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The Monterey Model for
Micro Business Special Education

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Abstract

The following program description, literature review, and theoretical bases demonstrate the andragogical soundness of the

two projects and a club of the Monterey Adult Transitions Program. the Bistro Project began as a suggestion of an Associate Superintendent, who ran a similar project in the Boston area. The Greenhouse Project began as a proposal of the author, who ran an agriculture class project in the San Mateo area. Both projects are funded by donations of the author for equipment and supplies and with no increase in salaries or fixed costs incurred by MPUSD. The Young and Able Club is a proposed student activity club under the auspices of Monterey Peninsula College beginning in spring 2010, and will receive funds from Monterey Peninsula College and require none from MPUSD. Both projects and the club are revenue positive for MPUSD in both the short and long term.

The Monterey Model for Micro Business Special Education

“Ability will never catch up with the demand for it,” advised publishing mogul and one-time presidential candidate Malcolm Forbes in a paraphrase of the ancient Chinese sage, Confucius (Zera, 2005, p.1). Ancient Egyptian deity Osiris taught the people of the Nile the

ability to make their own tools and to grow their own food so they could become independent (Bullfinch, 1979, p. 293). The main goal of the micro business special education curriculum of the Monterey Adult Transition Program (MATP) is for students to learn entrepreneurial ability—ability that creates independence. This curriculum follows the adult developmental theory of Daloz (1999) and the adult learning theory of Dewey (1938), and his many followers.

The Monterey Adult Transition Program

The Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD) serves approximately twenty moderate to severe adult special education students hosted at the Monterey Adult School (MAS) Casa Verde campus. Two credentialed special educators and seven classified instructional assistants staff the Monterey Adult Transition Program. Students range from 18 to 22 years of age and include such special education eligibility categories as autism, Down's syndrome, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, dandy walker syndrome, orthopedically impaired, visually impaired, and hearing impaired. MATP has historically included a vocational training component primarily categorically funded by a Workability I Grant award (Kilty, 2009). MATP components added or proposed during the 2009/2010 school year include (a) the Bistro Project, (b) the Young and Able Club, and (c) the Greenhouse Project all as part of a new micro business special education curriculum.

The Bistro Project

The Bistro Project began in August of 2009 at the suggestion of an Associate Superintendent, who ran a similar project in the Boston Area. The project is essentially a modified bake sale offering grilled hot dogs and hamburgers on campus for donations. The first

Bistro Project event netted a profit of \$13 in donations, and the second event \$31. The main goals of the project are (a) for MATP students to learn micro business skills, (b) for MATP students to mainstream with other MAS students, and (c) for MATP students to raise funds for the Greenhouse Project.

The Young and Able Club

The Young and Able Club is a proposed student activity club under the auspices of Monterey Peninsula College (MPC). The author initiated the Young and Able Club and it will begin in the Spring semester of 2010 when the author joins the MPC adjunct faculty and can serve as the club's advisor. The club will allow the MATP students who are concurrently enrolled at MPC to access college funds and college facilities. This access will also allow the MATP to move its Bistro Project from the MAS campus, with a daytime population of less than 200, to the MPC campus, with a daytime population of over 2000. The main goals of the club are (a) for MATP students to learn organizational skills, (b) for MATP students to mainstream with MPC students, and (c) for MATP students to raise funds for the Greenhouse Project. The club will receive funds from the MPC Student Activities Council and require no funds from MPUSD.

The Greenhouse Project

The Greenhouse Project began in September of 2009 with the purchase of an 18 by 36 foot by 12 foot high greenhouse. The MATP special education students participated in the planning and the assembly of the greenhouse frame. Volunteer students from California State University Monterey Bay assisted in placing the plastic cover over the structure in November of 2009. Construction of the greenhouse is scheduled to complete in December of 2009 so seeding

can begin in January of 2010. The current plan is to grow tomatoes, strawberries, and herbs to sell at the Carmel Farmer's Market, which re-opens for the season in May. The main goals of the project are (a) for MATP students to improve and practice their micro business skills, (b) for MATP students to mainstream with other Monterey County residents, and (c) for MATP students to raise funds for the classroom supplies, activities, and equipment. As with the Bistro Project, this project was funded by donations of the author toward supplies and equipment with no increase in salaries or fixed costs incurred by MPUSD.

Theoretical Bases of Micro Business Special Education

101 guilds mentored workers of 101 different trades in Paris in the year 1260 (Brentano, 1969). In the European guild system, apprentices advanced to craftsmen, then journeymen, the masters, and finally, grand masters. Learning a trade in the guild system was based almost entirely on the experience of working in the trade itself. Much of Western vocational and professional education since 1260 borrows from the mentorships and experiential learning of the guild system. Indeed in the modern era, credential candidates serve student teaching stints, medical students participate in residencies, and law school students typically serve internships and clerkships to complement and culminate their academic studies with practice in the field.

Relevant Adult Developmental Theory

“The defining task of the late teens and the early twenties is to move into the adult world and become accepted on its terms” (Daloz, 1999, p. 53). Proper adult transition curriculum should help to transform teens from a self-centered perspective as defined by Kegan's (1994) second order of consciousness into Kegan's third order of consciousness of mutuality in

relationships (p.28). The world's last Yahi, and California's last "wild" native-American, Ishi, learned each of his adult skills by experience (Starn, 2004). Fire-starting, bow-making, hunting, skinning, and fishing were all part of the boy-to-man education that Ishi experienced during what Levinson et al. (1978) refer to as the Early Adult Transition Period between adolescence and adulthood. For an indigenous native-American, this was vocational training, and Ishi's tribal elders designed the training to begin in his early adult transition period. The tribal elders offered this essential early adult learning through experience.

Relevant Experiential Learning Theory

"All genuine education comes about from experience" (Dewey, 1938, p. 13). Bishton's (1958) article, "Why Experience is the Key to Learning," applies Dewey's concept of experiential learning to special education populations. Hayes' (1969) symposium presentation, "Work Experience Programs: Innovations in the Junior College Curricula," adds to Dewey's work a description of the value of young adults leaving campus for community vocational training opportunities. Claus' (1989) report, "Renegotiating Vocational Instruction," recommends including entrepreneurship in vocational training programs as a means of delivering the educational experience Dewey describes. More recently and more importantly, The World Bank (Johanson & Adams, 2004, p. 109) took Dewey's experiential learning theory to Africa in its "enterprise based training" for Sub-Saharan youth, and The University of Portland Micro Business Marketing Project (Peterson & Albertson, 2006) sends marketing students out into the world to start their own micro business as a class project that helps to develop the social integration in vocational special education touted by Storey and Certo (1996), also building on

the experience as genuine learning theory of Dewey.

Implications for the MATP

Daloz' (1999) narrative developmental theory offers a broad framework for adult transition curriculum. Dewey (1938) and his followers, however, offer more specific applications to micro business special education and inspire us to prepare adult transition students for adult life through such real world experiential learning opportunities as the Bistro Project, the Young and Able Club, and the Greenhouse Project of the MATP. In conclusion, MATP students deserve the two projects and the club to enjoy, at least, one year experimental status due to (a) their strong scientific research basis, (b) their successful beginnings, and (c) their positive revenue flow for MPUSD.

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