CHILDREN'S ORIENTATION TOWARD
THE WORLD OF WORK

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INTRODUCTION

The need to provide elementary school children with educational experiences relative to the World of Work has been given lip service for several years. In 1962, Wrenn wrote

The elementary school and the junior high school have more urgent need in the immediate future than in the past for stressing vocational information and vocational counseling for a portion of their student population (Wrenn, 1962, p. 150-151).

More recently, publishers have developed materials to introduce the child to a greater variety of jobs. Traditionally, elementary school textbooks, such as readers and social studies texts, have described occupations and jobs centered on the service and professional areas. Tennyson and Monnens, in 1963, surveyed readers for grades 1 through 6 published by 6 different companies. They found greatest emphasis on the professional, managerial, and service occupations. According to the 1960 census, these occupational groups comprised only 19.9% of the working force in the United States; the 1970 census indicated 33.5%. The occupations of a sales, clerical and operative nature were listed in the 1960 census at 42% and in the 1970 census at 55.3%. Occupations of this nature were slighted in the readers. According to Tennyson and Monnens, no reader presented a true picture of the World of Work, probably because the authors are more familiar with the professional fields of work. Nevertheless, this one-sided view of the World of Work does not provide children with a total picture of their occupational options.

Frasher and Walker in 1972 compared the roles, relationships, activities and relative importance assigned to male and female story characters in readiness, first and second grade readers. Males predominated as main characters in all series, whereas female occupational roles were limited, distorted and stereotyped.
Historically, jobs have been handed from father to son. In the twentieth century, however, with the educational opportunities and advantages available to all youth, this pattern has changed. Knowledge gained during the early years is put to use in the adolescent years when decisions related to career selection, preparation and first employment are made. Pressures from society often force an adolescent to make a career decision before he is ready: colleges request a student to indicate a major; parents urge an adolescent to become involved in the World of Work; the military offers the choice of an occupation to all who enlist. Over and over, the adolescent is reminded that these decisions are waiting to be made!

Vocational theorists have debated the basis upon which one makes vocational choices. The majority of theories have been based on research conducted among adolescents and adults. For example, Super's rather comprehensive theory is based on his research with 9th grade boys (Super, 1960). Current introduction into the World of Work at the elementary school level is thus an extrapolation from adolescent/adult theory.

The KULDAU OCCUPATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY (KODI) was developed as a means of assessing the orientation which children at the upper elementary school levels have developed toward the World of Work. An instrument which measures such orientation would prepare elementary school personnel to assist children in acquiring basic knowledge for later vocational choice and decisions.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was three-fold: to discover 1) if children in grades 4, 5 and 6 have developed attitudes toward the World of Work, 2) if the instrument under development would differentiate these attitudes into three factors (Interpersonal Relations, Success Orientation, and Security Orientation); 3) if the variables under study (grade level, sex and community setting) influenced the children's responses to these three factors.

METHOD

The KODI was administered by the authors to over 1000 children in grades 4, 5 and 6 in three community settings in a city in Wisconsin. The 40-item forced choice instrument had a reading grade level of 4.7 as measured by the Dale-Chall Test for
Readability. Transparencies for each item were projected on a
cscreen and read orally to the children. The three community
settings were defined as:

*Inner City (IC)*: Schools which qualified for and were receiving Title I
funds, were located within the central business area of the city, and
served children residing within the central business area of the city;

*Working Blue Collar (WBC)*: Schools which were judged by the
administrators to draw the majority of their students from homes in
which the chief wage earner was employed in an occupation which
required less than two years post-high school training as listed in
Volume II of the DICTIONARY OF OCCUPATIONAL TITLES;

*Professional White Collar (PWC)*: Schools which were judged by the
administrators as drawing the majority of their students from homes in
which the chief wage earner was employed in an occupation which
required more than two years post-high school training as listed in
Volume II of the DICTIONARY OF OCCUPATIONAL TITLES.

Schools included in this study were said to draw at least 75% of their
students from the community setting described.

Each of the 40 items in KODI was statistically analyzed by using
the three-way analysis of variance. This approach made it possible
for the three variables (*grade level, community setting, sex*) to be
extracted and studied to discover the effect each had on the
development of orientation toward the World of Work. “The three
way anova permits the comparison of several groups’ performance
and the evaluation of the variations in performance shown by the
subjects” (Bruning and Kintz, 1968, p. 72).

Such analysis in the present study reveals the relationship
between and within the variables, considered singly and in
combination, thereby making a total of seven variables. The three
single variables include 1) *grade*, 2) *community setting* and 3) *sex*
with the combination variables including the relationship between
4) *grade and community setting*, 5) *grade and sex*, 6) *community
setting and sex*, and 7) *grade, community setting and sex*.

**RESULTS**

Table I contains 11 items that measure the importance of
Interpersonal Relations (Factor I) in the child’s orientation to the
World of Work. The *sex* of the child is the single most important
variable that influences this factor, with 8 of the 11 items meeting or
exceeding the 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance. The second most
ingredient single variable is community setting, with 7 of the 11
items meeting or exceeding the 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance.
However, when comparison was made between the variables, the
impact of grade combined with community setting was the most
significant with 6 out of the 11 items meeting or exceeding the 0.01
level of significance. Only when the impact of grade combined with
sex was analyzed did no significant results occur. On two items (no. 5
and 30) all three variables combined were influential in determin-
ing how a child responded to the inventory.

Table 1. Factor I. Interpersonal Relations. Analysis
of Variance for Grade, Sex, and Community
Setting for Each Inventory Item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Grade (A)</th>
<th>Community Setting (B)</th>
<th>Sex (C)</th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>AC</th>
<th>BC</th>
<th>ABC</th>
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*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 2 indicates that Factor II (Success Orientation) contains 12
items. The most influential single variable is grade with 7 of the 12
items meeting or exceeding the 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance.
The second most influential single variable is community setting
with 6 of the 12 items meeting or exceeding the 0.01 level of
significance. The most important combination of variables was
grade and community setting, with 6 out of the 12 meeting or
exceeding the 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance.
### TABLE 2. FACTOR II. SUCCESS ORIENTATION. ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR GRADE, SEX, AND COMMUNITY SETTING FOR EACH INVENTORY ITEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Grade (A)</th>
<th>Community Setting (B)</th>
<th>Sex (C)</th>
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*p < .05

**p < .01

### TABLE 3. FACTOR III. SECURITY ORIENTATION. ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR GRADE, SEX, AND COMMUNITY SETTING FOR EACH INVENTORY ITEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Grade (A)</th>
<th>Community Setting (B)</th>
<th>Sex (C)</th>
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*p < .05

**p < .01
Factor III (Security Orientation) contains 10 items as shown on Table 3. The single most influential variable is community setting with 10 out of the 10 items meeting or exceeding either the 0.05 or the 0.01 level of significance. The second most important single variable is grade with 9 out of the 10 items meeting or exceeding either the 0.05 or the 0.01 level of significance. When combined variables are viewed, grade and community setting has 4 out of the 10 items meeting or exceeding either the 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance.

DISCUSSION

Whether a child views Interpersonal Relations on the job as important is influenced directly by the sex of the child. The type of community setting plays only a slightly less important role in this orientation. The child’s grade becomes important only when it is related to the type of community setting of the school.

The Success Orientation factor was designed to determine whether individuals felt that the criteria of success were based on education and flexibility. Grade level seemed to influence the response of the child, when Success Orientation was taken into consideration. The child’s community setting was only slightly less important. Community setting and grade not only operate independently but in combination. This finding strengthens the concept that the community and the grade level of the child greatly influence his/her views of success. The latter point could relate to whether or not a child views school as necessary for success.

The Security Orientation factor has the greatest number of items reaching or exceeding the 0.05 or 0.01 level of significance for single variables of the three factors studied. Whether a child is materialistically oriented or not, and whether he/she is passive or self-directed, is influenced by the community setting and grade level of the child. The sex of the child also plays a role of importance in the Success Orientation. Generally speaking, each single variable independently influences the child’s orientation to security, i.e., the community setting influences whether the child views himself/herself as a passive or as a self-directed individual along with whether materialism is important or not.

In conclusion, it can be stated that: Children in grades 4, 5, and 6 have developed attitudes toward the World of Work. These attitudes are related to, or take into consideration Interpersonal Relations, Success Orientation and Security Orientation. These three factors
were influenced differentially by grade, sex and community setting.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


