

A Home-Community Based Career Education Model

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THE fundamental concept of career education is that all educational experiences, curriculum, instruction, and counseling should be geared to preparing each individual for a life of economic independence, personal fulfillment, and an appreciation for the dignity of work. Its main purpose is to prepare all students for successful and rewarding lives. Such help is provided to students by improving their basis for occupational choice, by facilitating their acquisition of occupational skills, by enhancing their educational achievements, by making education more meaningful and relevant to their aspirations, and by increasing the real choices they have among the many different occupations and training avenues open to them.

Career education is a lifelong, systematic way of acquainting students with the world of work in their elementary and junior high years and preparing them in high school and in college to enter into and advance in a career field of their own choosing. For adults, career education is a way to reenter formal education and upgrade their skills in their established career field or to enter a new career field. It embraces all occupations and professions and can include any individuals whether in or out of school.

The U.S. Office of Education has been involved in a number of exciting ways in furthering the career education concept. In 1971, the office initiated a research and development program consisting of several major projects. We identified four "models"

which represented new bases for studying the feasibility of career education: School Based Model, Employer Based Model, Rural-Residential Model, Home-Community Based Model. One of these, the Home-Community Based Model, is the subject of this article.

This model is a career-oriented approach designed to enhance the employability and career options of out-of-school adults. Through the use of mass media, referral centers, individual counseling, and articulated exploration of community resources, adults will be able to identify their aspirations as they match their capabilities, experience, and motivation to move through an adaptive program.

The adult population can be reached through mass media, and those who are excited into action can be handled by the limited, but expandable, capacities of existing service networks. The need for a central screening and switching mechanism will be met by the establishment of a total systems management entity which will involve representatives of the target populations; service agencies which will accommodate the target population's adjustment, education, training, and placement needs; employers; and other national/regional/local organizations which will participate in guiding or operating the program.

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The program will use mass media to attract the attention of Home-Community Based populations, probe their career education interests and generate feedback about their needs, provide information about existing career education resources, and inculcate certain skills related to engaging in career education. The program will bring together existing career education agencies to coordinate their efforts to reach home-community based populations, solve the problems of assessing the target population, identify and fill gaps in service, and respond effectively to the emerging career education interests.

The program may also establish a central vehicle, the Career Education Extension Service, to carry out network functions designed to receive and interpret feedback from home-community based populations, refer individuals to existing agencies, identify problems of access and aid in their solutions, identify service gaps and assist in meeting them, and foster and disseminate information about the effectiveness of existing approaches to career education.

In conjunction with the theoretical development of the Home-Community Based Model, several feasibility and planning studies have already been completed and the design for pilot implementation is currently under way. The Educational Development Center (EDC) in Newton, Massachusetts, has led in the development of the approach and has already established the criteria for target area selection. Providence, Rhode Island, has been actively examined and a pilot project was to be established there the fall of 1972. EDC will then phase out of the program during FY 1973, and a contractor to operate the Providence program will be competitively selected by the spring of 1973.

In Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Southwest Cooperative Educational Laboratory (SWCEL) has commenced planning for a Home-Community Based test site scheduled to be operational by the spring of 1973. The test site will take advantage of the communications satellite which will beam into Albuquerque as a part of the overall satellite demonstration being performed by the Federation of Rocky Mountain States. The satel-

lite, which will be activated next spring for an expected life of nine months, will be only one element of the Albuquerque program and will not be utilized to the extent that the program could not exist without it. This Albuquerque pilot study will also rely heavily on the work completed by EDC.

Numbers of participants in the pilot effort are difficult to estimate because participants may drop in and out and some may be repeaters. However, the best estimate at present is a total of between 300 and 500 students per week. A great deal will depend on the operating plans which are developed and approved along with the requirements for the satellite program development component.

Aside from increasing the employability and career options of out-of-school adults, the results of these pilot projects will aid us in the development of transportable processes and products and in conducting research and development programs aimed at the fractional objectives related to employability and career options. These products can then hopefully be utilized for other instructional programs as well.

Beyond the original U.S. Office of Education conceptions of the Home-Community Based Model, there are various exciting possibilities which we will continue to explore. For example, the model might be expanded to include actual job training through cable TV, cassettes, and traditional media such as newspapers and magazines. The model might also be utilized in correctional institutes and hospitals, and it might possibly be made adaptive to various stages in the life cycle other than adulthood for use as an adjunct or alternative to normal K-12 instruction.

With the establishment of the National Institute of Education (NIE), the career education research and development model effort will be an administrative responsibility of that agency.

The Home-Community Based Model, while still in the developmental stage, has almost unlimited present potential in furthering the very important goals of career education. □

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