**Inquiry Unit**

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| Topic:  **People and Work**  About the places in the local community where people work  That people choose their jobs |
| Rationale:    The eight experiences below will focus on answering the question, “What could I be when I grow up?” Children investigate different jobs/occupations through a variety of activities such as shared reading, dramatic play, and having members of their communities come into the class and share their expertise.  This topic has been chosen for two reasons. First, it gives children the opportunity to explore different jobs in their communities. It allows them to appreciate the people who do the jobs and to understand that there are many jobs that need to be accomplished. Second, it teaches them that jobs are personal choices, that there are plenty of job options available, and they can choose which they prefer.  Helping students prepare to go out into the world is an important part of a teacher’s profession. As the Department of Education and Training (DET) (2007, p. 2-1) tells us, “the early years provide a critical foundation for lifelong learning and the acquisition of life skills... needs to be... connected to young children’s worlds and their community experiences”. |

**Inquiry Framework Experiences and Strategies Resources**

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| Planning | Whole class experience | *‘Mystery Feely Boxes’*  The purpose of this experience is to introduce and build anticipation for the topic. It is also used to delve into prior knowledge and come up with new questions (Murdoch, 1998).  Description:  A set of objects related to various occupations will be placed inside a box. Students will come up and try to guess what the object is by reaching in and feeling the object and by asking questions answerable by ‘yes’ or ‘no’ . They will also be encouraged to describe what they are feeling (Murdoch, 1998). This activity may be integrated into the English learning area, as it allows children to use the language effectively in listening, asking, and answering questions. | * A box * Stethoscope * Hammer * Police badge * Rolling pin * Paint brush |
| Conducting | Whole class experiences | *‘Shared Reading and Guided Reading Experiences’*  As part of the conducting phase, the purpose of this experience is to provide new information.  Description:  Books about different occupations, job descriptions, work places, and tools used will be read. Teacher and students interact. This experience may be integrated into the following Learning Areas:   * English- teacher models the reading experience and allows children to participate in the process * History and Geography- the books (see Appendix 1) have specific themes related to the different learning areas. | Books (see Appendix 1 for the complete list)  Internet printable booklet   * Alphabet Occupation (see Appendix 2) |
| *‘Ask an Expert’*  The purpose of this experience is to allow students to ask questions (further stimulating their curiosity about different occupations) and to gather more information about different jobs people do and how they go about it (Murdoch, 1998).  Description:  Students will write letters to invite ‘experts’ in different fields as guests for the day and to ask them to bring ‘tools of the trade’. Students will get the opportunity to interview and, if possible, play with the tools and work outfits they have brought. This will be recorded through pictures. Letters of thanks will be written and sent to the guests (Murdoch, 1998). This activity may be integrated into the English learning area as children practice Literacy by asking questions and writing letters. | * Human * Props from work * Pencils * Writing Paper * Camera |
| Small group experiences | *‘Think, Pair, Share’*  This activity will be used to record information for later use (Murdoch, 1998).  Description:  Students will think and brainstorm about different occupations they already know (in addition to those inside the box and from the stories). They will then group into threes and share ideas with partners. They will write/ draw ideas on strips of paper and post them on a bulletin board (Murdoch, 1998). This activity may be integrated into the English learning area as it allows use of the language and writing. | * Paper strips * Pencils * Crayons * Sticky-tape |
| *‘Classifying’*  As part of the conducting phase of this inquiry, this activity will be used to gather and record data. It also allows students to share and reflect on their experiences (Murdoch, 1998).  Description:  Working in groups, resources related to certain occupations are shown and classified according to roles they play, where they work, and tools they use. These are presented in a data chart. This activity can be integrated into the Mathematics learning area as students construct and analyse their chart (Murdoch, 1998). | * cut-outs/ photocopies from magazines and books * Pictures from ‘Ask an Expert’ day * ‘think, pair, share’ paper strips * Chart paper * Sticky tape |
| Processing and Translating | Whole class experiences | *‘Dramatic Play’*  The purpose of this activity is to revisit and explore information students have gathered and to have hands-on experiences that allow them to reflect on and explore their feelings related to the inquiry (Murdoch, 1998).  Description:  Using drama and role-play, children will be given a chance to act-out an assortment of jobs for a day. Different areas in the room will be set up and filled with costumes, tools and other items from various occupations (adapted from Cox, 1999).This activity may be integrated into the English learning area as children will be given the opportunity to use the language in listening and speaking. | * props for different occupations |
| *‘The ABCs of Occupations’*  The purpose of this activity is to allow children to represent and record information gathered.  Description:  A book of occupations will be created. Every student will get a chance to write/ draw an occupation and its description for each letter of the alphabet. This will then be affixed together and placed in the class library (adapted from Young, 2003). This activity may be integrated into English and the Arts as it allows writing and visual arts expression through drawing. | * paper * Coloured pencils * Crayons * Stapler |
| Applying and Communicating | Whole class experience | *‘Putting Me in the Picture’*  The purpose of this activity is for students to apply what they have learned during their investigations. It allows for linkage between their two ‘worlds’- school and home (Murdoch, 1998). It also allows students to “see themselves in relation to the topic they have been investigating” (Murdoch, 1998, p. 116).  Description:  Students will apply what they have learned by drawing what they could be in the future. They will also complete the sentence stem (see Appendix 3), cut them out, and glue on a craft stick.  To communicate their output, a ceremony will be conducted. Family members will be invited to the classroom. Children will present their drawings and reasons why they chose that particular occupation. They will then ‘plant their future’ by inserting their flowers into the ‘Garden of the Future’ box (CAM Multimedia, Inc., 2003).  This activity may be integrated into the following Learning Areas:   * The Arts- allows self-expression through visual artwork * English- allows for speech and communication of ideas | * Paper * Coloured pencils * Crayons * Flower Print-out (Appendix 3) * Craft sticks * Garden of the Future (shoebox decorated with foam and slots to insert each flower) |

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| Teachers play a very important role in facilitating children’s growth and development. They have to plan and create an environment that encourages optimum learning and discovery. To be able to do this, they have to take into account the best ways children gain knowledge. Thus, the eight experiences described above were chosen because the writer believes that those strategies promote successful learning and are based on sound theories.  The main consideration for planning the experiences was the children’s stage of development. At about two to seven years old (K/PP), children are considered as preoperational thinkers. This means that their knowledge is based on concrete objects or things they can see, hence, having materials in activities that can be touched and manipulated is an important consideration when planning for this developmental stage.Moreover, the preoperational child learns through modelling. Having teachers and other adult’s model appropriate reading and writing strategies and arranging for brief demonstrations serve to guide children in learning (Morrison, 2008).  Another consideration was allowing children to actively participate in their learning. Piaget considers hands-on experiences as the foundation for thinking and learning. Together with this, play is considered as a primary way of active involvement. It has several purposes, one of which, is that it “enables them to try out roles” (Morrison, 2008). This is supported by DET (2007), who contend that “Children’s learning and development is supported and stimulated by play, use of hands-on, concrete materials and ICT”.  Play not only gives opportunities for language and cognitive development, but for social competence as well (Fromberg, 2002). DET maintains that “Social skills influence cognitive learning... and provides the foundation for later learning in Civics and Citizenship and the development of values”. Accordingly, the inclusion of group and collaborative work was an important part of planning for the activities. |

***Part 4***

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| From this Inquiry (What could I be when I grow up?), a variety of social actions could emerge, allowing children to support community groups at the school level.  One way is for children to show appreciation for jobs done in their communities and the people who do them. Something as simple as writing letters or drawing pictures for the workers demonstrates support. Another social action would be to assist fundraising activities by work groups (such as Transperth staff - Radio Lollipop Uniform Free Day).  Active citizenship is definitely an important part of teaching Society and Environment as we are very much a part of a multicultural society that advocates a ‘global perspective’. In Active Citizenship, not only do students get to explore their world, they also get to CHANGE it. |