

**THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES LEARNING THE
IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY HELPERS**

by

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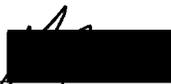
A Master's Thesis/Project Capstone
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education
Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
State University of New York at Fredonia
Fredonia, New York

May 2018

State University of New York at Fredonia
Department of Education

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS/PROJECT CAPSTONE WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT'S WITH DISABILITIES LEARNING THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY HELPERS by Taylor Marie Bankoski, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.



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Abstract

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES LEARNING THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY HELPERS

This Curriculum Project reviews all of the different ideas and concepts dealing with the term community helper. The community helper project touches on multiple ways to educate both students with or without disabilities on their community, who to contact in certain situations and the familiarities of each community professional. The importance of educating students on the community, the different jobs and all the different people working for the same community is very relevant. Young children today are not as familiar or comfortable as they should be with their community helpers. They are to be educated on the uniforms they wear, the tools they use and the types of jobs they are in charge of. Essentially this project shows how to incorporate the community helpers unit in all subjects throughout the day and the research that supports each and every lesson.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Curriculum can be defined as, “the sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development” (Hussain, Conner & Mayo, p. 61). Teachers are continuously researching the newest topics to improve their teaching techniques to achieve more student success. Teachers also need to be mindful of their students while engulfing them in knowledge and that “all facets of children’s experiences contribute to learning” (Hussain, et al., p. 61). What children go through, or teach each other during the school day, teachers should piggyback off of those thoughts and actions to help their students learn and appreciate their new knowledge.

It is important that teachers know their students. Students have strengths, weaknesses, likes as well as dislikes. Teachers have to allow their students to make their own choices and take responsibility for their learning. With that being said, students do not all learn and understand the same. Teachers need to be aware of their students and the ways that they learn best and provide different ways of teaching so that each student is engulfed in their learning. Johnson (2009) stated that, “the best teachers know when to extend or curtail the duration of the assignment, when to change the language of the assignment and give them learning activities that let them perform the same learning objectives with multiple mediums” (2009, p. 2). As educators, we want our students to be successful in all different situations and our job is to provide them with the skills to do just that.

Students should participate in all different learning experiences throughout their lives that challenge them mentally and developmentally. By challenging them mentally

and developmentally, those students are accomplishing goals that are set for them and taking their knowledge to the next level. Zeece (2010) stated that, “effective teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists integrate a variety of information to formulate design principles and develop and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum and concomitant teaching strategies”(p. 346). She also stated that teachers should use these important strategies while teaching in your classrooms, which are: conspicuous strategies, scaffolding, strategic integration, primed background knowledge, and thoughtful review (p.346). Scaffolding alone is very important when teaching any age group. Taking the students step by step through what they need to accomplish instead of giving them everything at once, is very beneficial to students and their success.

The purpose of this Curriculum Project is to go into depth with all that comes with the term “community helper.” It is to show the importance of all the different helpers in the community. It is to ensure that the students know who to call if something goes wrong, or they see something out of the ordinary, as well as what to do if, for example, they see smoke in their house. Today, I see many young children, uneducated on many of the community helpers and what each and every one of them actually does. In the school where I teach, a Special Education building to be exact, it is extremely important for my students to know what number to call if someone in their family has stopped breathing or if they don’t feel well. My students go through everyday struggles and they need to be educated on the importance of community helpers, and everything that comes along with that term, so they are able to function in the outside world.

Community Helpers in the Curriculum

Educators are finding it more and more important to educate their students on information that is useful outside of the classroom. Information that can be used in the real world, in real life experiences. Linde (2015) defined “community helpers,” as, “any person who helps with our health and overall well-being. Community helpers include dentists, doctors, construction workers, even grocery store workers”(p.133). Community helpers are professionals trained in certain professions.

It is important for the students to know the actual definitions of “community” and “community helpers,” because it shows that they are part of those definitions. When people feel like they belong to something, they have a responsibility to that group. Linde (2015) defines community as, “a group made up of diverse people who engage in collaborative tasks and share resources and ideas. Community members usually work together to achieve some common purpose or pursue a shared interest. Examples of communities include a school, church, city, and even a subdivision” (p. 1). The website also provides the definition of a community helper, which is the basis of this thesis. A community helper is “a person who performs some job that helps improve the overall wellbeing of the community. Community helpers are very important; they keep the community safe and healthy, make life better for the people in the community, and help the community function more efficiently. The clerk at the grocery store, the local farmer, and the mail carrier are all examples of community helpers” and will have the will to take care of what they belong to (p. 3). It is extremely important for children all over the world to be educated on whom to call if there is a certain emergency, what these men and women wear, where their doctor’s offices are, what happens at the dentist, the list goes on and on.

The goals of teachers consist of not only educating their students on the different professionals that they need to be familiar with, but also making them comfortable with those same professionals. I know of some children that need to be put under for the dentist to just do a routine cleaning. They do not feel safe with the doctor, or comfortable with the professionals. Teachers should aim to have their students go into any professional doctor's office and feel safe and ready for whatever needs to be done. If the students are educated and know what to expect, the success rate of them getting through their visits, stress-free, will be higher.

Linde (2015) commented that, "Teaching young children about community helpers is a popular unit, and for a good reason. Preschoolers love to dress up and do what they see adults do"(p.2). Teachers focus on four strands of development, which aide in the teaching of all the different helpers in the community. The strands of development include: cognitive, motor, social/emotional and language. Linde noted that there is much that goes on in the early years of development, especially with the brain:

The brain learns and remembers by making connections between brain cells, or neurons. Making connections happens just like it sounds: one remembered event has an association, or link, to a current event. Those two neurons reach out towards each other to create a bond, forming memory. To provide rich experiences for young children to remember, appeal to their natural likes and attractions. (p.2)

Some activities that can be done are puzzles, reading books, or even cooking. Those 3 things can be linked right up with the community helpers theme. The puzzles can

be putting together people that the students might see in their community. For example, a puzzle could be of a fireman. The students have to put together his whole outfit like if he were ready to put out a fire. The books are endless. There are books about all different community helpers. For example: *Whose Hands Are These?* by Miranda Paul (2016), *Let's Meet a Police Officer* by Gina Bellisario (2013), or *Community Helpers from A to Z* by Bobbie Kalma (1997).

Personal Interest Statement

The establishment where I work is located in a country-like setting, in a large, opened area. This work place offers many different services for our students, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, counseling services, vision therapy and hearing therapy. We allow our students to watch BrainPOP or BrainPOP Jr. which both stem from the company BrainPop Educators. These sites include educational movies and websites that the students can go on, watch movies and explore all the different resources.

BrainPop Educators does a community helpers unit. The movies “will describe different community helpers and how they help out. It will also share ways children can be active, responsible, and conscientious members of the community. Encourage children to be active citizens and help them understand that everyone plays an important role”(p.

1). BrainPOP makes certain that their viewers know that:

(T)here are many people who are involved with the community's safety, health, and general well being. This includes parents, teachers, and students. Children need to keep their communities clean, recycle, and treat everyone in the

community with respect. Also, they encourage children to volunteer in their communities. It also explains that when people volunteer, they give their time to help out in the community and work to make it a better place for everyone. (p. 1)

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this curriculum project is to enhance the students' knowledge on the trained professionals in their hometowns. In the classroom where I am doing my project, we focus not so much on the studying, the homework, and the worksheets; instead, we focus on the correct way to brush their teeth, how to get dressed after swimming, the different members of their family, and so on. We feel education is very important, but we also strongly focus on our students being able to function in the real world.

Community helpers are some of the most important people in the students' lives. If they are familiar with these professionals, they will be able to function that much better in society when it comes to having a certain problem. For example, if they are in the grocery store, and they see someone stealing, they know to call the police, what the phone number is, what the police car looks like when it pulls up to the scene, and of course, the uniform they wear. Children today are not as familiar with these professionals as they should be. For example, in my classroom, there is a lack of knowledge of what uniforms these men and women wear, or what number to call if their house is on fire or if someone is hurt.

The "Community Helpers" project is an, "in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about. The investigation is usually undertaken by a small group of children

within a class, sometimes by a whole class, and occasionally by an individual child. The key feature of a project is that it is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed either by the children, the teacher, or the teachers working with the children. The goal of a project is to learn more about the topic rather than to seek right answers to questions posed by the teacher”(Maple, 2005, p.137). This project is to help our youth, disabled or not, know the necessities in life when it comes down to different emergencies or issues. As educators, we want our students to be able to function in the outside world successfully.

In the next chapter, I will review the relevant research related to the problem that I have outlined above. The following studies show the importance and necessity for student’s awareness of all the people in the community that are necessary to make the world run.

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

The purpose of this Curriculum Project is to go into depth with all that comes with the term “community helper.” It is to show the importance of all the different helpers in the community. It is to ensure that the students know who to call if something goes wrong, or they see something out of the ordinary, as well as what to do if, for example, they see smoke in their house. Today, I see many young children, uneducated on many of the community helpers and what each and every one of them actually does.

In various different research pieces, such as Conley’s article, *Community Helper Riddles* (2012), it is said that children with or without disabilities should know information about their community and the authorized personnel that works within that community. The information can include the following: the uniforms that they wear, the equipment they use, the vehicles that they drive, the number with which to call them and what their job description. In different situations, children with disabilities should be educated just as much as the students without disabilities are, if not more.

Matson and Stumey (2011) noted: “When in community settings, individuals with developmental disabilities and ASD encounter various scenarios that can pose threats to their safety” (p. 345). The authors also mentioned the research on the lack of teaching individuals provide to children with disabilities and ASD. They commented that, “given the restrictions that a lack of safety skills can impose on individuals with ASD, and the dangerous situations that can result from failure to teach safety skills, effective interventions are of the essence” (p. 345). Research also provides us with the knowledge of the importance to “improve the social validity of the procedures used in the study by

teaching participants to approach specific community helpers, such as cashiers or sales clerks, so as to minimize the danger of communicating information of being alone and lost to a potentially dangerous person”(p. 345). The importance of young children, especially with disabilities, knowing who to contact or what to do in a certain situation is extremely high when it comes down to educating them in their schools.

Stemming from the importance of children knowing the importance of the community helpers, they should also realize that anyone could do anything, no matter what their race, ethnicity or background is. For example, if a student has a disability, that shouldn't hinder them in their decision on whether or not they can be a firefighter one day. When teachers or staff teach students about the different community helpers, it is important for them to show the different jobs with different people. For example, teachers should not just show pictures of a fireman, show a picture of a firewoman, instead they should, show pictures of different races doing different professions. Dhandania (2016) suggested, “So whether one wants to become a doctor or an engineer or a chartered accountant, an artist or a teacher, we all have to live in a society, interact with individuals belonging to different cultural and socio- economic backgrounds, adapt to various situations and circumstances, and also adhere to certain societal norms in order to lead a peaceful and productive life”(p. 2). The author spoke about not only the importance of Social Studies in the classroom, and everything teachers can touch on throughout the year, but makes a valid point, stating that, “awareness helps them to understand the importance of democracy, rights and freedoms and the fact that in order to live and coexist peacefully each and everyone needs to respect, trust and balance the various

opinions, values and attitudes, lifestyles, cultures and practices and ideologies existing in society”(p. 2).

Students need to know the importance of volunteering in their community. They need to know that by volunteering in their community, they are giving back to the community helpers who work to make the communities where they live, a better place. As Swain and Chapman (2017) argued: “The value of this lesson is apparent in the way it allows early childhood students and students with special needs to recognize their own roles as volunteers and agents of change in their communities”(p. 9). The authors also focused on the different ways students can begin trying to help their community fix the elements that need to be fixed throughout their living area. Students need the opportunity to focus on the subjects that are important to them, the services that they feel that they can incorporate into their community to make it a better place and to focus on their feelings and the ways that they effect their decisions. If students feel they are a part of their community, not just in school, but also outside of school, they will become more responsible.

The Family Education website (2017) is informative and full of different resources to use with the children. There is information on multiple jobs and professions that children can access to see whether they are interested in them as future career choices. There are resources on the different activities and tasks that they can do in their community in order to instill responsibility in them as young learners. There are also videos that they can watch to better become familiar with the requirements of certain jobs. For example, there is a video called “day in a life,” which provides, “ overviews of

some of the most interesting jobs and careers in life science, the arts, public service, engineering, medicine, and technology”(p. 2).

The teAchnology (sic) website also has great information on community helpers. The articles featured focus on the definitions of community and community helpers. For example, one stated, the importance of the community helpers in which they make the community function: “it is important for all of us to know the ways in which community helpers make our lives better. It helps us appreciate their work. Moreover, we can also help them to do their jobs better if we understand the role they play”(p. 3). It is important for the students to know that everyone in the community is intertwined, and the importance of helping one another to make the community a better place to live. The resource noted: “A cop who maintains the safety of a neighborhood allows a postal worker to do his or her job without fretting about unsavory neighborhoods. If everybody performs their role with an eagerness to help others, life in the community as a whole improves”(p. 3).

Sharon Linde writes about the community and community helpers. Her article (2015) regarding teaching about community helpers focused on the younger children and how they can be involved in the community helpers unit. She stated that, “teaching young children about community helpers is a popular unit, and for good reason. Preschoolers love to dress up and do what they see adults do”(p. 8). As adults, we model for children whether we realize we’re doing it or not. When children see people in the community, they observe them and see their actions, ways that they can catty them out and the ways in which they look when performing them. Young children are molded at a very young age. We allow them to use their imaginations and experience things through their point of

view. Linde commented: “Because the brain learns by making connections, they learn and remember best when provided with rich experiences. Focus all units of learning on four strands of development: cognitive, motor, social/emotional and language”(p. 8). When educators talk about the cognitive element, we refer to children making connections. They are linking one experience to another. They see a mail carrier delivering mail to their house; they bring that experience to the block center at school and act it out with their peers. Because of this it is important for educators to provide many diverse experiences for students. These lessons link content knowledge to the motor skills of students. Educators also need to provide multiple objects for students to use to create different experiences. That could include the use of different sized blocks, different signs that students might see in the community, and different dolls or puppets that they can use to re-enact an event that took place. For example, students may have seen a fire as they were driving to the store and may have seen the different community helpers that arrived to the scene to help. They might want to re-enact that in order to either cope with what happened or to make connections mentioned earlier.

Puppets allow the students to act out what they think or see their community helpers doing. Lepley (2001) stated that, “after classroom lessons talking about the jobs of various community helpers, students were given time to act out these jobs using community helper puppets. It was observed that students were taking the knowledge they had of various careers and were incorporating this into their exploratory play at the puppet center” (p. 3). This allows students to take risks and to begin to feel comfortable acting and playing in certain ways. When they are allowed free playtime, the students acted out the roles of the community helpers that they enjoyed the most. They acted out

different scenarios with their peers. This type of play links to the article about the importance of Social Studies in the classroom (Dhandhania, 2016). The students are relating to the diversity that they see in and out of the classroom, where they realize that it's all right to be of different races, religions and backgrounds, and still be able to do something you love, all in the same community.

Educating the students on the different kind of communities that they may live in someday or see is important for them to understand, not all communities are the same. Conley (2012) not only focused on the different community helpers, but also, the different types of communities. When teaching about the community and the different helpers in the community, Conley claimed that, "The students learn about different types of communities such as urban, rural and suburban communities. The students gain understanding that there are jobs in the community and this lesson introduces higher level vocabulary such as occupations and community helpers"(p. 1). The students are able to acknowledge the different language that comes along with the term community and community helpers, in order to better understand everything behind the two terms. In her approach, Conley allows her students to write an essay on their favorite community helper. Students write about the reasons that they like the specific person, the background information, the tasks that they are involved in and even what they as a student can do, to help their community helpers.

Gruszczyk (2012) focused on the importance of community and community helpers inside and outside of the classroom. She argued that teachers need to provide many different activities and lessons to incorporate different ways for their students to relate to the different community helpers. Students should have the opportunities to

physically dress up like their favorite community helper, as well as to read different books on them or do different kinds of worksheets that involve those community helpers. Gruszczyk mentioned that she allowed the students' families to come in who were different parts of the community to come and talk with her class to help make more of a connection for the students. Being able to see the different community members in their classroom can help them feel more comfortable when they see them in their community and allow them to interact with them inside and outside of the classroom as well. Gruszczyk stated that, "when community helpers come and visit they usually bring their tools of their trade. That is bringing learning alive. I also think that taking writing a step further and having the students present their writing in character and record them enhances the lesson"(p. 1).

Fredericks (2000) commented: "Community helpers are important to our community. They provide valuable services that help us all function efficiently in society. Community helpers may be visible or they may be rarely seen"(p. 35). Students need to know that they are many different community helpers that help make their community function. The policemen and women are very important but so are the cashiers, hairdressers and administrators. It is important for children to know the importance of many different helpers and be exposed to the different tasks many of the community helpers endure on a daily basis. Fredericks concluded: "It is important for students to know that there are many community members dedicated to serving the needs of the populace in an efficient manner"(p. 35).

The goal of this project is to better educate teachers and about the importance of the knowledge of our students when talking about our communities and the community

helpers, in our schools around the country. The next chapter will go into depth about the methodology behind this idea.

Chapter 3 Methodology

The purpose of this curriculum project is to enhance the students' knowledge about the trained professionals in their hometowns. In the classroom within which I am doing my project in, we focus not so much on the studying, the homework, and the worksheets; instead, we focus on the correct way for students to brush their teeth, the correct way for students to get dressed after swimming, the different members of their families, and so on. We feel that formal academics are very important, but we also strongly focus on our students being able to function in the real world.

In various different research pieces, such as Conley's article, Community Helper Riddles (2012), it is said that children with or without disabilities should know information about their community and the authorized personnel that works within that community. The information can include the following: the uniforms that they wear, the equipment they use, the vehicles that they drive, the number with which to call them and what their job description. In different situations, children with disabilities should be educated just as much as the students without disabilities are, if not more.

The Community Helpers project is a project in which educators can provide the necessary knowledge to the students to help them in different emergency situations. We need to make it possible for our students to be able to function successfully in society when it comes down to different issues they may be dealt. According to Maple (2005) an

In-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about. The investigation is usually undertaken by a small group of children within a class, sometimes by a whole class, and occasionally by an individual child. The key feature of a project

is that it is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed either by the children, the teacher, or the teachers working with the children. The goal of a project is to learn more about the topic rather than to seek right answers to questions posed by the teacher. (p. 137)

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

As I continued to develop my design, I decided that the most common definitions I came across were community, helper, and safe. Those words are the words, on which I want to base my project (Maple, pp. 133-138). There were many different articles that mentioned the importance of those words referenced above. The correlation between those words is very strong. They all go hand in hand to better suit the other. Students should group those words together, not only for the curriculum project but also for the rest of their lives.

Students of all ages should also know about the words environment, society, indirect and direct. Saini (2011) talks about our social environment and how we take care of others and they care for us too (p. 1). As educators we need to teach responsibility so that when our children are old enough to start working in society, they know how to act and how to help each other in the community. As defined by Saini, direct helpers are “helpers who come in our contact regularly and we talk to them about our needs” (p. 2). We would teach our children that those types of helpers could be our neighbors, family members or friends. Indirect helpers are “helpers who do not come directly in our contact but serve us indirectly” (Saini, p. 2). We would teach our children that those types of helpers would be known as our community helpers. The importance of the students

knowing that indirect and direct helpers all rely on each other to make their community a better place is easy to show and practice. Allowing students to know their importance in coming to school, shows that us as educators depend on them for our job. If we didn't have students to teach, we wouldn't have a job. We need each other to make the world go round.

We teach our young children to stay away from people they aren't familiar with, like strangers. Yet, we don't always tell them that someone who might need to help someday, may also be considered a stranger if they don't recognize them. Author Sarah Thompson (2015) stated that, "it's common for young children to avoid strangers, as that is generally a lesson we teach at home and in schools. However, in an emergency situation like a house fire, children need to recognize and understand that the stranger in a uniform is there to help and bring them to safety" (p. 1). When we work together as educators and parents, we can educate our children with the knowledge they need to help make the community a better place for everyone.

Intended Audience

The classroom I am focused on for this Curriculum Project on Community Helpers is a 6:1:1 classroom located in an educational facility located in Western New York. There are over 250 students from 20 different school districts that come to our facility. The amount of time it takes for the students to arrive at our location varies anywhere from 5 minutes to almost two hours depending on the weather. Our facility takes students from ages 5-21, with all disabilities, along with Career and Technology students and students that are interested in a certain trade. The incomes of the students

vary from low-income to high-income. The culture of the facility is very diverse as well.

The classroom I focused on consists of 6 students with two girls and four boys. DBK is a Caucasian, 8-year-old boy who comes from a lower-income household. AJ is a Caucasian, 9-year-old boy who comes from a low-income household. DM is a Caucasian, 8-year-old boy who comes from a middle-income household. NV is a mixed-race, 9-year-old boy who comes from a lower-income household. ARS is a Caucasian, 9-year-old girl who comes from a high-income household. MF is a Caucasian, 9-year-old girl who comes from a lower-income household. The students mentioned all are in an inclusive, Autism classroom. All of the students with the exception of DM receive free or reduced breakfast and lunch. All students with the exception of DBK have their parents together under the same roof.

DBK is a student with Autism. He yells quite often throughout the day and can become very aggressive. He tends to harm himself more than others. He loves the sensation of the vibration he feels whenever he hits his hands hard on any object, as well as his head or feet. He is non-verbal but will repeat what you ask him to say. He is able to answer questions and tell you what he wants or does not want. He loves the program Starfall that he plays on his iPad. He loves coloring and doing puzzles. He also loves being creative and making designs using blocks.

DM is a student with Autism. He is echolalic, which means that if he hears something he is attracted to, he will mimic it throughout the day for days on end until he finds new words or sounds he is attracted to. He is non-verbal. When he gets anxious or nervous about something he has to do in the classroom, like paint his hands, he starts repeating everything he hears in a very high-pitched voice. He can't answer questions

successfully and cannot always tell you what he wants or doesn't want. He loves trucks, buses, cars and tractors. He enjoys playing with them and watching them on his iPad. He also loves going for walks whenever he can get the chance.

AJ is a student with Autism and Epilepsy. He is able to have full conversation with staff and peers. He can answer any type of question. He can tell you what he likes and dislikes. There have been a few instances of him becoming aggressive towards others but it is very rare. He enjoys anything on the iPad, mostly trains. He loves coloring and designing trains using blocks.

NV is a student with Autism. He is nonverbal but can repeat words or phrases that are being asked of him. He gets frustrated easily and tends to cry. He doesn't like the feeling of tears on his face, which causes him to become more upset. He will yell and slam his hands down when he doesn't want to do what is being asked of him. He can answer yes or no questions and is able to tell you what he wants or doesn't want. He enjoys anything that has to do with minions or the iPad.

MF is a student with Multiple Disabilities and Cerebral Palsy. She is somewhat verbal but not able to keep up a conversation. She talks in one or few word phrases. She can become very aggressive towards anyone who is near her during her episode. She will yell and cry as well. She loves her friends in her class and will play with anyone. She enjoys horses and Shopkins.

ARS is a student with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Failure to Thrive, Epilepsy, Cerebral Palsy, Myoclonic tremors, a feeding disorder and a Ketogenic diet. She is full verbal. She can answer any question, have a conversation with anyone and let you know what she wants or doesn't want. She can become extremely aggressive towards staff. Her

episodes can last up to two hours or more. She enjoys the iPad, the movie Frozen, riding bikes and having books read to her.

Procedure

In the beginning, my thought process was all about the ways in which I could integrate into the importance of community helpers into my academic curriculum. Developing the curriculum was difficult at first due to the underlying question that I asked myself, how can I teach my students the importance of the professionals in their community without just reading them a book? Finally, I decided that, since my age level is that of kindergarten, I could incorporate the professionals in not only the literature included in the curriculum but also in the mathematics, art, science, and both fine and gross motor skills instruction within the curriculum.

The thought of having my students see the number of police officers there were or the puzzle pieces of the different uniforms that the students would have to match together, and even the game Bingo to find the different professional personnel located on their individual boards, all came to mind as I began to conceptualize the curriculum plan. I knew that, by including all of the different community helpers into the curriculum I have to provide my students, the curriculum would help them not just understand the different information and topics but also to enjoy them with each other. The curriculum is designed to benefit my students outside of the classroom, and to help them feel comfortable with the different personnel incase they encounter any type of situation.

To create this curriculum, I did research on all the different information students the ages of my students are learning. I also took into consideration the intellectual level my students compared with general education 8 and 9-year-old students. In the classroom

I selected, the focus is, of course, teaching them content material but it also strongly focuses on the outside world. For example the students are taught proper hygiene, their home addresses and phone numbers. They are taught their parents names as well as their own or other family members' names so that they are equipped to deal with life outside of education, which is how I came across my unit.

My unit is based on Education.com's idea of "community helpers" (2017, p. 1). Community helpers are anyone who may help my students someday. These consist of, for example, paramedics, dentists, doctors, firefighters, police, nurse, and teachers. It is important for the students to know who to go to if something is wrong, if they are hurt or who to turn to in emergency situations. Once I decided upon the helpers in the community, on which I was going to focus, I researched the different lessons I could do with the students using those helpers.

Young children are often afraid of seeing adults in clothing that they don't normally see or equipment they aren't familiar with. Educators need to make it possible for students to have access to dramatic play outfits and materials so their emotions are at ease whenever the time comes to come in contact with a community helper. Dean (2012) stated that, "By participating in dramatic play with costumes and acting out behaviors of community helpers, children develop important social/emotional skills and are more comfortable with uniforms. It helps them understand the world around them and their place in it. It's important for children to learn their role in a community and that there are safe, friendly people to help them if they get sick or have an emergency. It's comforting for children to learn there are strangers outside of their family who have a concern for their safety and well-being and to understand who they can trust" (p. 1).

For example, for choice time, having the different equipment each helper uses, like a stethoscope or a police badge, accessible for the students to play with and to become comfortable seeing, is crucial to my curriculum plan. For reading, I saw the different books that we can read as a class, individually or in small groups. Many of my students are afraid of doctors or dentists because they are not familiar with the jobs that they do to help us, their general appearance or the special tools that they use. Teaching students all about the community helpers will help them as they get older and go off into the outside world someday.

Scope and Sequence

The purpose of the scope and sequence of the curriculum project is to find different ways to incorporate community helpers in the instruction in informal and formal ways. The different lessons within the curriculum plan are intended to involve the students in independent and group activities in order to become familiar with the who, what, where, when, why, and descriptions of all the different community helpers in their community.

	Lesson One	Lesson Two	Lesson Three	Lesson Four	Lesson Five
Topics Covered	Centers: Have students categorize different items (stethoscope, thermometer, tongue depressor, Band-Aids,	Centers: The students will count "How many?" Example: There is a paper that has two firemen. Underneath the	Centers: "Community Helpers Bingo" The students will play bingo in their small groups taking turns	Centers: "Dentist Letter Sort" There will be paper teeth with either uppercase or lowercase letters on each one and	Centers: "Fire Extinguisher Station" The students will practice "putting out fires" using blocks, fire trucks,

	etc.) with the appropriate professional. Example: Band-Aids would go with doctor.	picture there are numbers 2,3,1. The student has to circle the correct answer.	calling out the pictures of the different helpers, playing or checking over the winner's card.	the students have to put them in the dentist's uppercase and lowercase tooth baskets.	people figurines and "fire."
CCSS	<p>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</p> <p>4. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.</p>	<p>K.OA</p> <p>Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and Taking from.</p>	<p>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</p> <p>5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.</p>	<p>Vocabulary Acquisition and Use</p> <p>5. With guidance and support, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.</p> <p>a. Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) for understanding of the concepts the categories represent.</p>	<p>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</p> <p>5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.</p>
Strategies/Skills Taught	Categorizing and putting correct items in the correct bin.	Counting and 1-to-1 correspondence .	Taking turns and following rules of the game.	The difference between upper and lowercase letters and categorizing.	What firefighters have to do everyday and all the precautions they have to go through to stay safe

					and keep us safe.
Assessment	The finished bins.	The finished worksheet.	The finished bingo boards as well as informal observations	The finished letters on the different teeth papers.	Informal observations and photographs .

	Lesson One	Lesson Two	Lesson Three	Lesson Four	Lesson Five
Topics Covered	<p>Centers:</p> <p>“Community Helpers Puzzles”</p> <p>There will be numerous pictures of policemen and women, dentists, teachers, etc. The pictures will be cut in half so the students will have to match the correct top part of a uniform with the correct bottom part of the</p>	<p>Centers:</p> <p>“Brush Your Teeth!”</p> <p>The students will take a piece of paper with an outline of a tooth drawn on it. They will take white liquid glue and a toothbrush and “brush.” They will try their best to stay in the lines and keep the “toothpaste” on the tooth.</p>	<p>Centers:</p> <p>Students will have pictures such as ice cream, carrots, cake, apples, oranges, etc. They will either put them on the tooth that says, “These foods make my teeth sad,” or “These foods make my teeth happy.”</p>	<p>Centers:</p> <p>Students will take “Q-tip bones” and construct them into the shapes that are listed on the different sheets of paper.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>The sheet says triangle. The student will take three Q-tips and construct a triangle.</p>	<p>Centers:</p> <p>Students will find all the different items used in the week prior in the sensory table. Example: the students will move through all the kidney beans or rice to find the toothbrush, Band-Aid box, etc.</p>

	uniform.				
CCSS	<p>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</p> <p>4. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.</p>	<p>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</p> <p>5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.</p>	<p>Vocabulary Acquisition and Use</p> <p>5. With guidance and support, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.</p> <p>a. Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) for understanding of the concepts the categories represent.</p>	<p>K.G</p> <p>Identify and describe shapes (squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, hexagons, cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres).</p>	<p>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</p> <p>5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.</p>
Strategies/Skills Taught	Matching	Fine motor skills	Categorizing and which foods are good for you and your teeth and which ones aren't.	The different shapes and how to make those shapes.	Fine motor skills
Assessment	The finished puzzles.	How much glue is inside and outside of the tooth on the paper.	The finished worksheet.	The finished artwork.	All the objects out are out of the sensory bin. Informal observations.

	Lesson One	Lesson Two	Lesson Three	Lesson Four	Lesson Five
Topics Covered	Centers: “Community Helpers Sort” The students will put the correct people and objects with the correct building. Example: The students will put a police badge, handcuffs, and police car all under the picture of the police station.	Centers: The students will label the correct items on the correct person. Example: There is a picture of a firefighter. The students have to label, with the words given, hat, fire hose, boots, jacket, etc.	Centers: “Who Am I?” The students will be given cards with different sentences on them. The student reads the sentences to the other student and they have to guess if they are a dentist, teacher, etc.	Centers: The students will have to trace lines on worksheets with different lines going from a helper to what they help with. Example: From the teacher to the school the student has to trace a curvy line.	Centers: Dramatic Play Area Students will have access to different outfits for them to explore and pretend to be different helpers.
CCSS	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 4. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 4. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 4. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.	Kindergarten students: Print Concepts 1. Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 6. Demonstrate an emergent ability to express thoughts, feelings and ideas.
Strategies/Skills Taught	Sorting	Labeling	Reading full sentences. Listening	Fine motor skills	Exploring what different

			skills.		helpers look like and their jobs they do.
Assessment	The finished worksheet.	The finished worksheet.	Informal observations.	The finished worksheet.	Informal observations and photographs.

	Lesson One	Lesson Two	Lesson Three	Lesson Four	Lesson Five
Topics Covered	Centers: The students will paint using different colors and plastic syringes.	Centers: Students will practice how to properly wash their hands by using different substances to wash off. Example: Students will have vegetable oil on their hands and they have to wash their hands long enough to get it off.	Centers: “Cover Your Sneeze!” The students will pretend to sneeze while having mini cotton balls in their hands. The cotton balls will go all over the floor and the students will have to pick each “germ” up and put it back in the container.	Centers: <i>Read My Trip To The Hospital</i> by Mercer Meyer	Centers: <i>Read Whose Tools Are These?: A Look at Tools Workers Use - Big, Sharp, and Smooth</i> By: Sharon Katz Cooper
CCSS	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions	Key Ideas and Details 1. With prompting and support, ask and answer about detail(s) in a text. 2. With	Key Ideas and Details 1. With prompting and support, ask and answer about detail(s) in a text. 2. With

	as desired to provide additional detail.	as desired to provide additional detail.	as desired to provide additional detail.	prompting and support, retell familiar stories. 3. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about characters and major events in a story	prompting and support, retell familiar stories. 3. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about characters and major events in a story
Strategies/Skills Taught	How to use the tools different medical staff use.	How to properly wash your hands.	Fine motor skills and to cover your sneeze.	Using prior knowledge.	Using prior knowledge.
Assessment	The finished art project.	Informal observations and photographs.	Informal observations.	Answering open and close-ended questions.	Answering open and close-ended questions.

Validity

This curriculum can be used in any classroom anywhere from Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) programs throughout Second Grade. Some of the activities will have to be on a higher level as teachers progress up through the higher grades, but the overall topic is important for the younger students to know. All students should know who their community helpers are, what they look like, what their jobs are, what their buildings look like, their phone numbers, and so on. Doing lessons, such as these allows students to explore with their peers. It is not direct teaching, but rather is based on the principles of

cooperative learning, which allows them to teach themselves and each other. It helps them to put their prior knowledge together with the new knowledge that they have received. This curriculum allows room for collaboration and exploration. It allows the students to move around and to use different types of learning to understand the concepts being taught.

This chapter focuses on all the different ways the theme community helpers can be integrated in all different subjects and assessments that will keep the students involved and engaged. As educators we need to engage the students with important information so that they are more apt to respond and remember what they are being taught. In the next chapter I will talk about the results and preparation in depth in regards to this project.

Chapter 4 - Results

The previous chapter focused on all the different ways the theme, community helpers can be integrated in all different subjects and assessments that will keep the students involved and engaged. As educators we need to engage the students with important information so that they are more apt to respond and remember what they are being taught. The following section contains the lesson plans, standards and materials that are used within the Community Helpers Unit. The lesson plans include the standards that are aligned with each center activity. The center activities include the different academic tasks as the literature and the assessments.

Prerequisite

No prior knowledge is truly necessary or required, nor is it necessary for students to be responsible for bringing lesson materials to school.

Online Resources

For questions about individual community helpers, lessons, free printable activities or materials that educators are interested in can be found on the following websites:

- <https://www.education.com/resources/community+helpers>
- <https://www.sesd.org/site/handlers>
- <https://www.prekinders.com/community-theme/>

and many more. Anyone that is interested can go on Google and search the term “community helper resources” and plenty of information will come up.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to recognize and acknowledge different community helpers.

Students will be able to relate certain uniforms and tools to a specific community helper.

Students will be able to describe what specific community helpers do in their profession.

Learning Standards

The New York State Common Core State Standards (2012) that are aligned with the community helpers unit are as follows:

- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.

- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.

- K.OA

Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from.

- K.G

Identify and describe shapes (squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, hexagons, cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres).

- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

5. With guidance and support, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

a. Sort common objects into categories (e.g., shapes, foods) for understanding of the concepts the categories represent.

- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

6. Demonstrate an emergent ability to express thoughts, feelings and ideas.

- Kindergarten students: Print Concepts

1. Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.

Lesson Plans

Week 1

Lesson 1: Centers (Community Helpers Matching)

Goal(s):

- The students will be able to categorize items into the correct bins.

Objective(s):

- The students will categorize different items with the appropriate professional.

Materials: (can be the real or fake version)

- Stethoscope
- Band-Aids
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Mini fire helmet

- Tongue depressors
- Cotton balls
- Dental floss
- Mouthwash
- Police badge
- Handcuffs
- Shots
- Mail truck
- Envelope
- Stamps
- Construction hat
- Cooking tools
- Different colored bins for sorting
- Labels with the different community helpers names
- Assessment check list of all the tools and the bins

Activities and Procedures:

- The different tools will be set out on the table as well as the labeled bins.
- The students pick up the different tools and place them in their correct bins.
- They are able to ask one another for help, but not the teacher.

Assessment:

- The assessment is the finished products of the bins. The teacher will check each bin and make quick check marks on the assessment sheet to see which tools were placed correctly and which ones were not. The checklist will show each student's number of correct items and incorrect items. The checklist will be kept in each individual's own personal folder or portfolio.

Lesson 2: Centers (Community Helpers "How Many" Worksheet)

Goal(s):

- The students will be able to count using 1-to-1 correspondence.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly match the number with the corresponding picture.

Materials:

- "How Many" worksheet
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Bin

Activities and Procedures:

- The worksheets, pencils and erasers will be on the table.
- The teacher will do a quick explanation of the worksheet, stating that they have to look at the different numbers of different community helpers and they have to circle the correct number underneath each picture.

- The teacher will explain that when the worksheet is done, it is to be placed in the finished bin.

Assessment:

- The assessment is the finished worksheet in the bin. The teacher can grade them at a different time since it's a worksheet it won't have to be graded right away.

Lesson 3: Centers (Community Helpers Bingo)

Goal(s):

- The students will learn how to play the game of Bingo by the given rules.
- The students will learn to compromise if there is an issue with the game or another teammate.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly follow the rules of Bingo.
- The students will correctly take turns sharing the different roles of Bingo.

Materials:

- Community Helpers Bingo

Activities and Procedures:

- The game pieces will be set out on the table.
- The teacher will define the different roles the students will have. Each student will take each role before the center is finished.

- The teacher will show an example of what each role consists of.
- The teacher will show how to use the Bingo card and pieces.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the finished products of the Bingo cards. The teacher will walk around at different points of the games to check on the Bingo cards. The teacher will also be doing informal assessments while the game is going on. The teacher is to look for: turn taking, compromises and following the rules.

Lesson 4: Centers (Dentist Letter Sort)

Goal(s):

- The students will be able to categorize the correct upper and lowercase letters.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly identify which letters are uppercase.
- The students will correctly identify which letters are lowercase.

Materials:

- Paper teeth with both upper and lowercase letters written on them
- Bins for upper and lowercase letters to be categorized in
- Assessment check list

Activities and Procedures:

- The different paper teeth will be spread out on the table.
- The bins will be set up on the table.

- The teacher will explain that all uppercase letters need to go in the marked bin and the lowercase letters need to go in the other marked bin.

Assessment:

- The teacher will walk to the table when each student is finished and use the assessment checklist to assess each student.

Lesson 5: Centers (Fire Extinguisher Station)

Goal(s):

- The students will learn the different jobs firefighters have.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly build and act out what firefighters do to keep our community safe.

Materials:

- Different colored and sized blocks
- Different ethnic and gender firefighters
- Different buildings
- Different vehicles
- Play sized fire (you can find it in the children's toy section at many different stores)

- Play sized fire extinguishers
- Different tools and equipment that firefighter use

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials listed above will be spread out on the floor.
- The teacher will explain that the students will be putting into their perspective what happens in a fire, who do they call, what does the fire scene look like and how to act when there's a fire.

Assessment:

- The teacher will be taking notes of each student, whether it is the language they use or how they are building their scenario. The teacher will be taking photographs of each students work.

Week 2

Lesson 1: Centers (Community Helpers Puzzles)

Goal(s):

- The students will be able to match.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly place the different parts of the puzzle together to create the correct community helper.

Materials:

- Different pictures of community helpers cut in half

Activities and Procedures:

- The teacher will have all the different picture pieces spread out on the table
- The teacher will show the students an example of finding one piece of the puzzle and matching it with the other piece to make a whole picture of a community helper.
- Assessment checklist

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the different finished products of the community helpers puzzles. It will be a quick checklist that the teacher fills out.

Lesson 2: Centers (Brush Your Teeth!)

Goal(s):

- The students will learn fine motor skills.
- The students will learn how to brush their teeth.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly place the glue on their paper tooth.

Materials:

- Paper with a tooth outline on it
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up on the table
- The teacher will explain the activity telling the students they are to put the toothpaste on the tooth, not outside the tooth outline.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the finished teeth papers. The teacher is looking for the toothpaste placement on the outline.

Lesson 3: Centers (What foods make my teeth happy or sad?)

Goal(s):

- The students will be able to categorize the correct happy or sad foods.

Objectives:

- The students will know which foods make their teeth happy.
- The students will know which foods make their teeth sad.

Materials:

- Happy or Sad worksheet

- Scissors
- Glue

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set on the table.
- The teacher will explain that the students are to cut out the different foods located at the bottom of the worksheet.
- The students are to glue the foods that they think make their teeth happy, on the happy side of the worksheet, and do the same with the sad.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the finished worksheets that are set in the middle of the table after the activity is finished.

Lesson 4: Centers (Q-tip Bone Craft)

Goal(s):

- The students will be able to name different shapes.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly assemble Q-tips to make different shapes

Materials:

- Q-tips
- Scissors
- Paper
- Glue

- Pencils
- Erasers

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set on the table.
- The teacher will tell the students they can make any and all shapes that they know, with Q-tips.
- The teacher will tell the students they can use a pencil and draw the shapes first then put the glue then the Q-tips or just do the glue and the Q-tips.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the finished shape artwork.

Lesson 5: Centers (Community Helpers Tool Find)

Goal(s):

- The students will be able to remember the different tools and materials from the lessons from the week prior.

Objectives:

- The students will find all of the items in the bean table.

Materials:

- Stethoscope

- Band-Aids
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Mini fire helmet
- Tongue depressors
- Cotton balls
- Dental floss
- Mouthwash
- Police badge
- Handcuffs
- Shots
- Mail truck
- Envelope
- Stamps
- Construction hat
- Cooking tools
- Bean Table
- Tool checklist

Activities and Procedures:

- The different materials will be in the bean table.
- The teacher tells the students how many pieces are in the bean table.
- The students have to find the correct number of pieces and name them correctly.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be using a checklist while the students name of the pieces they found. The teacher is looking to see if they collected the right amount of pieces and name them off correctly.

Week 3**Lesson 1: Centers (Community Helpers Sort)****Goal(s):**

- The students will be able to sort the correct pictures.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly place the different pictures under the correct community helper.

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Scissors
- Glue

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be placed on the table.
- The teacher will inform the students that they will cut all the different pictures out from the bottom of the worksheet and place them under the correct community helper.

Assessment:

-The assessment will be the finished worksheet that will be set in the middle of the table for the teacher to collect when the activity is finished.

Lesson 2: Centers (Labeling)

Goal(s):

- The students will recognize the different equipment each community helper has.

Objectives:

-The students will correctly label the parts on the worksheet.

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Pencils
- Erasers

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up on the table.
- The teacher will explain that the students need to label the different equipment and tools on the different community helpers.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the finished worksheet that will be collected from the middle of the table after the activity is finished.

Lesson 3: Centers (Who Am I?)

Goal(s):

- The students will be able to read the given hints to their fellow peers.

Objectives:

- The students will be able to correctly read the sentences on the given card.
- The students will be able to correctly guess the correct community helper.

Materials:

- Different cards with different characteristics of different community helpers

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up on the table.
- The teacher will tell the students that they will take turns reading the cards with the hints on them.
- The students will then have to guess which community helper their peers are describing.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the informal observations. The teacher can write notes on separate pieces of paper for each student to show which students were guessing correctly or incorrectly.

Lesson 4: Centers (Community Helpers Line Sheet)

Goal(s):

- The students will use fine motor skills to trace a line.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly hold a pencil.

- The students will correctly trace the line from community helper to community helper.

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Pencils
- Erasers

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up on the table.
- The teacher will explain that the students are to trace the different lines located on the worksheet.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the finished worksheets that will be collected from the middle of the table when the activity is finished.

Lesson 5: Centers (Dramatic Play)

Goal(s):

- The students will act out different characteristics of different community helpers.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly act out the different roles of the community helpers

Materials

- Use prior materials from previous lessons (toothbrushes, toothpaste, doctors tools, firemen's equipment, etc.)

- Different clothing from different community helpers

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up on the floor.
- The teacher will explain that the students are given this time to explore the different community helpers, the outfits that they wear, the way that they act and the tasks that they are responsible for.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be photographs and notes of the students and how they were talking with each other and acting in their different roles.

Week 4

Lesson 1: Centers (Syringe Painting)

Goal(s):

- The students will be able to focus on seeing and using the tools a doctor uses.

Objectives:

- The students will correctly use the syringe.
- The students will learn to paint using the syringe.

Materials:

- Plastic Syringes
- Different colored paint

- Paper
- Smocks

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up on the table.
- The teacher will explain what a syringe is and how doctors use it.
- The teacher will explain that the students will paint whatever they'd like using the syringes and the different paint.
-

Assessment:

- The assessment will be informal notes and photographs of each student. The finished art projects will also be used as assessments.

Lesson 2: Centers (Hand Washing)

Goal(s):

- The students will learn the correct way to wash their hands.

Objectives:

- The students will wash their hands for the correct amount of time, when getting different substances on them.

Materials:

- Hand washing soap
- Glue

- Vegetable oil
- Dirt

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up near the sink.
- The teacher will explain that the students will be getting the different substances on their hands and will have to wash them long enough to get it all off.
- The teacher will explain that if you sing the “Happy Birthday” or “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” songs, that is the correct amount of time to wash.
- The teacher explains that the water needs to be warm to kill the germs that we have on our hands.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the informal notes and photographs of each student washing their hands with the different substances.

Lesson 3: Centers (Cover Your Sneeze!)

Goal(s):

- The students will use fine motor skills to pick up the cotton balls.

Objectives:

- The students will learn to cover their nose when they sneeze.
- The students will learn how germs spread when they don't cover their sneeze.

Materials:

- Different colored pom pom balls

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up on the table.
- The teacher will model what not covering you sneeze looks like.
- The teacher will take a big handful of a certain color pom pom, pretend to sneeze and throw the pom poms on the floor.
- The teacher will model picking up all the pom poms on the floor.
- The teacher will explain that the pom poms act as germs. Germs spread all over if we don't cover our sneeze.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the informal notes and photographs of the students.

Lesson 4: Centers (*My Trip To The Hospital* by Mercer Meyer)

Goal(s):

- The students will use prior knowledge to answer questions.

Objectives:

- The students will answer the open-ended questions correctly.

Materials:

- *My Trip To The Hospital* by Mercer Meyer
- Numerous open-ended questions ranging from easy to difficult

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up on the carpet.

- The teacher will read the story to the students.
- The teacher will ask questions throughout the story to each student.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the answers to the open-ended questions.

Lesson 5: Centers (*Whose Tools Are These?: A Look at Tools Workers Use- Big, Sharp, and Smooth* by Sharon Katz Cooper)

Goal(s):

- The students will use prior knowledge to answer questions.

Objectives:

- The students will answer the open-ended questions correctly.

Materials:

- *Whose Tools Are These?: A Look at Tools Workers Use- Big, Sharp, and Smooth* by Sharon Katz Cooper

- Numerous open-ended questions ranging from easy to difficult

Activities and Procedures:

- The materials will be set up on the carpet.
- The teacher will read the story to the students.
- The teacher will ask questions throughout the story to each student.

Assessment:

- The assessment will be the answers to the open-ended questions.

This unit's target audience is Kindergarten aged students, with or without disabilities. The age range can be anywhere from 3 to 6 years old.

Conclusions

This chapter focuses on the actual curriculum that I created for this project. The curriculum then focuses on all the different ways the theme community helpers can be integrated in all different subjects and assessments that will keep the students involved and engaged. As educators we need to engage the students with important information so that they are more apt to respond and remember what they are being taught.

The community helpers doesn't just have to be used at a Kindergarten level. This unit could easily be taught from Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) throughout 3rd Grade. It seems as if many of the young children today are unfamiliar with their community helpers and all that goes into becoming one. They are unaware of what uniforms that they wear, the tools that they use, the locations of each helper and the phone number to call. As educators, we want our students to be well equipped for what the real world might throw at them, including whom to call in a certain emergency. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the significance and limitations done regarding this topic, the differences and similarities between my findings and others, and the consequences or limitations of this unit.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

The previous chapter focused on the actual curriculum that I created for this project. The curriculum then focused on all the different ways that the theme of Community Helpers could be integrated into all of the different subjects and assessments that will keep the students involved and engaged. As educators we need to engage the students with important information so that they are more apt to respond and remember what they are being taught.

The purpose of this Curriculum Project is to go into depth with all that comes with the term “community helper.” It is to show the importance of all the different helpers in the community. It is to ensure that the students know who to call if something goes wrong, or they see something out of the ordinary, as well as what to do if, for example, they see smoke in their house. As Seefeldt (2001) noted, “Most early childhood educators now know the importance of planning experiences for social studies, or any other content area, that are integrated, meaningful, and of high interest” (p.2). Students should know all different aspects of the curriculum in different subject areas to attract students’ interests throughout their learning experiences.

Today, I see many young children, uneducated on many of the community helpers and what each and every one of them actually does. Wood and Judikis (2002) identified "six essential elements" of a community: 1) common purpose or interest among the group, 2) assumption of mutual responsibility, 3) acknowledgment of interconnectedness, 4) mutual respect for individual differences, 5) mutual commitment to the well-being of each other, and 6) commitment by the members to the integrity or well-being of the group (p.1). Educating our students that there’s so much more that goes beyond the word

“community,” dealing with their daily lives and how they interact with others is something that they can take away from school and use it for the rest of their lives.

The need for instruction on Community Helpers for Students with Disabilities (SWDs) is very important. For example, Lesson 3, the “Who Am I?” lesson, challenges students to remember certain characteristics about the community helpers and the jobs they are trained to do. Lesson 3 is also done after weeks of repetition so that the students are more than familiar with the certain words and descriptions of the community helpers. According to National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (2000), the primary goal of public education is to prepare students to be engaged and effective citizens” (p. 4). To reach that goal, the NCSS (2000) position statement titled *Creating Effective Citizens* explains that students “should participate in activities that expand civic knowledge, develop participation skills, and support the belief that, in a democracy, the actions of each person make a difference ... as they work to solve real problems (p.4). Students need to be exposed to different lesson material throughout the school year so they are well-rounded when it comes down to the knowledge needed to succeed.

Lesson 5, the “Dramatic Play” lesson, is allows students with or without disabilities to be able to use their imaginations. It allows them to be creative and challenges them to act in ways that the different community helpers act. This is consistent with the research of Maple (2005), who stated that, “What we must do is provide opportunities for children to be part of an endeavor that celebrates our ideals through cooperative group efforts, in which they strive to better themselves by developing the disposition to find things out and respect each other's individual differences and

talents”(p. 3). As educators, when we create different situations for our students to react to, it allows them to explore new ideas, not only individually, but as a community.

Whether it be with puppets or with the actual tools and clothing of the community helpers, students are able to interact with each other, act out certain situations they’ve seen or learned about and are able to become more comfortable with each and every community helper. In Lesson 5, “The Fire Extinguisher,” is an example of this kind of strategic instruction. The students are given different materials to build and create certain situations and get to act as the firefighters and put out the fires and react to those situations with their peers.

The first lesson of my unit, “Community Helpers Matching,” challenges the students to categorize different tools and materials into different bins that go alongside the profession. For example, the student picks up a toothbrush and puts it in the dentist bin. The students are able to see the different tools that the different community helpers use or are exposed to. The different tools also represent that each profession is different. Each community helper has a different job to do that somehow links to other community helpers that make the community run smoothly. This curriculum work corresponds the findings of the scholarship in the discipline. For example, Maple (2005) stated that, “Children need opportunities to function as part of a community of learners if they are to gain the skills and dispositions that lead to civic competence, and grow into contributing members of society” (p. 1).

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the community helpers unit doesn’t just have to be used at a Kindergarten level. This unit could easily be taught from Universal

Prekindergarten (UPK) throughout 3rd Grade, which results in few limitations dealing with the age that these criteria should be taught. This unit would only be taught in the early childhood settings or in the classrooms with students with disabilities. Other limitations would deal with money or materials. If the school district were a low-income district, it might be hard for educators to gain access to extra money in the budget to get the materials needed for the different lessons. The materials might also be hard to get into the classroom due to the fact of time and knowing different professionals to be able to gain access to the actual kinds of materials such as a fire hat or a police badge.

Another limitation might be getting the actual professionals to come into the classroom to talk to the students, or getting permission slips signed by the parents or guardians in order to allow their children to go to the different professional workplaces. Permission from the Principal or other people in charge may be timely and permission may get denied.

It seems as if many of the young children today are unfamiliar with their community helpers and all that goes into becoming one. They are unaware of what uniforms that they wear, the tools that they use, the locations of each helper and the phone number to call. As educators, we want our students to be well equipped for what the real world might throw at them, including whom to call in a certain emergency. The community helpers unit, if it were to become more popular, could be used in schools around the world. There are so many different opportunities for educators to educate their students of different ages. The lesson plans are almost unlimited. Teachers can incorporate different community helpers into almost any type of lesson throughout the school day.

With that being said, workshops could definitely stem from the community helper theme. The workshop could consist of different lesson plans that educators could use in their classrooms, the different types of materials that could be used for dramatic play, ways to better incorporate centers into the curriculum, or the stores or places that have the different types of materials where they can go. This curriculum has the potential to provide different ways to make the certain materials so if money is an issue in a school district, the educators would still be able to do the lessons but just in different ways. The workshop could even offer different professionals that educators can get in contact with to get the community helpers into their classrooms.

Concluding this chapter, it is important to see the importance of the extent of the lessons that we teach our children and the ways in which research can support each and every one of those lessons. Katz and Chard (2000) pointed to community ethos as an important benefit of the project approach. They wrote: Community ethos is created when all of the children are expected and encouraged to contribute to the life of the whole group, even though they may do so in different ways (p. 9). This chapter also touches back on the importance of giving students different opportunities to explore new topics in more than one lesson. Community is more than important to me, touching back onto the school that I work for. We all have each other's backs. We are each other's support system. We work with each other make the classroom run smoothly for our students. Modeling the term "community" allows our students, and all students, to see the importance of that word when we come to school each and every day. When we model the importance of community, and helping each other in the school community, it's just a

small piece of the whole cake, which we call the world, that we are all a part of to make it so the world runs as efficiently as possible.

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