phenomenon, explaining our attempts at repair in this light:

"Education has often been called the American religion. Thus, if the school system fails, so does the promise of equality, so does the dream of the classless society, so does our security against the inequalities of society." (Shrag, 1975, p. 12)

Consequently, the explanations for failure up to this point have been that there is something wrong with the individual, the race, the environment, and so on. No one has pointed to the institution itself as the culprit, as that would mean admitting that we cannot

deliver what we have promised. If the schools had encouraged creativity and awareness they would have also encouraged change, equality, and a restructuring of wealth, which would have been dysfunctional in our current system. (Robischon, Rabow & Schmidt, 1975)

Thus, the broad implication is that the traditional school system is not accommodating the increasing growth and diversification of American society. It stands firm in all its obsolete convictions, creating and maintaining an elite social order while rendering any other avenues of success impossible. The reasoning behind the alternative school movement is that the system must be cracked open, overhauled, and made responsive to society as it is operating today.

More specifically, alternatives are necessary because the high schools are not doing what most people consider to be a vital aspect of schooling; preparing students for occupational competence.

In 1972, the Fourth Annual Survey of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools indicated that 44% of the general public thought that the most important goal of education was "to get better jobs." (Task Force '74, 1975)

In 1973, 90% of the public and 90% of professional educators felt that public schools should "give more emphasis to a study of trades, professions and business to help students decide on their careers." (Task Force '74, 1975) The results of the National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education's nationwide survey involving superintendents, principals, teachers, students and parents indicated that 62% viewed occupational competence as an important goal of high school education. (Task Force '74, 1975) But the high schools are not teaching the skills which society considers basic, as evidenced by the number of students who leave school unprepared for a career. Therefore, the argument is that we need alternatives to the traditional school system which give everyone a chance to succeed, and the tools to enable them to do so.

EXISTING ALTERNATIVES

Several types of alternatives to the traditional school system are currently in operation. Basically, they are: 1) schools within schools, which include the open classroom, work-study programs, computers

which diagnose individual needs and provide computer-assisted instruction, and vocational education programs, 2) freedom schools, which have ethnic, political, and social considerations written into them, and 3) free schools, which operate on the concept that personal freedom and autonomy enhance the learning process.

The schools within schools are the repairs we have been attempting to make on the traditional school. The open classroom includes learning centers, freedom of movement and selection of worthwhile activities within a covert structure. This cuts down on the push for everyone to learn the same things at the same rate and encourages individual exploration and creativity. Work-study programs divide students' time between a job and school, and are designed to give them a feel for what it would be like to work at one specific job. Computer techniques take the focus off the teacher and put it back on the student as an individual inquirer, and vocational education programs are concerned with developing salable skills in students. In all four programs the emphasis is on the individual as a

person capable of discovering his or her own interests and skills when given the opportunity to do so.

Freedom schools are owned and operated primarily by ethnic groups within their own communities. The main focus of these schools is "...to provide a political environment in which to prepare the next generation for the active transformation of society."

(Fantini, 1976, p. 4) The schooling process includes interaction with the community and its resources, establishing smaller educational units to humanize the experience for those involved and relating educational experience to the life of the community.

The third group, "free schools," are mainly a product of the white counter culture. Their major emphasis is on personal freedom and autonomy. Students have input in all areas of the school, from what they choose to study to how the decision-making process will work. Basically, they operate on the premise that students will realize their greatest potential in a totally free atmosphere. (Kozol, 1972)

While those three options seem to cover most all orientations, several recommendations for further

exploration into scholastic alternatives have been made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On one end of the spectrum, Bane and Jencks (1975) recommended putting political controls on the institutions that shape our society. They stated that nothing short of the establishment of socialism will redefine the school's role from excluder to includer. Similarly, Reimer (1971) felt that we must prevent the schools from monopolizing the life chances of individuals, and Illich (1970) said that unless we realize that schools are, in fact, agents of social control, we will be unable to begin a reform of education. The type of reform he advocated is the construction of "communication webs" as the alternative to scholastic funnels, where the world is opened up as an arena for the educational process to take place. As it stands, he stated, "...education becomes unworldly and the world becomes noneducational." (Illich, 1970, p. 35)

Shrag (1975) argued for a restoration of multiple options, and for a system that would ally with difference while fighting conformity and impersonality.

Glaser (1975) concurred with this idea and urged a shift from the selective mode to an adaptive one, where the system adapts to the child, rather than the other way around. Fantini (1976) stated, "Over time, we could emerge with a redefined system of public education that is diverse, self-renewing, and responsive to a pluralistic society." (p. 16).

On the more conservative end of the spectrum, the Council of Basic Education stated that "true Education" is a necessity, and that the schools must be receptive to change and innovation if they are to achieve it. This must be done, however, within some rational organizational framework in order to be effective. (Smith, 1976)

The 1974 Task Force set forth specific recommendations for emerging alternatives, both within and outside of the schools. First, they recommended that citizens and parents become more involved in the activities of high schools. They also encouraged the involvement of business and industry in the education of the nation's youth and sought its extension, believing that education extends beyond the classroom

walls. Also, the Task Force favored extending work-study programs, so that all students would have the opportunity to develop marketable skills prior to graduation. This also included career counseling and the building of problem-solving skills. (Task Force '74, 1975)

Finally, although the partnership between education and business was seen as essential, the Task Force insisted that the reliance remain limited. Work-study programs should be complements to rather than replacements for programs and experiences offered in the high school. "American schools do not exist solely to train young people to fit predetermined slots or to meet the specific manpower needs of American industry." (Task Force '74, 1975, p. 89) The Task Force believed that the challenge to the American educational system is to be responsive to the many clashing ideas and value systems which exist in the twentieth century.

SUMMARY

The literature reviewed in this chapter indicated that the traditional school system is outdated and unresponsive to change. Alternatives to this system are

necessary in order to insure that all students, not just a select few, have the opportunity to complete high school successfully. Three basic kinds of alternatives are already in existence: schools within schools, freedom schools and free schools. Yet there is room for alternative models which are geared toward the mainstream of society, and call for more parent and community input as well as the expansion of vocational type experiences for students.

CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF FOUR MODELS OF EXPERIENCE BASED CAREER EDUCATION

Experience Based Career education is a new approach to secondary education. It has been developed by the National Institute of Education and four regional educational laboratories to help bridge the gap between the classroom and the community.

E.B.C.E. students spend a major part of their time on learning projects in the community. They combine learning activities outside and within the school into a balanced, comprehensive, individualized program. The community is analyzed for its potential as a learning resource. Student experiences in the community are then carefully planned, supervised and evaluated.

Students learn material normally studied in the classroom, but in a practical way that has direct application to the job world. They are guided in their learning by ongoing relationships with working adults in the community. They explore important new dimensions about themselves and potential careers, and learn how to make informed career decisions. (National Institute of Education, 1976)

The four regional educational laboratories have

important similarities:

1) People and facilities in the community are the principal resources for student learning and program development.

2) All four models utilize some method of identifying and analyzing the learning potential of activities in the community. Each one is also concerned with identifying student interests and abilities so as to plan and individualize learning activities.

3) The roles of teacher and counselor are combined and shared with community participants.

4) Each model provides program activities that give students opportunities to explore different career areas in order to clarify possible career choices and needed preparation.

5) Guidance and instructional activities are provided to help students acquire competencies in dealing with the problems and decisions of adult life.

6) All four programs have ensured that the students can earn standard high school diplomas and present credentials suitable for college admission and employment. (National Institute of Education, 1976)

7) Each of the models has been designed to offer something worthwhile and attractive to a wide range of students:

a) Those who only have a vague notion of available career options and want to do some exploring through direct experience.

The four models also differ significantly, as each has an individual unique approach to providing program activities to students and involving community participants in program development and policymaking.

("EBCE: A Design," 1975)

Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL)

The AEL/EBCE curriculum is designed around courses and credits required by the public high school, yet it is a total alternative to traditional course work. Five components form the basis of this concept-centered curriculum: Career education, English/Communications, Mathematics, Natural Science and Social Science, which are integrated with career exploration experiences in the community.

Students work together with the program staff to formulate learning activities that combine academic

and career exploration components. The two main curriculum documents used in this process are the Student Program Guide and the Student Career Guide. Students must also complete a "Career Planning and Decision Making" course which involves the mastery of certain basic career decision-making skills.

AEL/EBCE students spend 70 to 80 percent of their time at community sites of their choice completing their individual career and academic programs instead of attending classes. The rest of their time is spent drawing up plans and objectives and assessing learning projects with program staff. Students also use diagnostic testing keyed to the U.S. Department of Labor's 114 Worker Trait Classification system to assist them in choosing career experience sites. (National Institute of Education, 1976)

Far West Laboratory

The Far West Laboratory model includes three primary learning resources for its students: 1) resource persons, who are working adults in the community willing to share their knowledge, skills, and experience with interested students on a one-to-one basis.

2) resource organizations, which offer small-group activities at employer locations. Activities usually include basic orientation, observation, study of operations, and hands-on experience. 3) community resources, which offer opportunities for individual and small group exploration and study, such as libraries, and museums.

These resources are organized and implemented through the package and the project. These packages, called Project Planning Packages, were developed by the Far West Laboratory and call for the use of resource persons, organizations, and the community. Each package unites a study area and careers associated with it, including goals, relevant concepts, issues and topics, sample projects, a list of available resources, and suggested readings.

Students work with learning coordinators to design individual projects and determine what type and amount of credit can be obtained through the successful completion of them. Students usually complete at least four projects each semester. In the orientation phase of the project, students find out what can be learned

from the source and whether or not they want to go ahead with the contract. The exploration phase lets them analyze the employer organization or career subject area in relation to their individual interests, abilities and values. Finally, students conduct an investigation in which they obtain sufficient experience in an organization or career subject area to develop generally useful knowledge and competencies through personal involvement.

This model has been implemented both as a supplementary program within public high schools and also as a separate full-time or part-time option for students. Thus, students spend between 20 to 80 percent of their time in the community, depending on individual needs and interests.

FWL/EBCE also makes use of a variety of group experiences (advisory groups, project seminars, and workshops) to support and build on students' individual learning. Students may also enroll in regular high school or community college courses to meet individual needs. (National Institute of Education, 1976)

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL)

This full-time program has three curriculum areas: Basic Skills (reading, math, communications), Life Skills (creative development, critical thinking, personal/social development, science, functional citizenship, competencies), and Career Development (identifying career interests, understanding the world of work, employability skills, career knowledge). Methods used within this framework include career explorations, projects, learning and skill building levels, competency certification, student journals and world of work seminars.

The process of developing learning plans and standards of evaluation is much the same as the two other models. Students and staff work together to establish those criteria.

Students spend about 50 percent of their program time at learning sites with volunteer community instructors. Again, each community is analyzed for its potential as a learning source, and students' learning tasks are structured accordingly. (National Institute of Education, 1976)

Research for Better Schools (RBS)

The RBS/EBCE model has been designed to operate within the regular school curriculum. This program also has three components. The first is Career Development, which consists of both the exploration and specialization phases. The second is Career guidance which helps students develop self-appraisal and decision-making skills. The last component is the Academic Resource Center, where student experiences at employer sites are complemented by work in academic areas, such as English and math.

Students spend approximately 20 percent of their school week in the community, where they expand their career development through explorations (a series of group mini-courses held at community resource sites) and specialization (a program of independent study projects).

The program also includes individualization of projects and group guidance instruction which helps students clarify career possibilities for themselves.

(National Institute of Education, 1976)

This broad overview of the four educational models shows that each has a slightly different approach to the

EBCE experience. A closer look at some of the specific components of each program shows several clear-cut differences among them.

1) The AEL and NWREL models are total alternatives to the existing public high school system. All student experiences are under the auspices of these programs. Students may elect to take a course supplementary to an individual learning activity, but that is their only contact with the high school.

The RBS model has been designed exclusively for use as a supplementary option within the regular school curriculum, while the FWL model can be used either that way or as a total alternative.

2) The curriculums of the AEL, NWREL, and the FWL models are essentially the same. The terminology for curriculum components differs slightly, but all three models require that students have mastery of certain career, life, and basic skills. The RBS model focuses only on the career development and guidance area, leaving coverage of the other areas up to the parent high school.

3) The third difference is the mode of learning. The AEL model uses the Activity Sheet, a single page

learning model designed to develop critical thinking and inquiry skills in the student, regardless of the specific course content of the project. Each short-term project, whether academic or career-oriented, is planned to help the student gain skill in five clearly specified levels of inquiry: defining the problem, gathering data, organizing/analyzing data, generalizing and making inferences and communicating the results. Each completed Activity Sheet is evaluated in four different ways, one of which is student progress in using these inquiry or critical thinking skills. Thus, students master both specific information and basic learning skills.

The NWREL model uses student projects in specific curriculum content areas as the primary learning and evaluative mode. Through the process of career exploration students investigate and assess what is available in the job world. Then, they may opt for "hands-on" experience, which helps them see what skills are required for specific jobs, and gives them a context in which to develop and complete projects.

The NWREL program also includes competency certification for certain skills needed for adult daily living,

such as balancing a check book, student journals which help students to integrate career experience with personal needs, and group seminars on the world of work.

The FWL model also makes use of the individualized student project as the primary mode of learning and evaluation. Projects are designed by students and approved by the staff. Supplementing the projects are advisory group sessions with learning coordinators and project seminars, in which students working on related projects share their individual research and knowledge.

The RBS model utilizes classroom learning, individual and group sessions and activities and experiences in the community as its mode of learning.

4) The fourth difference is in the use of group experience. The AEL model provides academic, career, and guidance/counseling groups so that students may share experiences, problems and concerns in any area.

Group experience in the NWREL model includes world of work seminars, all-student meetings, student retreats, gatherings with parents and community volunteers, and group debriefings following explorations, which enable students to share site experiences.

Advisory groups for better project planning, project seminars for students working in related fields, workshops, and group projects constitute the FWL group experience, while the RBS model offers group instruction and guidance sessions.

5) The role of the community participant varies from model to model. AEL community participants help students with activities in the Student Career Guide and the Activity Sheet. They also provide teaching in specific areas and fill out a Student Evaluation Form which students review with their learning coordinators.

NWREL involves the entire community in its design and operation (business and labor people, students, and parents). As in the AEL model, working adults volunteer to be instructors at specific job or learning sites. Other community resource people with expertise in various "survival skills" give "competency certification," as discussed before. Finally, business and labor representatives give student seminars on world of work issues.

The FWL asks community resource persons to "help students become adults, learn how to think for

themselves, make responsible decisions, relate maturely to others and plan and carry out their own learning projects." The scope, duration and objectives of these student-resource person contacts are negotiable, depending on specific individual needs.

The community participants in the RBS model are called upon to define and develop career exploration and specialization opportunities, teach mini-courses in those areas, and help the schools design and maintain a method of keeping up good community relations.

6) Community experience sites are also used differently. AEL students are active at a particular job site all day long, four out of five days, until the agreed upon placement period has been completed, while NWREL students explore the specific site for project purposes before moving on to the optional experiential level. The FWL students first receive some kind of orientation at the site which enables them to do a project sketch and determine whether or not they wish to turn it into a full-fledged project. At the exploration level, the students arrange for further observational opportunities,

and may continue into the investigative level if desired, which requires in-depth research into a specific area. Students are encouraged to use more than one community site on a project whenever possible.

The RBS model organizes a resource site into two experience levels. The first is career exploration where groups of 10 to 15 students get field experience in a variety of career settings. The second level is specialization, which consists of individual in-depth experiences and "hands-on" activities for students after completion of the exploration phase.

7) The final area which calls for comparison is each model's system of guidance and counseling. The AEL model sets forth a list of factors which help to create an environment and set of experiences in which learning, guidance and counseling are essentially one continuing event: a) the inquiry process/rational thinking strategy built into each Activity Sheet, b) the interactions between self-knowledge and directly experienced career information and insights, c) the fact that program decisions are based on individual student needs and interests, d) careful documentation of student learning, and e) the

one-to-one learning situations, whether with a learning coordinator or community resource person. In addition to all of this, the AEL model conducts small group guidance and counseling sessions.

The NWREL model also integrates guidance in all aspects. Guidance begins with orientation and continues through the development of individual learning plans, the student accountability system, the constant monitoring and documentation of student learning, and group guidance and counseling activities.

The FWL implements its guidance program with the help of program planning, and assessment of individual learning needs, capabilities, interests, and goals. Other contributing factors are the constant monitoring of student activities and growth, and the awarding of credit for these activities.

Guidance and counseling in the RBS model are delivered through the Career Guidance component of the curriculum. Guidance activities include both individual and group counseling sessions and group work with a process skills curriculum called "Career Clarification: A Problem-Solving Approach."

To summarize, it is evident that while the four models are all operating from the same guidelines and basic philosophy, the EBCE experience of each one is unique. Any community wishing to implement the EBCE program may choose the option that most closely fits the community's needs. ("EBCE: A Design," 1975)

CHAPTER 4

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the present time Bozeman Senior High has two part-time vocational programs within the school: distributive education and office education. Distributive education courses "include all facets of marketing and distribution as it relates to our free enterprise system." ("Co-op Training," 1977, p. 4) Activities include advertising, buying, consumer education, credit and collections, investments, and so on. Students are placed in downtown retail establishments during the afternoon hours to gain on-the-job experience.

Office Education prepares the student for a career in an office occupation, and likewise sends students out on the job. In both cases, students receive one credit for classroom work, and one credit for job participation.

Within Bozeman Senior High, then, students have the opportunity to explore sales and office work only. Those students wishing to become plumbers, teachers, or anything outside of those two categories have no opportunity to explore their vocational interests other than through academic work or "shop"

activities.

Further, Bozeman does not have a public vocational education center for high school -age students; there is a fee for participation in all courses except Defensive Driving and First Aid. In short, Bozeman does not have any kind of full-time public alternative system of education available for high school students in which they can intensively investigate potential career interests.

This information indicates that there is a place for Experience Based Career Education in Bozeman, Montana. This researcher has chosen to use the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory model as a guide because it is a full-time public alternative and an extremely comprehensive model, covering all aspects of academic and vocational experience. The components of the Bozeman model of EBCE will be as follows: (National Institute of Education, 1976)

Curriculum Design

The curriculum will be divided into three content areas, each of which has specific outcome goals: Life Skills, Basic Skills, and Career Development. The five Life Skills include creative development,

critical thinking, personal/social development, science and functional citizenship. The Life Skills area is designed to emphasize personal growth, life-long learning, and the relationship of the individual to the community, nation, and the world. Also included in the Life Skills is a set of "survival skills" called competencies, which are necessary for daily living. These include knowledge of checking accounts, budgeting, insurance, auto maintenance and so on. The program will require the student to demonstrate competency in these areas.

Basic skills include reading, mathematics, writing, speaking and listening skills, all of which will help the student to function effectively, whether in a career, academic, or day-to-day setting.

Finally, the Career Development area focuses on identifying career interests, understanding the world of work, general employability skills and career knowledge.

Students will work closely with the staff to develop individual projects to be conducted at student-selected community sites. Each project will

have specific outcome goals integrating each of the three content areas with the individual student's needs, interests, and abilities.

Program Completion Requirements

1. Each year, students must complete ten projects, two in each Life Skills area. Each project includes Basic Skills activities.
2. A set of thirteen skills or competencies must be completed by all students, whether they enter the program as juniors or seniors.
3. Students must spend a minimum of fifteen hours per week at employer/community sites and complete a minimum of three career explorations and three learning levels (hands-on experience) per year. Students will also be required to attend six hours per day (including job site) and submit a weekly "student journal."

Content requirements will be negotiated with each student so as to combine program requirements with individual needs and goals.

Mode of Learning

The main concept behind the mode of learning is that students will integrate learning experiences

gained in the community with academic knowledge, so as to make learning a lifelong activity.

Students will be required to put together projects which include practice in the basic skills and life skills while calling for activities in specific curriculum content areas. The process of career exploration will enable students to find out what tasks are associated with a particular job, and help them to reassess their interest in that type of work. At the learning level, students get "hands-on" experience at a particular job site, and use this experience as a project component. If students decide they want to pursue a specific job further than the learning levels allow for, they may return to the site for skill building activities geared to give specific entry-level skills similar to pre-apprenticeship training.

As mentioned before, competency certification and student journals add breadth to the learning process, as do seminars on world of work issues.

Student Learning Plan Development

The first phase of the learning plan development is assessment of students' interests, needs,

and abilities. Staff and students will then work together to develop individual goals in such a way as to include program goals as well. Each completed project will be assessed and evaluated by the student, the staff, and appropriate community resource people. Students will set their own timetables for project completion and will be closely monitored by the staff who, in turn, will keep a record of students' personal growth and specific accomplishments.

Career Planning and Decision Making

Career planning and decision making will be an integral part of the total EBCE experience. World of work seminars, student journals, learning level experiences, and most importantly, career exploration and project activities will make up the context in which career planning and decision making take place.

Use of Academic Course Work

Academic course work will take place primarily through the project, which integrates basic skills, life skills and career development. Students will also be free to include required high school courses in their learning plans if appropriate, or they

may enroll in relevant college courses.

Group Experience

This model includes several types of group experience:

1. world of work seminars
2. all-student meetings (held weekly)
3. student retreats
4. gatherings with parents and community

volunteers

5. group de-briefings
6. guidance/counseling groups
7. group projects

Certification of Learning

No grades will be assigned, and activities will not be broken up into course areas. Rather, students will be expected to complete projects at a level appropriate to their individual abilities, interests and needs. Evaluation criteria will first be negotiated between students and staff, and each completed project will then be turned over for evaluation to staff, parents, and appropriate community participants.

When students leave the program, they will receive a certification portfolio that contains performance information needed by parents, high school placement officials, potential employers and college registrars. Graduating students will receive a standard high school diploma. They will also be free to transfer back into the regular high school program if they wish to do so.

Role of Community Participants

The Bozeman EBCE model will follow the NWREL'S specifications for the role of community participants:

1. Business and labor people from the community, students, parents and school district representatives will all share in program planning and policymaking.
2. The community will provide the learning sites that are used by students to meet personal and program objectives. Working adults at these sites will serve as "instructors" for the students. They will help students learn, counsel them, provide help on special problems and give feedback to staff on student performance.

3. Community resource people with expertise in the various "survival skills" or competencies specified in the curriculum will certify satisfactory student acquisition of those skills.

4. Business and labor representatives will participate in student seminars on world of work issues.

Community Site Recruitment Process

Staff, parents, students, community leaders, and the program planning/advisory group will all be asked to suggest potential learning sites. Staff will then be responsible for writing letters introducing the program, conducting recruitment interviews and recording site information.

A wide variety of sites will be recruited so as to accommodate students' varying needs and career interests. Employers will be asked to describe the specific type and extent of their involvement with students. They will sign a Letter of Intent to participate in the program and designate appropriate "community instructors" to work with students.

Resource Person Development and Maintenance

Community resource persons will be selected to

instruct students in specific areas at the learning sites. They will have close contact with the program staff so as to keep in touch with program requirements, individual student needs, evaluation procedures, etc. Meetings of staff and community resource people will be held four times a year to maintain this liason.

Staff will contact each learning site at least once a week at which time they will deal with any concerns, needs, questions, or suggestions that may have come up.

Site Analysis

The NWREL/EBCE has developed a Learning Site Analysis Form which will be used in this model. It identifies potential learning activities at each community site in the program. Staff members and community instructors work together to identify job requirements, characteristics and tasks. The community instructor's job is broken down into major tasks, subtasks and basic skills functions that a student could perform. This information aids in preparing project objectives and activities for individual students to complete at the learning site.

Site Utilization

Students will use learning sites in four ways. Their first experiences at these sites are organized career explorations, which teach them to investigate and assess what is available at a particular site. Next is the learning level, a hands-on experience designed to give students a closer look at what is actually involved in a particular job. The optional skill building level allows for development of entry-level skills while special placement, also optional, lets students use employer and community sites for purposes other than learning specific career skills, such as completing a specific project activity.

The career exploration and learning level sites will be used by students to complete work on projects.

Range of Career Options

This EBCE program will recruit a wide variety of community sites in order to give students an opportunity to broaden their experience. Students will be encouraged to explore and compare as wide a range of careers and jobs as possible, rather than to focus on a single potential future career.

Student Accountability

Each student will work with staff members to spell out specific learning objectives in stated time frames. Staff will meet regularly with students to review their progress and meet among themselves to discuss student growth and behavior. Students will also be informed as to what to expect if they do not meet their responsibilities.

System of Guidance and Counseling

The system of guidance and counseling will be incorporated into all aspects of the program. Guidance will begin with student orientation and will continue through individual learning plan development, the student accountability system, the systematic monitoring and recording of student learning, feedback to students and parents, and periodic group counseling activities for staff and students.

Every staff member, parent, community instructor, and competency certifier plays a part in the program's total guidance system. Any additional in-depth professional help needed from the community or the high school will be made available.

Parent Relations

Before students enter the program, staff will meet with parents to describe the program and gain permission for a student to participate. Communication between staff and parents will be an ongoing process in which parents are constantly being kept informed as to student projects, growth, and general progress. Staff will encourage parent opinions and suggestions and involve them in guidance decisions. Parents will also meet periodically with the staff, students, and community resource people as a group, and will be represented on the program's governing board.

Student Recruitment and Population

The Bozeman EBCE model will be a voluntary program designed to accommodate students from the total range of academic ability, motivation, career aspirations and dependability. Students must be willing to work with a variety of adults, learn in a variety of settings, be able to adapt to new learning styles, work in an individualized program and be responsible for themselves and their work in the program.

Student applicants will first be screened by staff, then selected at random to arrive at the required number of participants for the program. (The number of participants will be contingent on the availability of funding and staff.)

Policymaking

The Bozeman EBCE model will follow the policy-making procedures of the NWREL model. Those with a voice in policymaking will include:

1. A community program planning group made up of schools and community representatives.
2. A program governing board, which consists of community members with representatives from parent, student, and school groups. Their major function is to make ongoing decisions about program operations.
3. Program director and staff.
4. Students, who make suggestions and recommendations to staff and the governing board.

Staffing

Staff will include a program administrator, one learning manager per 20 students who will be responsible for developing, maintaining, evaluating

and updating all aspects of a student's learning program, both career and academic. Other staff members will be an employer relations specialist who will locate and maintain learning sites, and one resource specialist who will be responsible for recruiting, analyzing and maintaining the pool of resources.

Facility

The facility must be able to accommodate space for instructional materials and student records, office space for staff and student interaction, and gatherings of students, staff, parents and community members.

Insurance

Again, the Bozeman EBCE will follow the NWREL's guidelines for insurance policy. It will have three basic kinds:

1. General liability to cover employers and students at community learning sites.
2. Accident insurance to cover minor injuries to students and staff at the learning center.
3. Personal injury protection to cover students at community learning sites.

SUMMARY

The core of the Bozeman model of Experience Based Career Education is the basic belief in students as autonomous individuals, capable of discovering their own potentials and directions if given the opportunity to do so. By providing students with first-hand on-the-job investigations and experiences at a variety of community sites and making necessary materials and guidance available to them, the program will enable them to make a smoother transition from school to career. From those experiences students will gain a broader perspective of what is available to them, and begin to discover what they want out of a career and how to get it. Basically, the program is designed to combine academic breadth with the concrete realities of the job world, as well as to replace accident with choice and dissatisfaction with enthusiasm.

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