

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 469 196

CG 031 937

AUTHOR Shapiro, Ronald G.  
TITLE Mom and Dad: An Untapped Source for Career Information.  
INSTITUTION International Business Machines Corp., Poughkeepsie, NY.  
PUB DATE 2002-10-01  
NOTE 7p.  
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)  
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS \*Career Choice; \*Career Exploration; \*High School Students; High Schools; \*Learning Activities; Parent Role; \*Parent Student Relationship

ABSTRACT

Obtaining and evaluating career information is a beneficial activity for high school students. Although a potential source of this information is parents, students do not necessarily have meaningful career discussions with their parents. An activity, "That's My Mom" / "That's My Dad" was developed to encourage more parent-student career decisions. In this activity, high school students attempt to identify which individual on a panel is their parent, based upon asking questions about what they do at work. As students participate in this activity they tend to realize that having additional career dialogs with their parents is a good idea. The author suggests using this activity as part of a Career Day or Night for a company, local high school or youth organization. (Author)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made  
from the original document.

# Mom and Dad: An Untapped Source for Career Information

by

Ronald G. Shapiro

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

---

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

2

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND  
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS  
BEEN GRANTED BY

*R. SHAPIRO*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

# **Mom and Dad: An Untapped Source For Career Information**

**Ronald G. Shapiro, Ph.D.**

**IBM**

## **Abstract**

Obtaining and evaluating career information is a beneficial activity for High School Students. Although a potential source of this information is parents, students do not necessarily have meaningful career discussions with their parents. An activity, "That's My Mom" / "That's My Dad" was developed to encourage more parent-student career discussions. In this activity, high school students attempt to identify which individual on a panel is their parent, based upon asking the panelists questions about what they do at work. As students participate in this activity they tend to realize that having additional career dialogs with their parents is a good idea. If you need to organize a Career Day or Night for your company, local high school or youth organization this activity may be for you!

## **Introduction**

Students need to make a number of career related decisions during the high school years. For example, they may need to decide whether to take advanced math and science courses in high school, whether to enroll in a summer science program or select a job which may offer the opportunity to earn money. They may also need to decide what college or university to attend, and what major to select.

Career programs sponsored by schools, local industries, and community service organizations can provide students with valuable information to facilitate their decisions. Parents and

Copyright (C) 2002, International Business Machines Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Permission is granted to copy and distribute this paper without alteration, provided that the work is distributed without charge and provided further that copies bear all notices contained in the original, including attributions of authorship, copyright notices and this notice.

Distributed by: U. S. Department of Education Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

relatives provide another potential source for career information, however this source remains at least partially untapped. I have noted this through:

- being asked career questions from high school students which their parents could have answered more effectively than I
- observing middle school student inability to identify their parent in the “What’s My Job Mystery Guest” (Shapiro, 2001a) activity. (In this activity, middle school students (blindfolded) need to decide if a mystery guest is their parent by asking a series of “Yes” / “No” questions about the work the mystery guest does.)

I have also noticed that after participating in the “What’s My Job” activity students have stated that they need to talk more with their parents. Thus, the activity is successful in encouraging more parent-student career dialog with middle school students.

Working from the successful track record of “What’s My Job” and hypothesizing that high school students also need encouragement to talk with their parents about careers, I developed a similar activity for Career Explorations (Shapiro, 2001b), a High School students program. Typically some parents attend Career Explorations along with their students. Thus, the current objectives were to:

- Develop a program sufficiently challenging, interesting and enjoyable for high school students and their parents
- Involve as many of the parents as possible in sharing some career information with the students in attendance
- Encouraging students to communicate more with their parents.

The current activity “That’s My Mom” / “That’s My Dad” was developed to meet these objectives. In this activity high school students attempt to identify which individual on a panel is their parent based upon asking the panelists questions about what they do at work.

## Procedure

### Selecting Student and Adult Participants:

1. Four students and their parents are selected to be contestants. The activity can be made more or less challenging by selecting parents with relatively similar or relatively dissimilar careers. All are brought up on the stage.
2. The students are blindfolded and seated in a random order on one side of the stage.
3. To make the task more challenging, after the students are blindfolded, an additional adult with a career relatively similar to that of the other adult panelists is also selected.
4. The five adults are seated in random order on the other side of the stage.
5. Four of the adults (three parents plus the additional adult) are assigned a number. One of the parents is not assigned a number and is excused from the panel.
6. Students are told that three of their parents and one other adult from the audience were selected to be on the adults' panel.

### Explaining the Rules:

1. Students may ask the adult panelists any "Yes" / "No" question that relates to what they do at work, such as "Panelist # 1: Do you conduct meetings?" or "Panelist #2: Do you always use a cell phone at work?" Students are not allowed to include people's names or job titles in their questions -- as these are more related to whom people know, not what they do.
2. A given question may only be asked of one panelist in the entire game.
3. The adult panelist questioned answers by nodding "Yes" or "No" (or holding up a "Yes" or "No" sign.). The moderator announces whether the answer was "Yes" or "No" (providing the question falls within the rules of the game).
4. Each student panelist is called upon to ask one adult panelist a question. After all students have asked one question of the adult panelist of their choice, a second round of questions begins. This process continues until the student panelists run out of questions.

5. Once the student panelists run out of questions each student panelist is asked to identify their parent.

**Additional Activity:**

At the conclusion of the activity, the parent panelists might each be asked to describe their work for five or ten minutes.

## Results

None of the participants were able to identify their parents based upon asking career relevant questions. Prior to our instituting Rule 2 (above), “A given question may only be asked of one panelist in the entire game,” one student successfully identified her father by asking each panelist the identical question about cell phone usage, suspecting that most of the parents would respond affirmatively but that her father would respond negatively. As the student said “I did not know too much about my dad’s job, other than he doesn't leave his cell phone on.” To eliminate this strategy we instituted Rule 2.

A second student was able to select her parent through another method, not completely associated with asking questions. This student eliminated two of the panelists through asking career relevant questions, but she could not determine which of the two remaining panelists was her parent. To give her an opportunity to complete the task successfully, we had her identify her parent by handshake. She was immediately successful at this task.

## Discussion

“That’s My Mom” / “That’s My Dad” encourages parent/student dialog on careers. In an unsolicited comment one of our parents said “I appreciated your program and approach - it did start a dialog between my daughter, Erin, and I about my job and other possible job opportunities she could consider. Interestingly, our son who is younger, heard some of these discussions and also got in on these talks” (Sean C. Ryan). Erin Ryan, in her review of this article, said “I had a fun time playing and did want to find out more about what he did afterwards. I think it is a good idea to let other people use the activity to get them more interested in what their parents do.”

Based upon comments such as those from Sean and Erin Ryan and the presenter's observations this activity is recommended as an opening to career programs offered to high school students in a variety of settings including industry, community groups, and schools.

### **Note**

I would like to thank Dr. Raquel Shapiro, a Professor at Rhode Island College, Erin Ryan, a student at Sacred Heart High School in Greenwich Connecticut, Karen Knight, the manager of Executive Communications at IBM, and Andrea Knight, a student at Somers High School in Somers New York, for helpful reviews of this paper.

### **References**

Shapiro, R. G. (2001a). *What's My Job? An Effective Career Orientation Program For Middle School Students*. Somers, NY: IBM. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 453 499.)

Shapiro, R. G. (2001b). *"Career Explorations": An IBM Outreach Program for High School Students and "From College To Career": An IBM Outreach Program for College Students*. Somers, NY: IBM. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 458 500.)

### **About The Author**

**Ronald G. Shapiro, Ph.D.** is the Program Manager for the IBM Technical Learning Curriculum. Ron received his B.A. from the University of Rochester and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Ohio State University in Experimental Psychology. Ron has taught psychology at the university level and presents regularly at professional psychologists' and educators' conferences, and to various high school and college student groups. He was recently elected as a fellow in the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society. Ron's email address is [RSHAPIRO@US.IBM.COM](mailto:RSHAPIRO@US.IBM.COM).



**U.S. Department of Education**  
 Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)  
 National Library of Education (NLE)  
 Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)



# REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

## I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Title: Mom and Dad: An Untapped Source For Career Information |                                   |
| Author(s): Ronald G Shapiro, Ph. D.                           |                                   |
| Corporate Source: IBM   | Publication Date: October 1, 2002 |

## II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to each document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified documents, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

**1**

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

**2A**

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

**2B**

OK  Level 1

Level 2A

Level 2B

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only


Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.  
 If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate these documents as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.



Sign  
here, →  
please

|  |  |                                 |
|--|--|---------------------------------|
| Signature:<br> | Printed Name/Position/Title:<br>Ronald G. Shapiro, Ph.D.<br>Program Manager IBM Technical Learning Curriculum<br>Consulting Human Resources Professional |                                 |
| Organization/Address: IBM<br>2455 South Road, Mail Slot P101<br>Poughkeepsie, NY 12601         | Telephone:<br>845 433 3146   | FAX:<br>Call before sending Fax |
|  | E-Mail Address:<br>RSHAPIRO@US.IBM.COM   | Date: October 1, 2002           |

### III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, or, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of these documents from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of these documents. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

|                        |
|------------------------|
| Publisher/Distributor: |
| Address:               |
| Price:                 |

### IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

|          |
|----------|
| Name:    |
| Address: |

### V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse: | <b>ERIC Counseling &amp; Student Services<br/>University of North Carolina at Greensboro<br/>201 Ferguson Building<br/>PO Box 26171<br/>Greensboro, NC 27402-6171</b> |
|---|---|