

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES ELEMENTARY

Curriculum ideas have been included to provide school staff with concrete ideas for implementing career education and guidance strategies with students. The following classroom activities are taken from the list of Connections 2002 Award of Distinction winners. Connections is a conference devoted to developing and disseminating activities innovations throughout the State of Illinois. These activities have been provided as examples of experiences that can meet career development needs of learners in the following levels:

Ashmore Elementary Productions

Ashmore Elementary School
313 S. Ohio St., PO Box 219
Ashmore, IL 61912

ABSTRACT

Ashmore Elementary students have been given an opportunity to partner with Kal Kan Foods as well as increase their listening, speaking and writing skills while having fun! The Workforce Opportunities Resource Consortium has joined a business and school together to create an audio and video productions laboratory and a powerful learning tool.

The Ashmore Elementary Productions project was born with the primary goals of making learning fun, creating something different and improving all facets of communication skills with an emphasis on writing. After the initial meeting, the production laboratory idea was presented to Kal Kan – the school's business partner. Leaders at Kal Kan, by coincidence, had been developing a communications system within their company. So the team leaders from the faculty and company representatives collaborated and developed a plan for a new productions laboratory at the school.

The productions lab has been in place now for one year. During this year, team leaders and company representatives have spent many hours conducting research on equipment and becoming familiar with the technology purchased for the laboratory. The productions laboratory enables students to produce morning announcements, program notifications, community communication, innovative programs, gifted education enhancements, incentive programs, as well as many other programs.

During the next phase of the project, students will visit Kal Kan to see how similar productions laboratories are used in a large corporation and to become aware of possible career options in the area. Participating students have produced a broadcast that will be aired at Kal Kan during the visit. The broadcast will illustrate the role that the Kal Kan Corporation has played in the community and how the company has opened doors to students and teachers for such a learning experience. This project has been encouraging and has facilitated staff and students to participate with technology. This project has brought two groups together and helped to promote a greater overall interest in technology, influence education and has helped to ensure that we will have a more skilled and diverse future workforce in Illinois.

Careers, Communities and Citizenship

Benson Primary School
Itasca School District 10
301 E. Washington
Itasca, IL 60143

ABSTRACT

The Career, Communities and Citizenship Project at Benson Primary School is designed to cause students to begin thinking about and modeling career decisions. Students begin by creating a multimedia presentation complete with photos and descriptions of businesses and places of interest they encounter each day. Each student then chooses a type of business that they believe is important to the community. They build a model and write about why they chose the business. It may be because of a service that it renders, jobs that it provides, or a need that it fills. After discussing the models, all of the “businesses” are put together to build a town display.

Following the business modeling activity, students complete a career research: what jobs interest a second grader? To answer that question, students are required to answer a number of questions regarding respective career options. These questions include:

- What special training might be needed to be successful in a particular career?
- How does a particular occupation help a community?
- What careers interest you the most?

Finally it's Career Day! More than 30 presenters are given 10 minutes to talk about their career, complete with props and documents from the field. After the initial presentation, the speakers respond to questions from the students. Because it is done on a revolving schedule, the children can learn about more than six different occupations during the event.

The project culminates with a Community Leaders' Luncheon. Students come to school dressed in appropriate clothing for the career they have selected. School administrators, village officials and business leaders are invited to share a “career conversation” with the students. At the close of the program, the students present an adult with the School Community Services Worker of the Year Award. The Career, Communities and Citizenship Project has proven to be a fantastic tool for exposing the students to the world of career options and is a very popular event with local community members as well.

The “Arithmetech” Club

Benson Primary School
Itasca School District 10
301 E. Washington
Itasca, IL 60143

ABSTRACT

The Arithmetech Club (TAC) is an after-school math program at Benson Primary School. TAC uses real-life situations to reinforce classroom lessons, as well as introduce and implement higher-order concepts and thinking skills. Because mathematics is everywhere, TAC provides an opportunity to make connections to a primary student's life through the use of guest speakers, games, group problem-solving and community service projects.

TAC allows children an opportunity to discover mathematical concepts together and shows students how mathematics relates to their world. An important part of each TAC meeting is the guest speaker. Each week an adult makes a brief presentation about their occupation. During these presentations, the emphasis is placed on the mathematics used every day on the job. A physical education teacher using a stopwatch, a plumber reading a blueprint and measuring lengths of pipe, a concrete contractor discussing volume, or an author explaining how a book is made – all bring real-life experiences to what the students are learning in second grade.

A sense of caring and responsibility for the world outside the classroom is important for students, so another aspect of TAC is community service. So far, TAC has collected over 600,000 pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. The collection of pop tabs is a project in which every child in our school participates, with TAC taking the responsibility of tabulating and reporting the number of tabs to the student body and community. TAC's responsibility for calculating the number of tabs also lends itself nicely to the creation of math activities (estimating, counting, patterns, volume, weighing, measuring) that develop from week to week.

Super Science Day

Casey-Westfield Elementary School
301 E. Monroe
Casey, IL 62420

ABSTRACT

Super Science Day at Casey-Westfield Elementary School allows 650 students in grades pre-K through sixth grade the chance to learn more about careers related to science and technology. The afternoon and evening event involves students in engaged learning, hands-on activities where the students create experiments on their own and test those experiments. Exhibits from businesses, colleges, high school students, and governmental organizations are set up during the day for the elementary students. The elementary students use this time to learn how careers are related to science and interact with the displays. Additionally, the elementary students participate in experiments conducted by high school students throughout the day. In the evening, the children set up their own exhibits in the gym and bring their families to participate in the activities.

Through funding received from an Illinois State Board of Education Workforce Education grant, faculty at the school were able to significantly enhance the program to change the experiments to make them more grade relevant. Program leaders designed simple experiments for grades pre-K through third and more in-depth experiments for grades four through six. High school students served as mentors and helped conduct the experiments for all 650 participating students.

To enhance the evening format in the school's gymnasium, program leaders added innovative technology – which allows the students to become much more active in the science experiments. During the 2002 program, the participating students used LEGOS pilot program of model building to create structures, work with wheels, bridges, towers, gears and simple machines. The Super Science Day event has proven to be a very popular event with students, parents and faculty at the school.

Super Saturdays

Indian Valley Vocational Center (IVVC)
600 Lions Rd.
Sandwich, IL 60548

ABSTRACT

Super Saturdays is an innovative program that provides fifth and sixth grade students the opportunity to complete hands-on career exploration. The program was developed by staff at Indian Valley Vocational Center (IVVC) in 1990 and has been held for two consecutive Saturdays in March for the past 10 years. Through Super Saturdays, fifth and sixth grade students take half-day career courses at IVVC with career and technical education instructors and their 11th and 12th grade students. During the half-day courses, elementary students complete age-appropriate, real-world projects that are based on highly skilled career areas. Students from all elementary schools within IVVC's 11 feeder school districts participate in the program.

Under the supervision of IVVC staff and students, the fifth and sixth grade students complete projects that include taking vital signs, helping to do an oil change on an automobile, investigating a crime scene and taking fingerprints, making and serving pizza, completing board and CAD drafting, designing T-shirts, testing the hardware of a computer, doing Mig welding, and conducting educational activities for preschoolers.

The half-day courses offer subjects that address a wide range of interests. Some of the most recent courses include Hot Wheels (auto mechanics), Computer Wizards (computer repair technology), Draw (drafting), Special Babysitter's Club (early childhood development), Start Your Career as a Chef (food service), Computer Designing (graphic communications), Exploring Health Careers (health occupations), Future Agents (law enforcement), Business Bonanza (office careers), and Don't Look at that Bright Light (welding).

Super Saturdays has always been a well-attended program, but its popularity has skyrocketed with the advent of the Education-to-Careers movement. As a direct result of Super Saturdays, 1,110 young students have explored their career interests, high school students have benefited by teaching fifth and sixth grade student's career skills and vocational instructors have had an opportunity to develop innovative curriculum for the lower grades.

If I Had a Hammer

Triton College
2000 Fifth Ave., Room R-326
River Grove, IL 60171

ABSTRACT

The "Hammer Program" at Triton College is a hands-on learning opportunity where children apply mathematics, science, physics and team building skills to constructing an eight-by-ten foot house in two and a half hours. "Hammer" bosses and adult volunteers supervise construction activities.

"If I Had a Hammer" was developed by Perry Wilson, a carpenter-turned-educator. The program includes an extensive project curriculum in both English and Spanish. All components of the eight-by-ten house are made available through the "If I Had a Hammer Foundation." The Home Depot Corporation serves as a business partner and provides all tools and supplies necessary for the project.

Triton College's "Hammer Program" provides real-life construction opportunities and hands-on learning experiences for children (age eight and older) and adult volunteers. "If I Had a Hammer" is one component of Triton's Pre-College Transition Program. Schools, clubs, libraries and other community groups make reservations to build the little house.