

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 453 499

CG 030 991

AUTHOR Shapiro, Ronald G.  
TITLE What's My Job? An Effective Career Orientation Program for Middle School Students.  
INSTITUTION International Business Machines Corp., White Plains, NY.  
PUB DATE 2001-00-00  
NOTE 43p.  
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)  
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS Career Development; \*Career Exploration; Experiential Learning; Learning Activities; \*Middle School Students; Middle Schools; Program Development; \*Role Models

## ABSTRACT

This publication offers a career awareness program for middle school students that engages them in activities designed to stimulate conversation about various careers. The program attempts to provide students with information that will help them develop an interest in pursuing a career. It encourages students to observe, listen, and learn about careers from family and other people. The activity is tailored after a television show called "What's My Line," where contestants ask questions of panelists to ascertain what they do. In this model students ask questions of a guest to learn about and ultimately guess what career they represent. The activity provides an engaging way for students to learn about careers, and to hear from parents and a variety of adults about their employment. By listening to others, students learn which questions to ask to gather information about different careers. (JDM)

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# What's My Job?

## An Effective Career Orientation Program For Middle School Students

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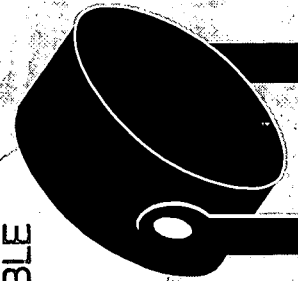
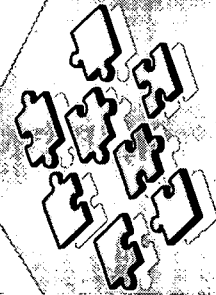
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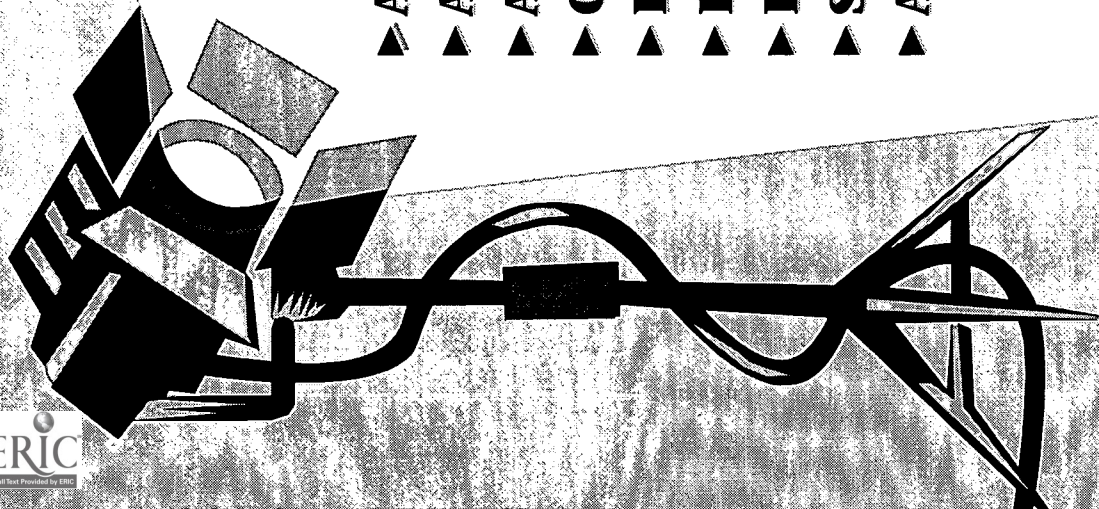
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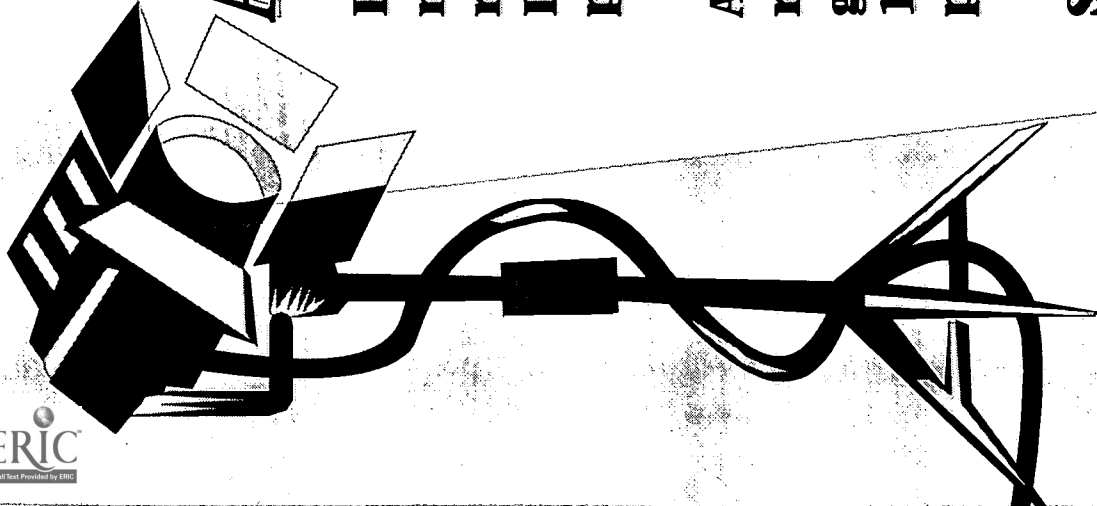
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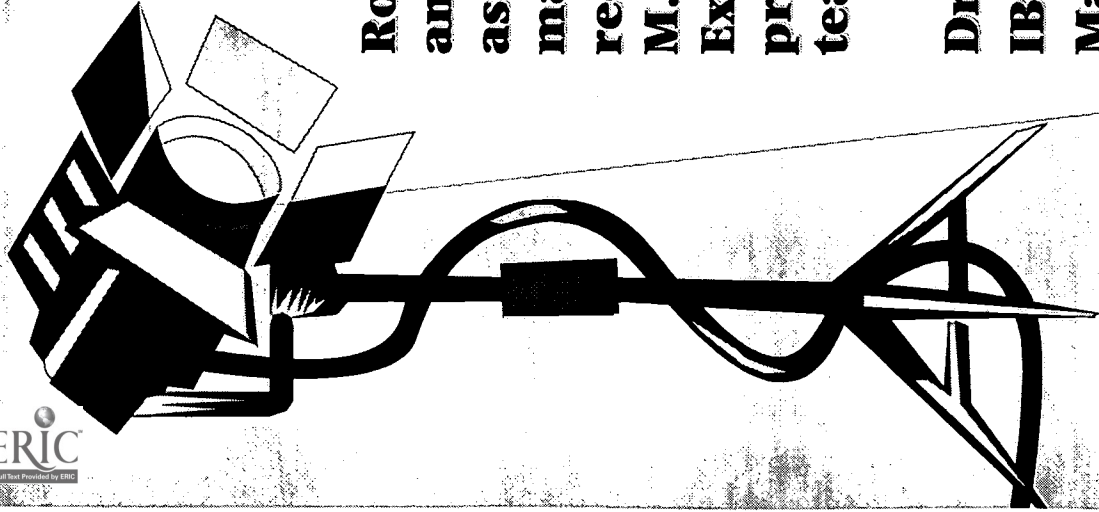
# **Abstract**

**Do you need to organize a Career Day or Night for your local middle school or youth organization? Are you the person responsible for coordinating a "Bring Your Child To Work Day" program for your business? If either case, this presentation is for you!**

**An effective and engaging format in which students are required to discern the job responsibilities of a series of guests is presented. While the format was motivated by the 1950's and 1960's television show "What's My Line?" the exact process and rules of the program are not identical.**

**Students seem to be very interested in the session, asking numerous questions. When asked informally if they enjoyed the event and if they learned a lot the answers to both questions were unanimously "Yes."**

**Note: "What's My Line?" is a Trademark of Mark Goodson Productions, LLC, Santa Monica, CA**



# About The Presenter

**Ronald G. Shapiro, Ph. D. is the Program Manager for Skills and Employee Development for IBM Software. In previous assignments, Ron served as a Human Factors Professional, a manager, and the IBM Coordinator of Human Factors. Ron received his B. A. from the University of Rochester and his M. A. and Ph. D. from The Ohio State University in Experimental Psychology. He taught at Denison University prior to entering industry, and has held numerous adjunct teaching assignments.**

**Dr. Ronald G. Shapiro**

**IBM**

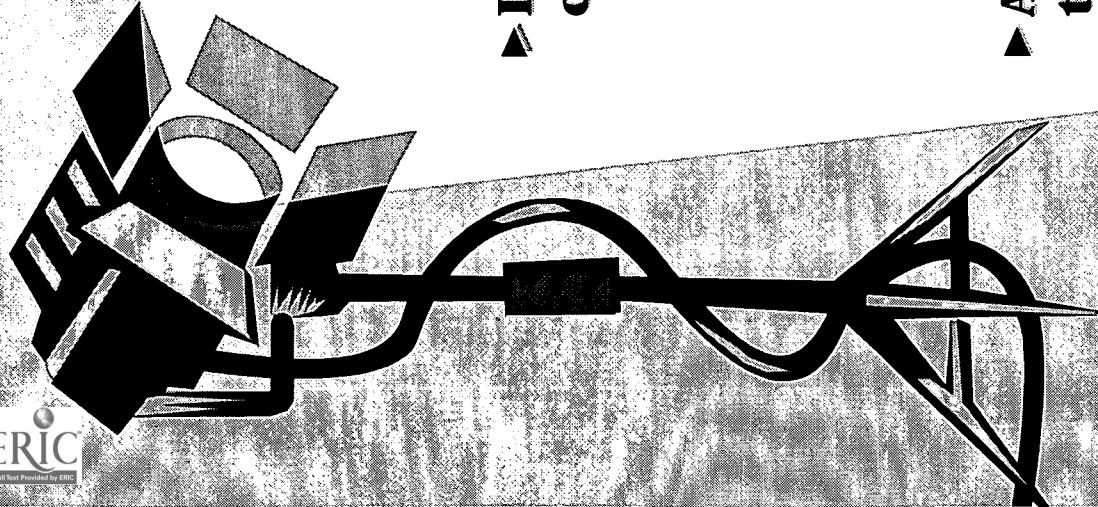
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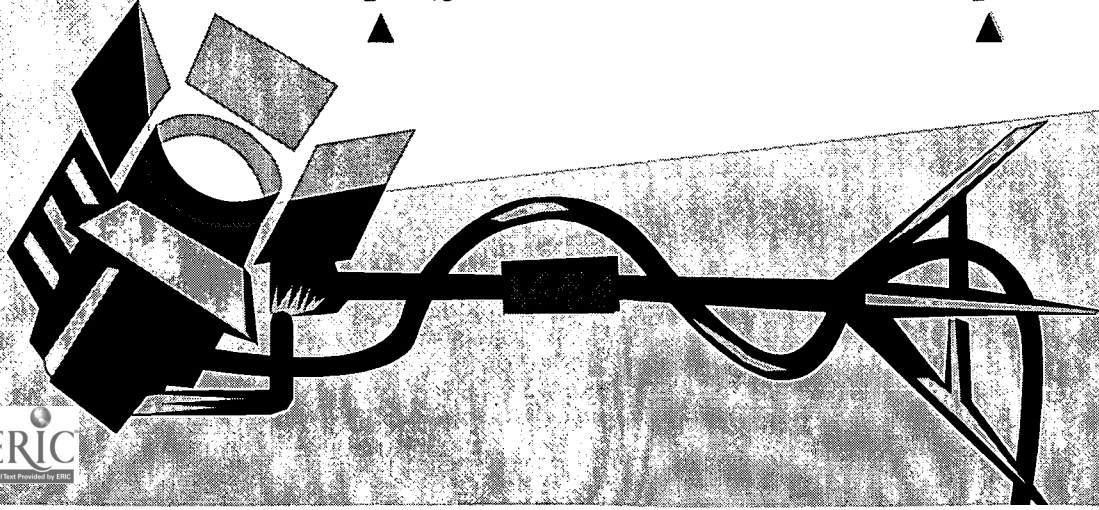
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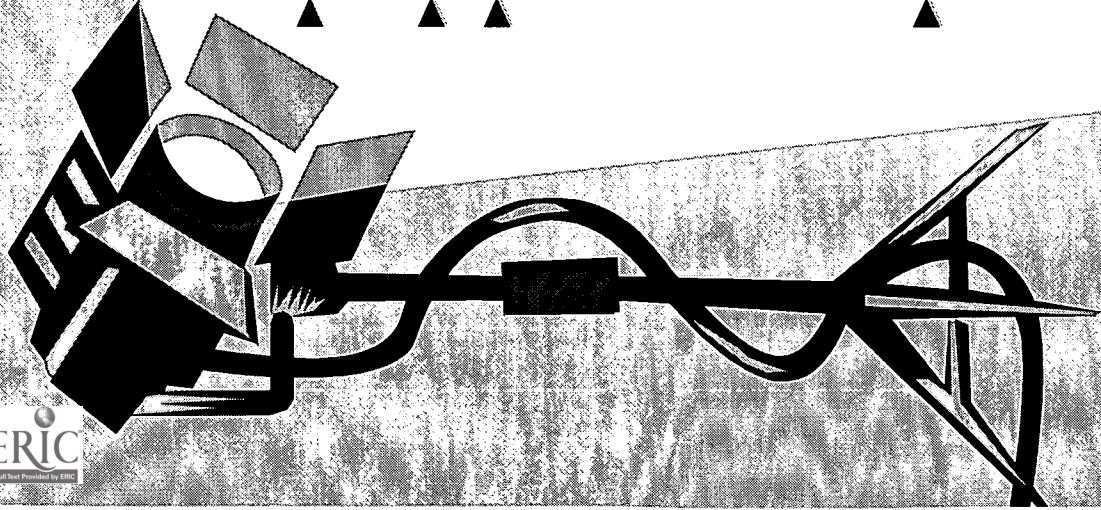
# Acknowledgments

- ▶ I would like to thank the following people for helpful comments:
  - ▶ Eileen Masselli
  - ▶ Morgan O'Brien
  - ▶ Raquel Shapiro, Ed. D.
  - ▶ Pat Tate
  - ▶ IBM Somers 2001 Bring Your Child To Work Day Program Student and Adult Participants
- ▶ Appreciation is extended to Christina Clark for permission to include her photographs and the photographs of her daughter Jennifer in this presentation and to Andrea Borgelt for taking the photographs.



# Objectives

- ▶ **The objectives of an effective career orientation program are to:**
  - **Provide students with meaningful information so that they can develop interest in pursuing a career.**
  - **Motivate the students to work to pursue the career.**
  - **Specify a career path that is both meaningful and understandable to the students.**
  - **Encourage the students to observe, listen, network, and learn about additional careers from family, friends, and other people they interact with in their daily lives.**
- ▶ **To achieve these objectives one needs:**
  - **Excellent content.**
  - **A format that will engage the students.**
- ▶ **"What's My Job?" seems to achieve these objectives.**



# Requirements

- ▶ **An effective "What's My Job Program" should be about an hour to an hour and a half in length.**
- ▶ **There should be three to four panels during that time frame.**
- ▶ **For each panel arrange to have an adult guest who:**
  - **Has an interesting career which cannot be differentiated easily by a single obvious question like "Do you sell cars?"**
  - **Is not known to the students (except for one mystery guest who is the parent of a student. Students must not know in advance whose parent is participating).**
  - **Is an engaging presenter.**
- ▶ **Each guest professional (except the mystery guest) will:**
  - **First introduce themselves but they do NOT say what they do for a career... For example they may talk of a hobby, or their last vacation, or their kids... This gets the students interested in the Guest as a person.**
  - **Answer "YES"/"NO" questions from a panel and the audience.**
  - **At the conclusion of the panel explain their career, and provide an understandable career path that is meaningful to the students (10 minutes).**



# Procedure

- ▶ Arrange seating for students auditorium style, in front of the room (on stage) you will need:
  - A table with four chairs for the "panel."
  - A chair for the guest professional.
- ▶ As the program begins introduce yourself, display and explain the "Rules of the Game" from Appendix A to the students. Answer questions, if any.
- ▶ Select a panel of four students from the audience. A mix of volunteers and calling on people (perhaps the next person to have a birthday) works well. Seat the panelists.
- ▶ Invite your first guest to come into the room and introduce themselves for 2 to 3 minutes. The key points to cover here concern the "human" side of the individual. This helps to engage the students and to see "work/life balance." the students become interested in the Guest as a person.
- ▶ Administer job related question/answer part of the game based upon the rules shown. If time allows after the panelists have run out of questions allow a few questions from the audience.

# **Procedure** (continued)

## ▶ **Administering job related questions (continued)**

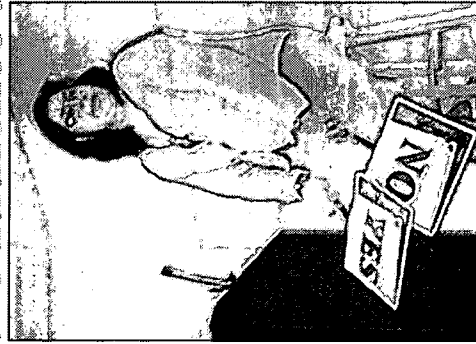
- **Examples of appropriate questions:**
  - ▶ **Do you sell?**
  - ▶ **Do you answer the telephone?**
  - ▶ **Do you write computer programs?**
  - ▶ **Do you type?**
- **Examples of inappropriate questions that would not be answered for the panel:**
  - ▶ **Are you a sales person?**
  - ▶ **Do you report to a vice president?**
  - ▶ **Do you know John Doe?**
- ▶ **Display the multiple choice Career Choice Selection page (sample in Appendix B).**
- ▶ **Panel and audience attempt to identify guest's job.**
- ▶ **Panelist talks about their job for 10 minutes to:**
  - **Provide students with meaningful information.**
  - **Motivate the student to pursue the career.**
  - **Provide a meaningful career path.**
- ▶ **If possible, offer a small gift to the guest and panelists.**
- ▶ **Repeat the last 6 steps for one or two additional panels.**

# Procedure -- Mystery Guest

- ▶ **The final panel of the day is the Mystery Guest panel. The objective here is to help motivate the students to observe, listen, network, and learn about additional careers from family, friends, and other people they interact with in their daily lives. This is done by allowing the students to discover the gaps they have in understanding their own parent's career -- and how much better they would have performed without these gaps.**
- ▶ **Display Appendix C: Mystery Guest Rules.**
- ▶ **Call the four preselected panelists to the front of the room. One of the panelists is obviously the son or daughter of the "mystery guest." The other three panelists are preselected based upon parents having a career that is somewhat similar to the mystery guest's career (if possible). Seat the panelists at their table, and blindfold them.**
- ▶ **Bring the mystery guest into the room, calling them "Mystery Guest, not by name of course..."**
- ▶ **Provide the mystery guest with two signs, a "YES" sign (Figure 1) and a "NO" sign (Figure 2).**

# Procedure -- Mystery Guest (continued)

- ▶ Panelists ask the mystery guest questions. Since the objective of the exercise is to teach understanding about what people do, not who they know or what industry they may be in, all questions must be job task but not specific product or person related.
  - In the Mystery Guest Activity it is especially important to be certain that only job related task questions are answered. Otherwise, a student might solve the problem by merely asking an irrelevant question such as do you know Bill V. Jones -- knowing that Bill is their parent's friend, but not knowing anything about work.
- ▶ After the panel asks all of their questions you might allow the audience to ask a few questions of the Mystery Guest.

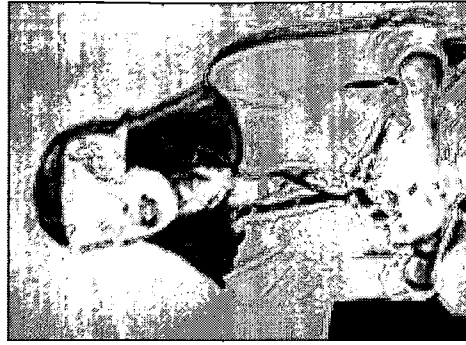


**Mystery Guest:**

**Christina Clark (left)**

**Panelist:**

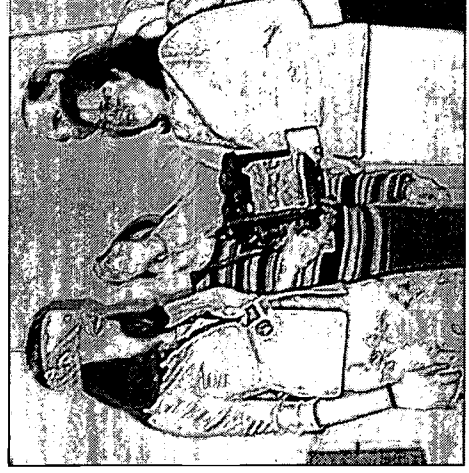
**Jennifer Clark (right)**

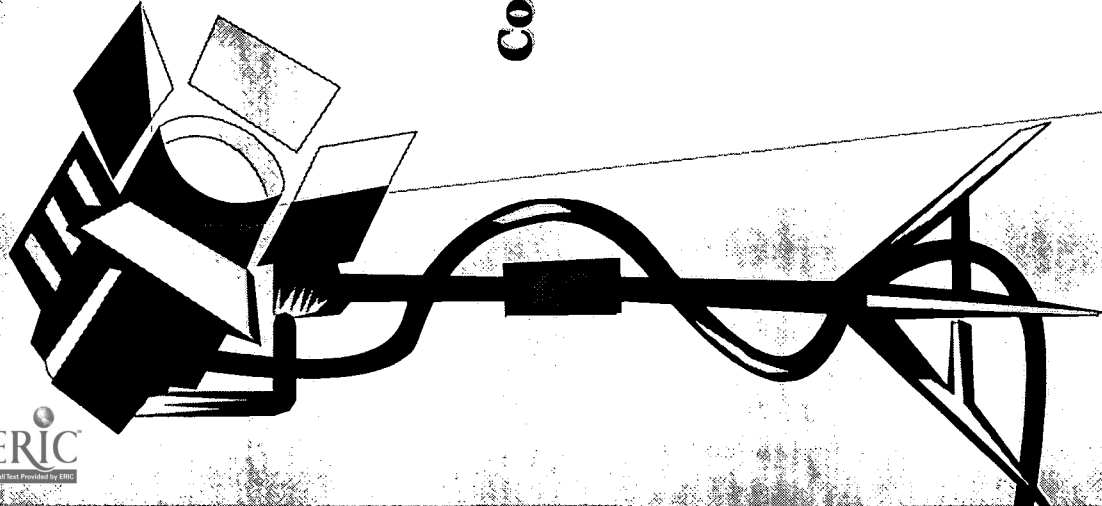


# Procedure -- Mystery Guest (continued)

- ▶ Upon concluding the questions, ask each of the panelists: "Is the mystery guest one of your relatives?" If they say "yes", ask the relationship (e.g., mother, father...).
- ▶ Ask the audience to vote as well. Disclose the identity of the mystery guest.
- ▶ Typically, panelists have not been correct in identifying their parent and/or panelists have claimed as their own a parent that is not theirs. A productive discussion on the valuable information on careers that students may be able to learn from parents and others follows. Indeed, this "eye-opening experience" that sons and daughters could benefit from knowing a lot more about their parent's careers follows.
- ▶ Ask mystery guest to discuss their career for 10 minutes.

**Panelist Jennifer Clark presented with a gift from the "Mystery Guest" (her mother) at IBM Somers Bring Your Child To Work Day April 26, 2001.**

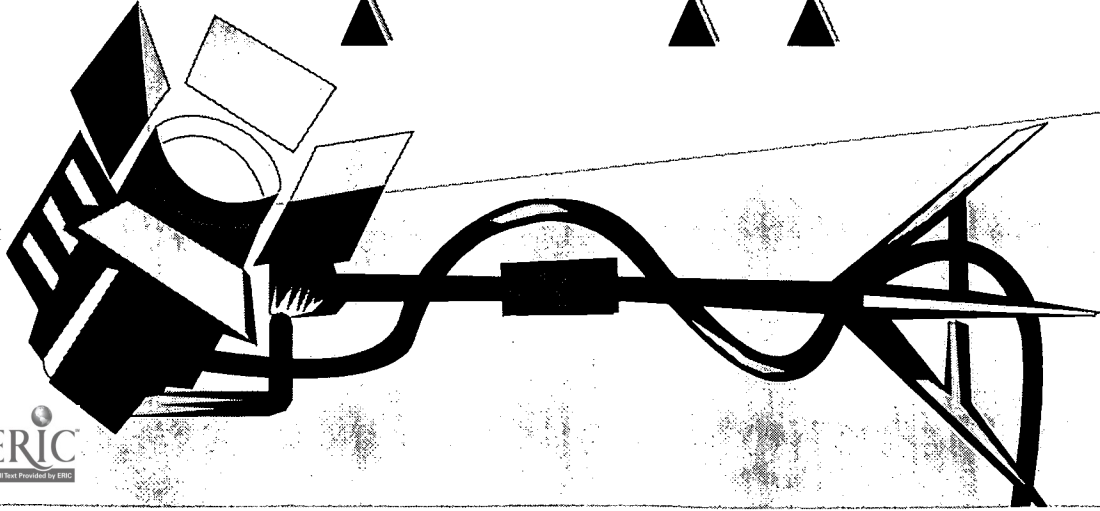




# Summary

**Conclude the session by asking the following questions:**

- **What careers did we learn about today?**
- **What can our parents teach us about careers?**
- **What questions are you going to ask your parents and relatives about their career?**



## **Appendix A:**

### **Rules Of The Game**

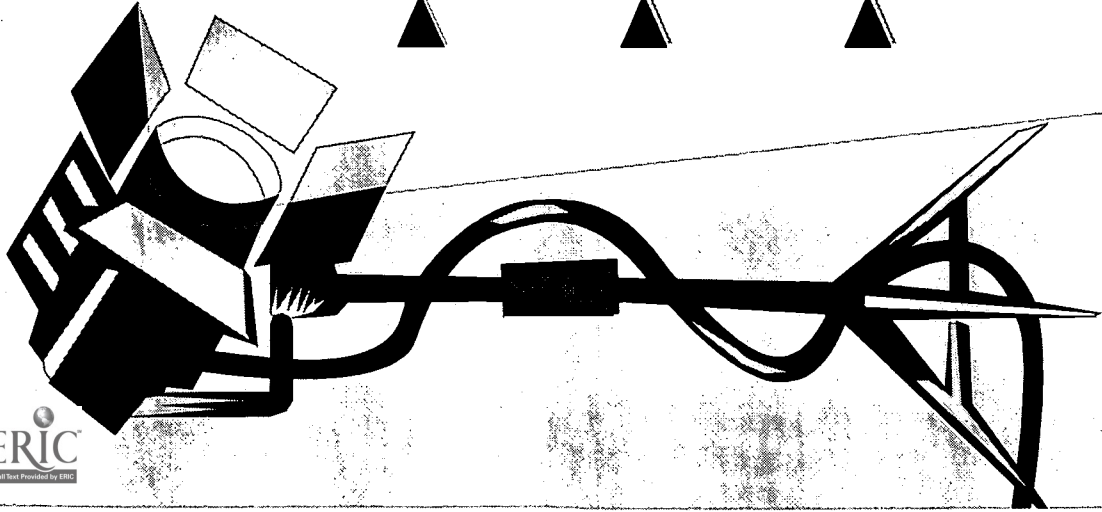
- ▶ **I will select panelists to come on stage. Who would like to volunteer for Panel # 1?**
- ▶ **Our guest will then appear.**
- ▶ **The panelists will have the opportunity to ask the guest "yes" /"no" questions for five minutes.**
- ▶ **The questions MUST be about job related tasks.**
- ▶ **All of you need to listen very carefully.**

# Appendix A:

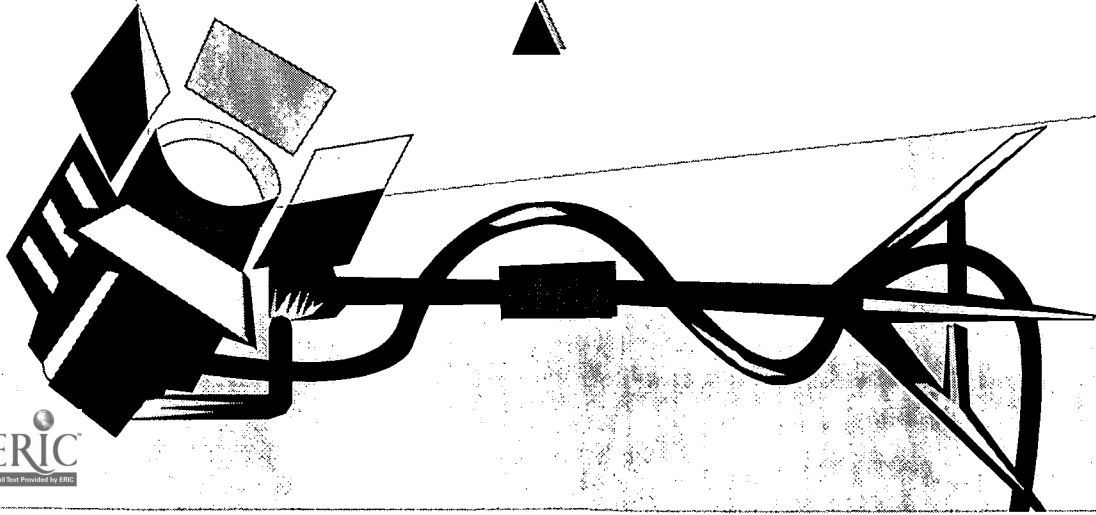
## Rules Of The Game

(continued)

- ▶ **You will see a multiple choice question about the guest's job.**
- ▶ **You will vote for what you think the guest's occupation is.**
- ▶ **The guest will tell us if we were correct and tell us a little about her/his job.**
- ▶ **We will play this game two or three times this morning, and we will play the mystery game.**







# **Appendix B:**

## **Sample Career Choices**

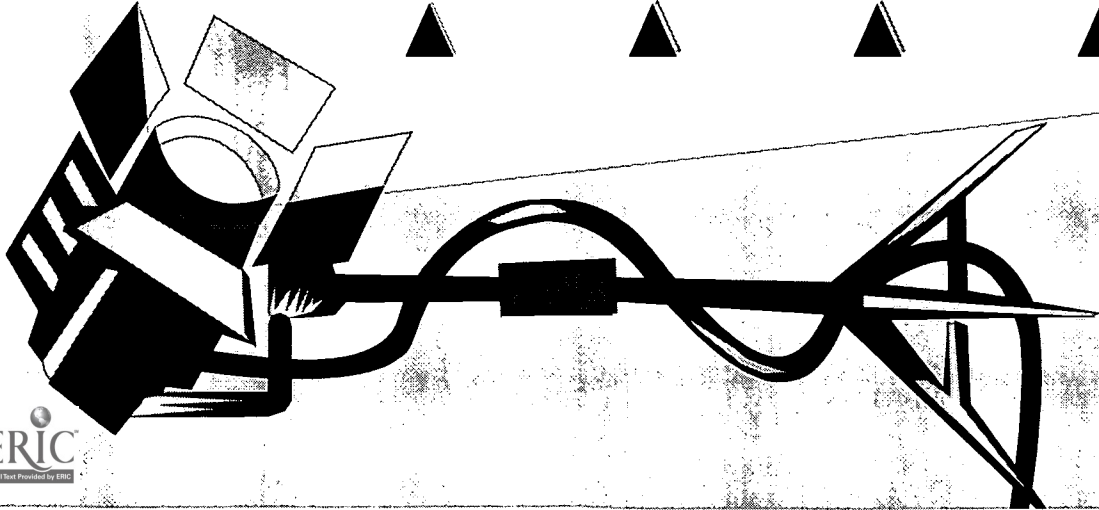
- ▶ **Melinda is a:**
  - **Secretary**
  - **Teacher**
  - **Software Engineer**
  - **Technical Manager**

# Appendix C

## Rules --

### Mystery Guest

- ▶ **I have already selected panelists to come on stage.**
- ▶ **The panelists will be blindfolded.**
- ▶ **Our Mystery Guest will then appear.**
- ▶ **The panelists will have the opportunity to ask the guest "yes"/"no" questions about the work they do for five minutes.**

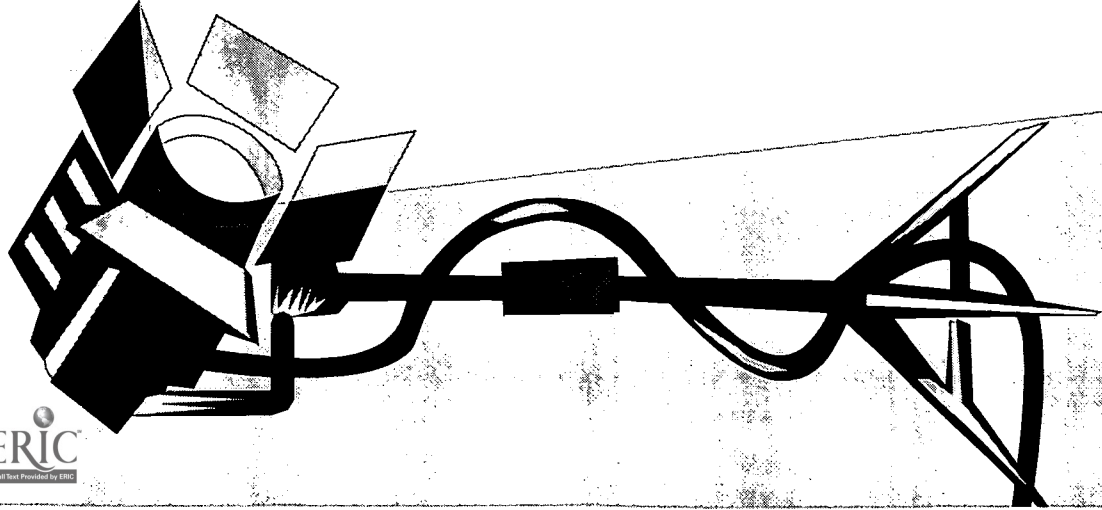


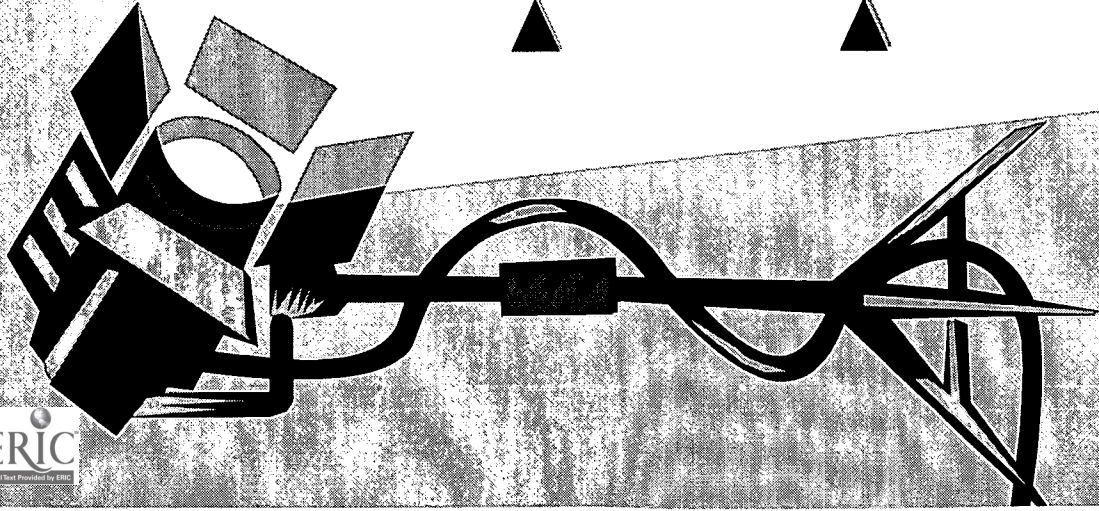
# Appendix C:

## Rules --

Mystery Guest (continued)

- ▶ **The Mystery Guest will answer the questions by holding up the "Yes" or "No" sign. I will read the answer to the panel.**
- ▶ **Each panelist will then be asked to tell us if the mystery guest is their relative. If so, which one.**
- ▶ **The audience will also vote**





# Appendix C:

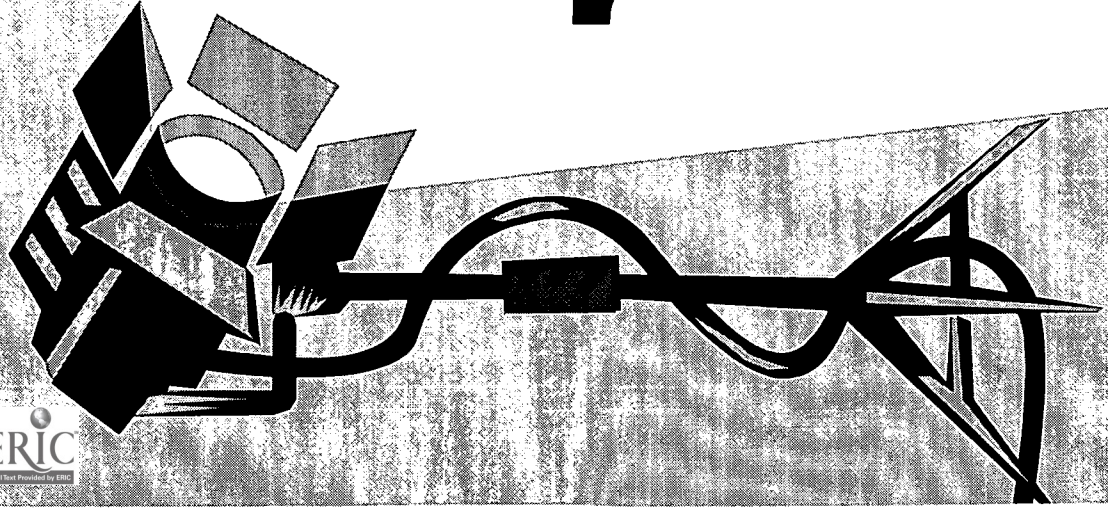
## Rules --

Mystery Guest (continued)

- ▶ **The guest will tell us which panelist is their relative and the relationship.**
- ▶ **We will discuss:**
  - **What our panel did that was effective in identifying their relative.**
  - **What our panel did that interfered with their ability to identify their relative.**

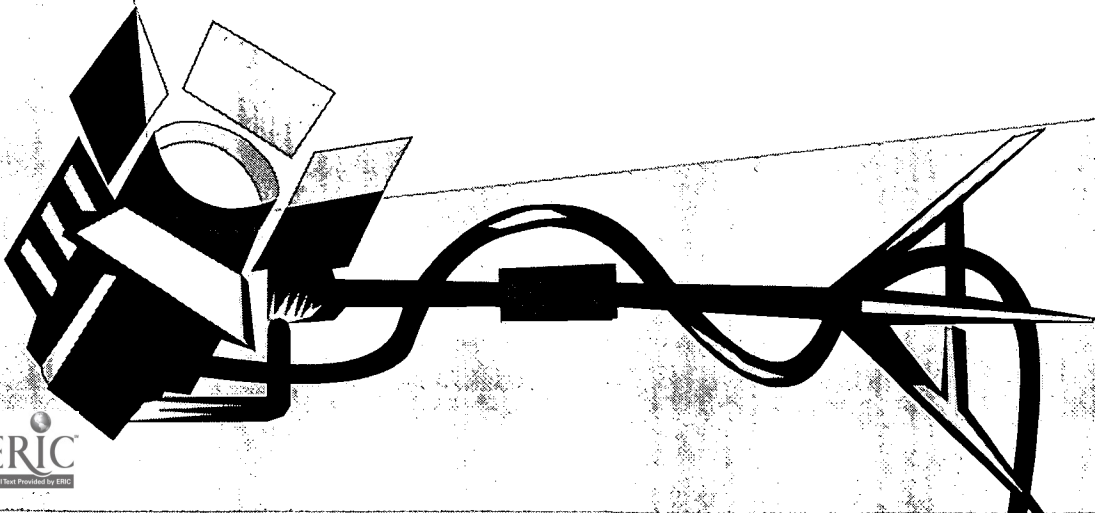
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