Board of Education in 1976. The program was adapted from a college course for students and adults who are changing careers. UCAN is an annual course offering one year"'s credit.

Funding is provided by Community Development Block Grants, administered locally by Chicago's Department of Human Services.

UCAN is organized into classroom and field experiences to provide students with the skills to think through and implement their career plans.

During the first semester or classroom phase, students deal with activities in self-awareness and career awareness—values clarification, skills analysis, information gathering, resume writing, interviewing techniques—in order to decide what careers to investigate during the second semester or internship phase.

In the second semester, students are assigned for four days a week—usually 3-5 hours per week minimum—to "observation internships" with working adults or "mentors" who are in careers of the students' choice. Students not only observe adults in careers they want to pursue but are guided in their internships by projects that must be prepared and submitted for credit.

On the non-internship day, customarily Friday, a class "rap session" is conducted to share experiences.

There is also a UCAN Early Involvement Program for seventh and eighth graders. They receive high school credit for their participation by taking career enrichment classes at the local UCAN high school. The program is broken into ten-week segments in the following areas: Ethnic Studies, Communications, Data Processing, and Technical Careers.

Longitudinal studies of a representative sampling of UCAN alumni since 1976 show a majority going on to a college/university/trade school or employment.

Currently, UCAN serves from 800 to 1,000 elementary and secondary students.

More information about the program is available from Charles Kuner, UCAN Teacher-Counselor, c/o Farragut High School, 2345 S. Christiana, Chicago, IL 60623.

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Curriculum Clearinghouse

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Integration Through Foreign Language Instruction

Chicago has turned six elementary schools into citywide "magnet" language academies that offer voluntary integration through foreign language instruction. In three years, the "Access to Excellence" desegregation program has resulted in improved math and reading scores, better attention and classroom behavior, and a basic skills curriculum enhanced by the demands of intensive language study. Students have also made noticeable gains in listening skills.

Each school offers from two to four of the following languages: Spanish, Russian, Polish, Japanese, Italian, Modern Greek, German, and French. While the school day is no longer than at other schools, the pace in the language academies is much quicker. Regular class periods have been shortened to create an extra period for language study.

Classes tend to become multilingual as children share what they learn in language classes in English or social studies. Students study foreign culture while studying the language; a minimum of English is spoken.

The language academy program offers a successful approach to general learning. In addition it has proven successful as a means for reviving language study at a time when our nation cannot afford cultural isolation from the world at large.


Interdisciplinary Team Teaching

At the E. T. Richardson Middle School in Springfield, Pennsylvania, teams of math, science, English, and social studies teachers work with approximately 100 students at the sixth, seventh, or eighth grade levels. Rather than focus on the narrow aspects of team teaching, this middle school program uses team planning to develop an interdisciplinary program that relates to the problems faced by today's students.

Joint planning of the instructional programs also includes regular participation by a guidance counselor. Primary attention is given to the development of the interdisciplinary units that reflect the interests and needs of learners assigned to each team.

The unit on "Water: An Ecological Study" examines local needs, sources, and problems in the fresh water supply. Content and skill study in the content areas interfaces functional learning and social awareness. Another unit, "Man and His Environment: A Socialization Experiment," focuses on the environment in Eastern Pennsylvania and its relationship to the demands of life and how resources can best be used, respected, and improved.

"City Renaissance" helps students identify the future needs and resources necessary to modernize the urban areas of Springfield and nearby Philadelphia. The programs relate classroom study of content with a broad experiential base of field trips and direct involvement in the "real world" in which these middle school students live.


Bridging Science and Humanities

Seniors in Westfield, New Jersey, examine the relationship between science and the humanities in a course entitled "Two Cultures: Fact, Fantasy, or Fiction." Based on C. P. Snow's notion...
that science and the humanities are separate cultures, the course seeks to counter the widening gap between science and the humanities through a team of teachers grounded in both areas.

The course includes films, readings, visitsations, invited speakers, and valuing exercises. Students deal with real problems in the context of their own lives and communities and attempt to use means and approaches from science and humanities to solve problems. A culminating activity focuses on this hypothetical problem: “Because of declining enrollments and financial restrictions, the academic program of the high school will be reduced to basic courses in the sciences and the humanities.”

Parents, members of the community, faculty, and the board of education are impressed with the awareness and understanding gained by students who have taken this course. It seems to provide a realistic perspective for high school graduates who must deal with the gap between science and the humanities in their adult lives.


Increasing Science Awareness in the Inner City

Black middle and high school students are encouraged to consider careers in science and engineering in East Cleveland, Ohio, through Saturday and summer classes and site visitations. Role modeling is a major program component that stimulates student interest and helps raise horizons. The National Technical Association, a group of minority engineers and scientists, assists with the program by bringing their high level of expertise to the students.

The program at Kirk Middle School is run by two paid staff members responsible for recruitment, lesson planning, staff meetings, evaluations, field experiences, Saturday classes, and monthly site visits during school hours. A major element in the success of this Career Awareness Program is the link forged among the schools, parents, science and business community, and the colleges.

The school year program at Kirk Middle School is followed by a two-week summer program at Gahoga Community College in Cleveland. Students at Shaw High School participate in an advanced program that adds the resources of Cleveland State University to the community college offerings.

A measure of program success is seen in the excellence in student achievement and in college admissions and scholarships to students whose goals have been focused on science-related careers. The East Cleveland schools have developed a manual describing how the program can be established.


Gifted Students Sample Science Careers

The “externship” for gifted students at Gardendale High School in Birmingham, Alabama, offers a flexible work-study program for science buffs.

Interested students list their preferred science careers or local scientists with whom they would like to work and are then matched with the most appropriate “externship” sponsor. In mid-November, the 40 students involved in the program spend a day with their sponsors at his or her work setting. This activity is designed as a “mentor” relationship with all activities of the day, including lunch and meeting, shared.

The sponsor completes a written evaluation of the “externship” experience, which often sets the stage for a continuing mentor relationship. Students correspond, telephone, and visit with their sponsors during out-of-school time. In class, activities can be based on projects students develop with their sponsors.

Some students have spent vacation and summer time following up the “externship” experience. Others have conducted laboratory research and published scientific papers under the sponsorship of available grants and scholarships. Part-time work experiences with work sponsors have also been possible.

The “externship” is a strong vehicle for personal interaction between students and the scientific community in Birmingham. It has provided a focus for continuing studies in the sciences at Gardendale High School.


Parents Tutor Reading

Parental involvement in the school reading program is a top priority in New Haven, Connecticut. At kindergarten registration parents receive a booklet, “Read To Succeed,” which outlines ways parents can help foster reading readiness at home. Parents from the inner city receive special training and work in the schools under the supervision of reading specialists.

Once selected as tutors, parents attend five intensive training workshops; two 10-week reading courses for parents are also offered in local high schools. Parent tutors work eight hours weekly for which they are paid a stipend.

Project GRASP (Good Readers Are Successful People) also makes available “Saturday Tutoring” for students who live near a housing development and a “Be My Guest” program designed to attract parents as visitors to the schools.

Research on the program suggests that this interaction of supportive, informed parents with students results in academic gains.


Note to readers: The authors of these columns welcome feedback and contributions. Address items to Editor, Educational Leadership, 223 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

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