5-2002

Learning Through Meaningful Work: The Post Office Job at City & Country School

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Science in Education/Master of Education
Bank Street College of Education
2002

Abstract

This independent study is a description of the Post Office job at City & Country School. The school runs a jobs program for children ages eight to thirteen years old (third - eight grades). The eight year old group runs the school Post Office. Chapter 1 presents an introduction to City & Country School. Chapter 2 discusses the Post Office job and its development through the course of a school year. Chapter 3 discusses the developmental orientation of the jobs program. Finally, chapter 4 raises other topics for discussion, including the possible sociopolitical implications and subject integration issues involved in this type of program. This study is presented in both print and electronic format. In the electronic version, there are two video clips available for viewing. An internet browser and Windows Media Player are needed to view the electronic version.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction to City and Country School

History of City and Country School

The history of City and Country began many years before the official opening of the school. It began with the birth of Caroline Pratt in 1867 in Fayetteville, New York. Pratt began her teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse in her hometown at the age of sixteen. After eight years of teaching, she enrolled in Columbia University's Teacher's College. It was in a Kindergarten course at Teacher's College that Pratt, for the first time, "questioned seriously our accepted method of teaching children" (Pratt, 1948, p. 10).

Objecting to the popular practices of the time employed in teaching Kindergarten, which Ms. Pratt interpreted as a means for social control rather than education, she abandoned her Kindergarten training and, on the advice of the Dean at Teacher's College, switched to a program in Manual Training. While this program seemed to sit better with Pratt, it was not long before she was questioning these practices as well.

Caroline Pratt's first job after attending Teacher's College was as a Manual Training teacher at the Normal School for Girls in Philadelphia. It was here that she first put her new training to the test, a Manual Training system that she had already begun to question. The system called for the teaching of a sequence of skills to be learned for the sake of the skills, without concern for the objects to be made. During this time she proved, at least to herself, that the sequence of skills she was taught did not seem accurate or useful in practice and that there seemed to be no harm done in learning these skills in a different sequence and, perhaps, with different intent.

Pratt experimented with shifting focus away from the individual skills that she had been instructed to teach to the act of constructing something useful, with the skills needed for the construction learned along the way. It was also in Philadelphia that Caroline Pratt found a small library devoted to liberal thought and run by Helen Marot, who would later be known for her work with the Women's Trade Union League. It was at this library that she began to recognize the need to shift perspectives on the duty of education and schools from being an end in themselves to seeing them as a beginning.

> Listening to these people, many of them graybeards, as they argued and studied, I began to see education not as an end in itself, but as the first step in a progress which should continue during a lifetime (Pratt, 1948, p. 14)

In her last year in Philadelphia she began to help Helen Marot in an investigation of custom tailoring trades for the U.S. Industrial Commission while she taught half-time. It was here that Pratt seemed to acquire a new perspective on education and it's relation to the outside world as she notes, "Helen and I often discussed the futility of trying to reform the school system, if after leaving school human beings had to earn their living under such conditions as these" (Pratt, 1948, p. 15). She began to think that, "a school's greatest value must be to turn out human beings who could think effectively and work constructively, who could in time make a better world than this for living in" (Pratt, 1948, P. 15).

After the conclusion of this study over the course of one year, Pratt and Marot moved to New York City, where they would live together for the next thirty nine years until Marot's death in 1940. Pratt's affiliation with Marot helped her to form her new theories on education, grounding her in the conditions of women and children in the world outside the schools. Marot worked on investigating child labor and women's working conditions,

playing active and important roles in the New York Child Labor Committee and the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) until 1913 when she resigned and became a, "full-time writer, publicist and editor, devoted to socialist reconstruction of society" (Antler, 1987, p. 237).

School and Curricula

When Pratt moved to New York, she found employment at two settlement houses and one private school, while she also worked part-time for the Women's Trade Union League with Marot. It was at this time that Pratt had another revelation that would later help to define City and Country. She observed a friend's six-year-old son's construction of a railroad system from blocks, toys and other materials. She saw this as the child, "setting down his understanding of the way things worked, the relationships of facts to each other, the causes and effects, the purposes and functions" (Pratt, 1948, p. 19). Her observations of this six-year-old boy along with her experiences as a Manual Training teacher, where she concluded that more meaningful learning occurred when the action of the classroom was purposeful and based on the interest of the children, formed the pedagogical foundation for what would become her great educational experiment.

With this pedagogical framework, along with her orientation to society and social change, Pratt formed an experimental school for five-year-olds, which was initially to run for two months, that would seek to prove and refine her theories.

The experiment was funded by a WTUL colleague, Edna Smith, and took place in a room at the settlement school of the Hartley House in the spring of 1913. After the two-month trial, the school was expanded with the continued support of Smith to a three-room apartment on the corner of West 4th and West 12th Streets in Greenwich Village. The school was, at this time, called the Play School. When the time came for the school to expand, Smith, Pratt and Marot rented a small house on West 13th Street that they would use for living and for the school. Pratt struggled with expanding her program to older age groups because she found most parents reluctant to keep their children out of public school at the ages when they would normally be taught the three R's. Because of this, the population of the older groups mainly consisted of the children of writers and artists, who seemed to be more accepting of this type of education, a phenomenon that is still somewhat true today. The Play School's location turned out to be a fine choice of neighborhoods given these needs, as the beginning of

Pratt's school coincided almost exactly with the beginning of Greenwich Village's development into "the nation's testing-ground for cultural experimentation" (Homberger, 1994, p. 134).

In November, 1913, Pratt was introduced to Lucy Sprague Mitchell. The two were immediately impressed with each other and would eventually have profound effects on each other's lives. Their relationship would produce a vastly expanded school led by Pratt, along with the foundational experiences for Mitchell that would later give birth to several education-related institutions.

In 1915, after the Play School had been operating for a couple of years in it's modest home, Mitchell came to Pratt to propose a plan for expansion. The Mitchell's had recently purchased a large brownstone on Washington Square and Mitchell thought that it would be a perfect setting for the Play School. In October of 1916, Pratt moved the school to the Mitchell's residence. The school ran out of the Mitchell's converted stable on MacDougal alley and the children used the Mitchell's yard for outdoor play. As the Play School expanded, the Mitchells continued to give up parts of their home. This began a long relationship of financial support from Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Mitchell soon came to be a teacher at the school, where she honed

many of her own theories on education. Mitchell also sent her children to the school. Mitchell would later recount that her experiences at City and Country, and with Pratt, allowed her to form her own theories of education at a tremendous speed. Mitchell would go on to form many education related institutions, including the Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE). At the BEE Mitchell began a teacher education program in 1930. With this new program, the BEE needed larger quarters and moved to 69 Bank Street in Greenwich Village. This institution would come to be called Bank Street and eventually developed into what is now Bank Street College of Education and the Bank Street School for Children.

In 1921, the Mitchell's moved to two new buildings on West 12th and West 13th Streets and the Play School moved with them. In the years preceding the Play School, Pratt had designed and created curriculum materials to support her view of children's learning. She added wooden unit blocks and scaled wooden people and animals to the crayons, paper, and clay used in early childhood settings. The unit blocks Pratt designed remain a basic material in the curriculum of early education in the United States. In addition to the unit blocks which were used in the classroom, Pratt also designed larger hollow blocks for

building outdoors. As children studied life in the city, from stores in the neighborhood to grand structures like the Brooklyn Bridge, they used unit blocks to recreate their trips to these locations. In discussions, sharing ideas and space, building together, children worked hard to make sense of their world. It is interesting to note that all sides of the hollow blocks, designed by Pratt, were closed. By doing this, the blocks were heavier, requiring children to work cooperatively. The design of the hollow blocks offered children an opportunity to experience an idea - the concept of cooperation - an idea that was essential to Pratt's view of society.

As the school grew in physical size, new groups of older children were added. It was in this setting that the first group of eight-year-olds clamored for a change from the blocks based curriculum of the earlier years. With the help of the VIIIs teacher at the time, Nell Moore, and the VIIIs, the jobs program was created at the school. With this first group, their job was that of the school store, a rather sizable undertaking for children of this age. As they graduated to the IXs it was decided that the job would travel with them. The next year's VIIIs now needed a job and they found it in managing the internal correspondence of the school, as the school post office.

The children would not, of course, be allowed to do just anything as a job. There were, and are, strict requirements for a job at City and Country. The most important differentiation between this jobs program and the job curricula of other schools lies in their quality as "real" jobs. That is, the jobs at City and Country are required to perform an important function within the school. These are not made-up jobs created for the sole purpose of putting whatever academic agenda has been decided upon into a context. Rather, these jobs are truly integral to the functioning of the school, needful and useful. Along with a "real" job the students are given the opportunity to experience all of the drama of a regular job, both good and bad, as this is an integral part of any job. Of course, because City and Country is, after all, a school, the academics are by no means ignored. A job, no matter how "real" it may be, is not acceptable unless inherent to it is real academic learning appropriate for the age, along with possible venues for further curriculum development.

As the School grew and City and Country added new age groups, finally ending at the XIIIs, or eighth grade, the creation of jobs for each of these groups, VIIIs - XIIIs, became the next challenge. Jobs have changed over the

years, seemingly because they became obsolete (i.e. no longer a service to the school). For example, the XIIs were, for a while the toy makers for the lower school groups. Additionally, the XIIIs were once the photographers for the school, providing records of classroom activities and documentation of teaching practice as well as photographs for the City and Country yearbook.

As City and Country school grew in size after moving to the buildings on 12th and 13th Streets, it became necessary to file incorporation papers with New York State. It was this action that formalized City and Country as a Teacher Cooperative. In 1924, City and Country filed for provisional incorporation with the state of New York, as a Membership Corporation. In this corporate structure, employees who were employed by the school for one year were elected to become members of the corporation. While this process still continues, it now exists on a more symbolic level as City and Country is no longer a teacher cooperative. However, it still remains as a membership corporation, in which the lone power of the members is control over the By-Laws of the corporation. The Board of Trustees holds all other power.

There are accounts of Pratt being an almost tyrannical leader of this institution, with accusations of never

accepting another's idea unless it sat long enough that Pratt forgot whose suggestion it was and assumed it as her own (Pratt, 1948, p. 179). However, the structure of the school as a membership corporation was much more inclusive. This structure consisted of five charter members of the corporation, all teachers including Lucy Sprague Mitchell, and an annually elected Board of Directors. The staff of the school, being extraordinarily identified with the school's philosophy and mission, assumed large amounts of the administration of the school with work on subcommittees and a share in the stresses that a privately funded school typically faces, including economic hardship. More than once the teachers at City and Country have either taken pay cuts or deferred their salaries in order to keep the school functioning. However, it should be noted that for a few of the teachers at City and Country, their salaries were not their primary form of financial support.

It was the philosophical stubbornness, or leadership depending on your perspective, of Pratt, along with her lack of concern in much of the administrative details of running the school, such as the ordering of coal and maintenance of the building, along with Pratt's refusal to adhere to a school budget that began to cause a division between herself and Mitchell (Antler, 1987, p. 245).

Eventually, this would result in the breakup of their partnership and Mitchell's consequent formation of Bank Street College of Education and School for Children. Lucy Sprague Mitchell ceased teaching at City and Country in 1928 and ended her direct financial relationship with the school in 1931 when she sold the buildings in use by City and Country to the School at a significantly discounted price. However, Mitchell did remain on the Board of Directors until 1937 (Antler, 1987, p. 301).

City and Country at Present

City and Country still operates from the two buildings on West 13th and West 12th Street in Greenwich Village. The buildings are connected by two yard areas, one for block building and one for games. This setup allows for easy access between the buildings and a common shared community space linking the buildings.

A major difference between the school at present and its roots is the tuition structure. In its earlier days, "tuition never even remotely covered expenditures" (Antler, 1987, p. 245), the difference being made up by the significant contributions of Lucy Sprague Mitchell, among others. However, at present, tuition is the major contributor to the expenses of the school, thus suggesting

a much higher tuition rate and therefore a significant change in the general socio-economic makeup of the student population. This suggests a gradual shift from what were commonly working class families in the school's earliest years, to a more middle class, and now more affluent families at present, though there remains a strong element of artists in the parent body.

There are eighteen groups in the School ranging from ages two through thirteen. The School is divided into three divisions, the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools. The Lower School consists of children ages two through seven, with each age having two groups except for the IIs and VIIs, which have three and one respectively. The Middle School consists of children ages eight to ten, with one group for each age. The Upper School consists of children ages eleven to thirteen, with one group for each age. Class sizes are relatively small with classes ranging from twelve to about twenty students.

Each group is named by age, rather than grade and are referred to using roman numerals. Therefore, the eight year olds, who would normally be referred to as third grade, are referred to as the VIIIs. In this paper, I will refer to the group studied as they are at City and Country, the VIIIs.

The school population totals approximately 255, with 165 in the lower school, 43 in the middle school and 47 in the upper school. The population is about 46% male and 54% female.

The early teachers at City and Country were many times historical experts, social workers or others of a non-teacher training background, where the law allowed, due to the Pratt's belief that these individuals were better equipped to provide the kind of education City and Country offered. However, the present teaching population consists largely of graduates of teacher education programs. Many of the teachers have received their education from Bank Street College of Education, where the program and theories explored are quite similar to City and Country's philosophy. There are typically two teachers in each of the Lower School classrooms and often in the Middle School classrooms with an occasional second teacher in one of the younger Upper School groups. Usually the two teacher classrooms have a head teacher and an associate or intern teacher, although there are occasionally co-teacher configurations, depending on the size of the group and the experience of the teachers. The teacher population is, at present, a relatively young group with many in their twenties and thirties.

While in its earlier years City and Country had but one administrator, the Principal, there is now a three person administrative team consisting of the Principal, the Director of the Lower School and the Director of the Middle/Upper School. While there is still a good deal of teacher involvement in the decision making process of the School and there are numerous committees and subcommittees with teacher representatives, including the Board of Trustees, the primary power now lies less with the teachers than with the administrators of the school and the board of directors. This represents another major shift at City and Country. While there is still a strong legacy in the running of the school from its days as a teacher cooperative, this is no longer the formal structure of the school. At present a more traditional system is in place, primarily due to the assumption that the current structure makes for more prudent business decisions, therefore providing some needed financial stability to the school and helping to insure its existence in the future.

This study was compiled over two years with two different groups of VIIIs at City and Country School. There were a total of thirty-one students, thirteen the first year and eighteen the second. Both groups were fairly even along gender lines.

Community

I would certainly be remiss in discussing any activity at City and Country without talking about the context in which it is performed: the school community. As Caroline Pratt, the founder of City and Country, said, "It would be next to impossible to talk of any aspect of the school's work without reference to the social experience which is automatically a part of it; as in life itself, the individual is always both an individual and a member of a group" (Pratt, 1948, p. 168). In thinking and reading about community and how it could be defined, I observed three major factors that are needed in order to form a community: proximity, communication and shared experience. These three factors in combination are what turn mere groups of people into viable communities.

A group can, however, possess both proximity and communication and still not form a community. It is shared experience that provides the litmus test for a community. "It is not 'bare association' that will endow significance or meaning to a community, nor mere physical proximity. It is the sharing of activity. It is in doing together, in

the sharing of hopes and aspirations, in participating toward a common end that communities are created and sustained" (Cuffaro, 1995, p. 26). Without common experience, there can only be group acquaintance and casual or prescribed relationship. However, with the introduction of the concept of shared experience, the group then starts to develop an identity unto itself, one that is different than the sum of its members. They begin to not only share separate experiences and communicate with one another, they start to realize a shared common purpose, one that will enable them to see the needs of the group as worth considering in relation to their own needs. At the point of achieving shared common purpose, there then exists both the members of the group individually and the shared identity of the group, individuals who have experienced something in concert with each other, talked about it and found a common purpose. With this greater identity, we can now refer to the group as a community, for now this group has a character unto itself. It is this factor of shared common purpose that stands out at City and Country, specifically in the jobs curriculum.

The condition of shared common purpose is, perhaps, the central characteristic of education at City and Country and the foundation of the Social Studies based curriculum.

While, in other settings, content of the curriculum might be the sole focus of energy for a classroom, at City and Country it is clearly that of group experience, curriculum flowing out of that shared experience. The jobs program, and specifically the Post Office job, is, in fact, a structure that is in place to provide opportunities for its participants to experience shared common purpose. There are, of course, many social, psychological and academic advantages to this program that will be discussed later in this paper, but at its core, the Post Office provides a large common purpose shared by the group and is, therefore, a major defining characteristic in forming the classroom community. Indeed, it is such a large experience that it is a defining characteristic of the group (i.e. the VIIIs "are" the Post Office).

Naturally, as a school, there is not a goal of forming just any community in our classrooms. Because City and Country is an educational institution, there is great energy put into creating a community that will be responsive and appropriate for educational purposes. Both shared experiences and communication are examined in this context to insure not only that they are experiences of educational value, but also that the communication around those experiences is of educational value. The VIIIs are

not the Post Office because of any whimsical reasoning, they are the Post Office for educational purposes, social and academic.

Inevitably, a major challenge for any community is in conflict resolution. After all, a community can have supreme intentions, but can easily be hampered and rendered ineffectual if there are no mechanisms for the resolution of conflict. Often groups at City and Country spend major chunks of class time on this very issue. Since the classrooms at City and Country are focused on community and the major studies of the group are done with a common goal in mind, the major vehicle for the control of the classroom is, in fact, the group itself. In this setting, "the primary source of social control resides in the very nature of the work done as a social enterprise in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute and to which all feel a responsibility" (Dewey, 1938, p. 56). Conflict resolution and classroom management in this context occurs as a reaction from the group, who have a collective and powerful desire to succeed in their common purpose. Constructive dissent is valued in the group and much energy is channeled into hearing other opinions. In sharing their experience of designing the Post Office, the VIIIs discover that the best ideas sometimes come from the most unlikely

places. However, the group also becomes sensitive to time constraints and working efficiently. Therefore, there is a distinct interest in resolving conflicts that are no longer constructive. In these cases, the group directs the resolution with the teacher acting mainly as a facilitator for the discussion. Fundamentally, the common goal, in this case the formation and operation of a functioning school job, provides a naturally structured environment in which the need for resolution of disputes is felt in relation to the larger goal. The group therefore has a vested interest in finding effective and satisfactory methods of resolution in which, "those who take part do not feel that they are bossed by an individual person or are being subjected to the will of some outside superior person" (Dewey, 1938, p. 53). It is out of the social control and conflict resolution activities that one begins to see a democratic model entering the classroom sociology. In these contexts, "the rights of the individual [are weighed] in relation to the interests of the larger society [the classroom community]" (Apple, 1995, p.5).

Now that we have an idea about what community is and how a City and Country classroom fits into that model, it may be useful to talk about some of the particular qualities of City and Country's community. As a school of

the progressive or "new" education movement of the early 1900s, City and Country was founded with a particular philosophy in mind. This characteristic is unique in and of itself, but the fact that this core philosophy can still be felt after almost nine decades of operation is incredible. Aiding in this continuity is Caroline Pratt's book, *I Learn From Children*. In it, she outlines some key intended characteristics of City and Country's community. She said of the action in a typical City and Country classroom, "there was noise, until the walls of the room must bulge with it. Of twenty souls in the room, only one was quiet- the teacher" (Pratt, 1948, p. 3). She also described how City and Country classrooms looked less like typical classrooms and more like a combination of factories and small offices. She understood that children wanted to work, as long as that work was practical, needed and within the scope of the child's understanding. Children were given power over not only how they did their work, but what kinds of work they performed. These principles still pervade the functioning of City and Country today. In conversations in faculty meetings or more informal settings, teachers commonly debate topics based on what kinds of things "we do here" and I am sure that the spirit in which Caroline Pratt saw the school is being reminisced.

As the VIIIs work on their post office, their experience is shared, primarily, within their group. However, they have significant experiences with both the larger school community and the local community. In doing so, they become legitimate members of these communities. As the VIIIs endeavor to form their post office, they share the common purpose of designing, building and performing a function in the school. While they perform those duties, they share experiences with the rest of the school. In the design of the post office, they question the older groups to obtain information about how their job has been performed in the past. They also involve the entire school in collecting information about what the school would like from their service. In their daily collection and delivery of the mail, they interact with teachers, students and administrators from all over the school. In this way, the VIIIs, through their work in the post office, share the common purpose of a well functioning school with the larger school community.

As the VIIIs design the post office, they do not solely rely on the experiences of past groups in the formation of their post office. They quickly realize how boring it would be to do exactly what has always been done and how many good ideas they have for the job. To get

other ideas about how the post office may run the VIIIs visit several post offices in the first few weeks of school. They examine post offices of different size and ask questions that will help them design their own post office. In this way, the VIIIs are also sharing experiences and aligning with people (the postal workers) of a similar common purpose, though not as intimately, within the larger community of New York City.

Overview of jobs

As is implied by the subject of this paper, there is enough material in each of the group jobs at City and Country to warrant its own in-depth analysis. However, it will be useful to provide brief summaries of each of the jobs to provide a fuller picture of the jobs program. Additionally, many of the jobs are interrelated and therefore have connections to the Post Office.

The IXs Job – the School Store

The IXs School Store provides most of the supplies, paint, pencils, paper, etc. used by students, teachers and administrators during the school year, with the exception of the first several weeks of school when the store is not

yet ready for business. The IXs store is similar to a normal stationary store, with shelves full of merchandise, sales clerks, a cashier and receipts for merchandise.

The school store is open three days a week for a total of four hours. During this time, small groups of four or five IXs work in the store, rotating the jobs of sales clerk, cashier and receipts writer each time they work in the store. In addition to their job while the store is open, each student also has a more global responsibility related to the store such as inventory manager, bookkeeper, advertiser and purchasing agent.

All groups in the school receive a monthly budget of about $100. The students in each group, with the help of a teacher in the younger groups, come to the store to buy supplies with their monthly allowance. Usually the ordering occurs during the designated store hours. However, there is also an emergency order system in place for items that might be needed at other times. The IXs buy their supplies from various wholesalers and retailers and add a modest markup to the prices they charge in order to cover operating expenses, such as the purchasing of signs for advertising from the Xs and print advertisements placed in the XIIIs newspaper.

The Social Studies program in the IXs is focused on colonial America and the westward expansion. Typical topics include the Oregon Trail, the Lewis and Clark expedition and the Erie Canal. At the outset of their study, they examine general stores in 17th century colonial America after having just completed the opening of their own store.

The Xs Job – Scribing and Sign Making

The Xs create all the handmade signs needed for the common areas at City and Country, including all the signs identifying rooms and offices. The Xs are also given orders by the retail businesses of other groups, the Post Office, the Store and the Newspaper, for signs advertising their grand openings, their hours and for special events. Their first signs are rough drawings and pencil signs used for room labeling on the first few days of school. Over the course of the year, they learn new signing methods and create inked signs with more elaborate drawings. The Xs Social Studies program follows the use of symbols in ancient times and leads into a study of illuminated letters, scribes desks, and life in the Middle Ages.

The XIs Job – the Printing Press

The XIs run two hand-operated printing presses on which they print Attendance Cards, After School Slips, trip slips and library cards. Additionally, they make Holiday cards, which they sell at winter break and a literary magazine of original written works, complete with illustrations from linoleum cuts. The XIs sell their Attendance Cards and After School Slips to the VIIIs Post Office as a wholesale item and the VIIIs repackage them in smaller quantities and resell them to all the groups in the school at a slightly marked up retail price. The Social Studies program in the XIs is focused on The Renaissance and the Explorers and includes the invention of printing and its involvement in shaping that time period.

The XIIs Job – IVs Assistants

The XIIs job is to work with the IVs. They assist in the classroom with the IVs on a daily basis. A mainstay of this program is that the XIIs walk the IVs down from their third floor classroom for dismissal everyday. In addition to work in class, the XIIs do observations of children in the IVs and write and illustrate books for the IVs

classroom library. This job is unique in that it does not service the school community at large, but rather a small section of it. Additionally, this job does not connect to their Social Studies curriculum, the study of ancient Greece and the idea and practice of democracy.

The XIIIs Job – the School Newspaper

The XIIIs run the School Newspaper, which serves to address issues that are deemed important, by the XIIIs, to the school community. The Newspaper includes school, outside community, city, national and international events. The choice of topics and focus varies depending on the interests of the group of XIIIs and the happenings of the time.

It could be said that this job represents a shift back to the representational nature of the block program at City and Country. The XIIIs job is no longer one that is principally set in direct participation. Rather, it is one that provides them an opportunity for examination from the outside. They are now in the role of observer, examiner and critic, in addition to participant. The XIIIs Social Studies topic is American History, with work in current events and World History as well. The XIIIs use the role

of journalism in the development of the United States as an access point to American History. From the VIIIs to the XIIIs, the research process is basic to their work in the Social Studies curricula and jobs. The practice of researching for articles in the XIIIs job can be seen as a culmination of the research process at City and Country.

Criteria for making a job

As I touched upon earlier, the creation of these jobs was done with extreme care and intention. Caroline Pratt explains the requirements for a job as such:

> Our Eights should have a whole job, with the adventure of planning and the glamour of accomplishment, no less than the necessary drudgery which is part of all work. And the job must be real. It must be of actual service or the essence is lost (Pratt, 1948, p. 101).

In essence, there are three main requirements for a job at City and Country:

1. The job must fulfill a need and be useful to the school community
2. It must be real, in that the job is experienced in its entirety, as a job would be in the adult world.

3. It must be designed from a developmental perspective and fulfill an educational need for the group.

These three factors combine to allow for true value to come from the jobs program. With the first requirement, the sense of school community is developed. Although the Lower School groups do not have jobs themselves, they interact with the jobs performed by the other groups daily. Additionally, all Lower School groups perform jobs within their classrooms. All school groups must interact with other groups through their jobs. In doing so, they get to know one another, they share experiences and they develop understandings of and relationships with the school population as a whole. The Post Office is extreme in this nature because through this job the VIIIs quickly get to know every teacher and administrator in the school, as well as most of the children. Knowing these people is simply a requirement in order to fulfill their duties.

It is also an important distinction to recognize what factors allow these jobs to be real. There is an inherent and marked distinction between the Post Office job and a post office curriculum, which are common in other schools. With the Post Office job, or any of the other jobs, the

focus is not bent towards the study of these jobs in the larger society, though this is certainly included. Rather, the focus is on serving a community of people in a way that allows direct participation in its functioning. There are direct and noticeable outcomes and responsibilities inherent in these jobs. For example, if the VIIIs do not deliver the mail, the after-school director will have no way of knowing what after-school activities have been chosen by the children of the school. There is hard and slow work that the students put into these jobs, many times with no reward aside from the satisfaction that they have made a difference in its functioning, and by extension in the school's functioning.

The third qualification for the Post Office in particular will be discussed at length later in this paper. However, this can be recognized as a general rule requiring that there must be some skill or quality that is uniquely appropriate for the age group to perform and practice and that the job meets a developmental need. In general, this is the desire and newly developed ability of children in the middle years to have direct participation in their surroundings. However, there are other opportunities, including the relationship of needs between the XIIs and IVs, which may qualify a job as developmentally oriented.

Relation to blocks program

As the blocks program in the lower school provided the IIs - VIIs with the means to explore and experience their world in more digestible chunks, the jobs program of the middle and upper school serves to bridge the gap between blocks and the larger world. By creating a smaller community in which students can emulate their world in a functional and impactful way, they begin to experience the community in a different way. They are now not just imitating and interpreting society, they are active participants in a small segment of it. They are now full participants in this miniature community, performing a function based upon the larger outside community.

This brings to light the important developmental differences for which the jobs program was initially developed. It became apparent when the first VIIIs group was formed at City and Country that the program of the younger children was no longer satisfactory for their needs. They were no longer satisfied with the representational world provided by the basic materials of blocks, clay and paint. The VIIIs needed direct participation in their world. They needed a job.

This change in need is of no surprise to someone who has studied child psychology. Though there are many views on what exactly happens at or about the age of eight, it is largely accepted that there is some major shift in development. It is here that many psychologists mark the entry into middle childhood. Though the explanations for what kind of changes occur vary greatly among theorists, I will later examine how the jobs program serves children of this age under many of the varying frameworks.

Chapter 2 - The Post Office Job

Introduction

It may be tempting to begin reading this section expecting it to be an explanation of a curriculum on the Post Office in the classic sense of the word, with lesson plans and content driven outcomes. In fact, it is not that at all. This is a job, not a study, and while there are enormous lessons to be learned by the VIIIs, concerning group functioning, math, writing, social studies, research, organization, business practice, community interconnectedness, etc. this job does not function as a curriculum of the post office. Therefore, my explanation of the post office is given in a more abstract and narrative manner. What follows is a description, rather than prescription, of how the VIIIs discover, examine and problem solve in order to create and hold an important place for themselves in the school community.

The Job

From the very first day of school, there is immediacy to the VIIIs job. There is mail to be picked up and delivered. These parcels are of great importance to the school community and even play central roles in the

functioning of the school, especially the after school program. When the VIIIs arrive for their first day of school, they are extraordinarily excited by their new responsibilities. What they don't yet realize is the immediacy and depth of the school's need for them.

Soon after their arrival at school, the state of urgency is explained to them. This first day of school is the only break the VIIIs get, the only day that mail will not be collected, sorted and delivered. On the next day, there will be mail in mailboxes that have not yet been made and it will be delivered to places and in ways that the VIIIs are not yet familiar. It may seem like an awful lot of pressure to put on the shoulders of eight year olds, but this is a real job, an important job, and this urgency is a necessary part of a real job.

The first order of business is to create a temporary system for the school to mail their correspondence. It does not take much thinking or discussion for the VIIIs to realize that they need mailboxes. Of all the parts of the Post Office job, mailboxes are perhaps the aspect of the job most remembered by new groups of VIIIs from their younger years at the school.

On the morning of their first day, directly after this initial discussion, the VIIIs venture out on their first

trip. They look at mailboxes around the neighborhood. They notice some of the usual blue mailboxes with the standard letter opening. They find some green mailboxes without a place for letters. Questions arise about the different boxes and their purposes. These questions will be explored later, when there is more time. Now, they must focus on the design of these boxes. What are the important features of a mailbox?

After sketching mailboxes and writing down notes on important features, the VIIIs return to school. Though they have visions of grandeur in their heads from their observations in the neighborhood, these first mailboxes must be completed quickly. They save the intricate designs floating in their heads for the design of their permanent mailboxes, which will be completed in Shop class over the next four to six weeks, and start work on their temporary designs. These first boxes will be cut from regular cardboard boxes and painted, while their later boxes will be made of wood and will be much more intricate.

Before the VIIIs embark on their mailbox making, an important question arises, or is posed to them by a teacher. How many boxes should we make? A meeting is called and the students and teacher debate this issue. Many more questions surface from this question. How many

floors are in the 13th street building? How many are in the 12th street building? How many boxes should be on each floor? These are just a few of the possible questions that are discussed.

To confirm how many floors are in each building and how many boxes might be appropriate for each floor, the VIIIs explore the school. They may do this in partnerships, in small groups or they may be split into two groups, one for each building. Once they have collected the information on how many mailboxes they will need, they begin to make their mailboxes, typically in groups of two or three. In making the boxes, they think of the most important features they found present on the U.S. mailboxes: a place for people to put their letters; a place for mail carriers to remove the mail; a distinct color so people in the community know it's a mailbox; etc. The temporary mailboxes are cut, taped, painted and set out to dry for use the next day. As the last order of business for this first day, the VIIIs write a letter to the school community (see Appendix D) letting them know that the Post Office is on schedule and that they

will collect mail at a certain time of the day, usually in the morning around 10 a.m. This letter serves as the beginning to what will become a regular practice of letter writing for the VIIIs.

The VIIIs return to school for their second day, excited and a little nervous about their first mail collection. As they arrive, they are eager to examine their finished temporary mailboxes. Each group takes their box to one of the locations decided upon the day before. By 9 a.m. the mailboxes are out and ready to receive mail. On this day, the head of the after school program and/or the school secretary might come into the classroom to talk to the VIIIs about why the Post Office is important to their jobs. At the designated time, the VIIIs split into two groups and set out to collect the mail from each building. They find mailboxes stuffed with Attendance Cards, After School Slips and other correspondence to be delivered. There are letters from administrators to teachers and from one group to another.

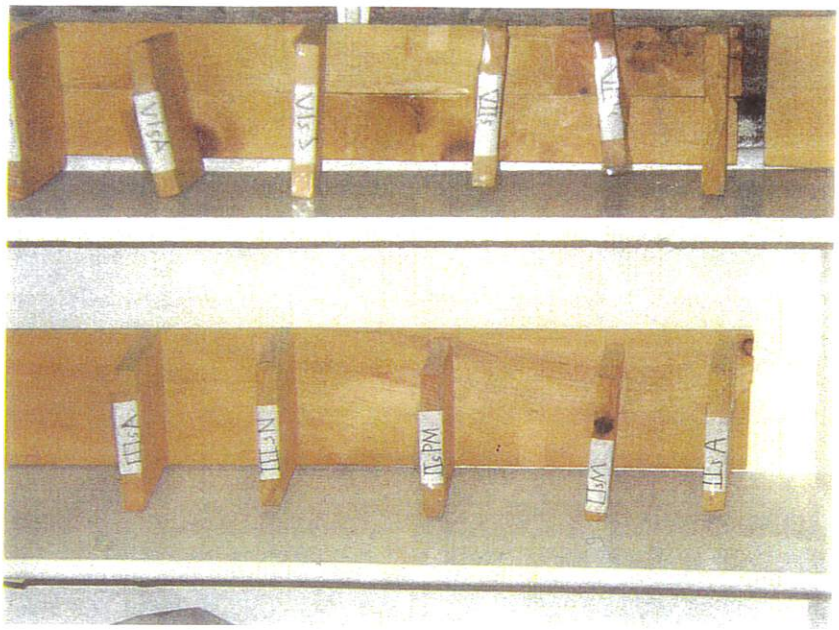
The VIIIs return to the room and the teacher leads a discussion of where each of these items must go. For

example, the After School Slips are done in triplicate by each group in the Middle and Upper School. The top and most legible set is given to the office, where the After School Director will pick them up. Another copy is hung in the hallway on the first floor, outside the Middle/Upper School Director's Office. The last copy is hung up outside the Library on the second floor. The whole class is involved in this first day of sorting and distributing the mail. On this day the mail is sorted and delivered in about an hour and a half with the entire class working. In about six weeks, the VIIIs will be able to collect, sort and deliver the mail in about fifteen minutes working in mail crews of about four or five students.

When delivering the various other correspondence on this day, it usually occurs to one student or another in the group that they do not know the school, or the people in it, as well as they thought. There are letters to people they do not know and to places they're not sure how to find. It is at this point that the group must discuss ways of solving this problem. One solution has been to make detailed floor plans (see Appendix A) for each building. Groups of VIIIs disperse throughout the school and sketch the details of each floor. They return to the classroom to compare notes and work on final copies of

their maps. The end result is a representative floor plan of the entire school that the children will use until they have mastered the layout and population of the school.

The activities described thus far are typical of the first two to three days of school. These first few days are packed with an amazing number of activities for the VIIIs and the Post Office. From the third day of school



on, the mail will be collected, sorted and delivered by one mail crew of about four students. At first, it will take them a long time and they may require the help of a teacher or members of other mail crews, but they will eventually figure out more efficient ways their group can manage this task and will become speedy and independent. From observations of their own work, tips from older students and information learned on trips, the VIIIs will develop more efficient systems. For instance, on a trip to the Old Chelsea Post Office, the VIIIs were shown and

allowed to try the job of "boxer". In this job, a postal worker takes a box of unsorted mail and distributes it into the correct slots, or boxes, for delivery. Then, the mail carrier comes to pick up the now sorted mail for their route. After the VIIIs returned from this trip, a few of them came together in a group to make their own sorting slots. Creating checklists is another common way for the VIIIs to organize their sorting.

Over the next five to seven weeks, the VIIIs continue to work on improving the mail collection process. Additionally, they begin work on the post office store operations. The VIIIs post office is not just a mail collection and distribution service, it is also a storefront that operates out of their classroom. The storefront is open four times a week for half an hour. In the P.O. store, they will sell After School Slips and Attendance Cards printed from the XIs printing press, as well as stamps of their own design for intraschool mail. It is likely that they will

sell other items, like U.S. postal stamps and envelopes, but this varies depending on the group each year. Once the VIIIs choose which items they will sell, there are many decisions the group must make including:

In CD-Rom version, click on image for video of stamp packaging discussion.

how much they will charge and how many of each item will be in each package they sell.

Committees

There is much to be decided and prepared with this storefront and the VIIIs must decide on everything from the name of their post office, to what it might sell and what repairs they need to make to its structure. Typically, the teacher leads the VIIIs in a brainstorming session to list all the items that need to be worked on and decided. Once the list is created, the VIIIs categorize it. Usually there are about four broad categories into which the list

is organized. Students then choose which group best matches their interests.

Of course, this exercise, along with many of the other tasks that require student groups, provides a great opportunity for students to test out different groupings and work practices. Additionally, students are asked to choose their own groups, which provides them with practice in making good choices for work partners. However, even with a job of such importance, students sometimes do not make good choices right away or all the time. It is in these instances that teacher support is most helpful. Though nearly all of the tangible work on the post office is done by the VIIIs, it is in the group dynamics and organization areas that the teacher is most needed and useful.

The groups, or committees, that the VIIIs are divided into are usually similar from year to year, at least in the past five or six years. In one of the years I was a teacher in the VIIIs, there were four committees: Advertisement, Supplies, Workshop and Jobs. Each one of these committees had many questions and tasks in its charge. As we continued to go on field trips to U.S. post offices and stores, these committees gathered information that would prove useful in finding answers.

The Advertisement group was primarily responsible for informing the school community of post office activity. These activities included procedures for completing the After School Slips and Attendance Cards, addressing mail, mail pickup times and eventually, the grand opening of the Post Office and Post Office store hours. Not only was this committee responsible for the advertising of specific items during the setup and opening of the post office, they were also responsible for setting up systems for other information to be disseminated throughout the year. Clearly this group had significant contact with the Xs sign-makers and the XIIIs Newspaper (see Appendix C).

The Supplies group's responsibilities fell under two broad categories: supplies for sale and supplies for running the business. These were two very different notions for the group. Some of the members originally envisioned this group would be responsible for one or the other of these two aspects, but not both. In their beginning conversations, the group realized they needed to focus on both. This group sometimes acted as a whole and sometimes split into two groups, one for each category. This group's task, along with that of the Jobs group, is particularly abstract, requiring planning to be done for situations they have not thus far been involved in

directly. They had to imagine supplies that they *might* need and evaluate what supplies a customer *might* want in addition to the standard supplies. Of course, information gained on trips was essential in grounding their thinking on this matter. The Supplies group had significant connections to the IXs store.

Every year, there is some physical detail, small or large, of the Post Office storefront that is changed or created by that group as a legacy to be left for future groups. This was the primary charge of the Workshop group, along with repairing parts of the Post Office that were in need. This group also led the repainting of the post office, which is another yearly tradition.

The Jobs group examined the procedures needed to carryout Post Office sales and made suggestions on possible divisions of labor between the four and five person mail crews. Additionally, they diagnosed areas in which skills

In CD-ROM version, click on image for video of Cashier training

development was necessary for each member of the class to be able to perform their required duties when working in the Post Office. These skills primarily fell under customer service and math skills. This group organized practice in using Post Office materials and developed job descriptions. The Jobs committee also identified areas in which they thought the group as a whole needed more instruction from the teacher and made that request. This resulted in some math instruction that, for a progressive/constructivist based math teacher, was more rote than I was completely comfortable with at the time. However, because this math already had a context and purpose that was so clear to the VIIIs, this work did prove to be beneficial and was consistently met with excitement and determination by the VIIIs.

It must be stated that these committees did not have ultimate decision-making power regarding their area of responsibility. Rather, these groups were formed to function in a similar manner to congressional sub-committees; they are charged with researching and thinking about questions and issues, but must present their findings to the entire group in order for a decision to be made. When the committees reached the point where they wanted to start to enact some of their solutions, they came to the

group and presented their conclusions. In some cases, their suggestions were generally acceptable and agreed upon easily. In other cases, particularly with price setting, the debate is longer and may involve several revisions to the committee's proposal. The group may request that the committee do more research and may ask for a polling of the school community on their opinions related to the topic. Personal issues, group issues and community issues are weighed when recommendations are considered.

These committees also generate lists of needed items or skills required for the post office. Once they receive approval from the group, committees may seek the assistance of other members of the group, or even the whole group to fulfill these requirements. For instance, the supplies group quickly realized that there is a need for stamps to be made for use on internal mail. As it does not seem fair for only this committee to make stamps, they enlist every child in the making of their own stamp design.

In addition to the regular mail delivery service and the P.O. store front, the VIIIs also fill emergency orders and have a messenger service. While the P.O. store front is open four times a week for half an hour each time, there are occasions when the other groups of the school can not come to those hours. In those instances, groups can

request an emergency order and the VIIIs will generally fill these orders at a convenient time during the day and deliver the order to the requesting group. This system is set up towards the end of the planning stages for the Post Office. In general, a simple system is used that requires the group to fill out an emergency order form, created by the VIIIs, and place it in an envelope on the door to the VIIIs classroom.

The messenger service is another important aspect of the Post Office service, but there is little that the VIIIs need to set up for this service to function. Essentially, when there is an urgent message that the front office staff needs to send to another part of the school, they press a buzzer, which rings in the VIIIs classroom. There is a rotating schedule of who has the messenger job each week. The messenger picks up the message from the front office and delivers the message. While this seems like it could be a rather simple and inconsequential job, it is one that is highly valued by the front office staff and they often remark, casually and in formal staff meetings, that this service makes their job much easier. In the past, the VIIIs would build the buzzer mechanism used by this job every year in Science class. Through the years, this practice was abandoned and the buzzer from previous years

remains. While this practice was given up primarily for convenience sake, because the messenger service can now start on the first day of school, it was an important part of the curriculum and could always be reinstated.

These first several weeks of developing the Post Office are extremely intense. They serve to form the VIIIs as a group around a shared common purpose. All of them find that they must work together in many different groupings in order for their operation to be successful. There is an incredible amount of learning, both academic and social, that comes along with the Post Office. The academic lessons sometimes go almost unnoticed by the children. As one VIII said of a homework that the teacher thought was about three digit addition and subtraction, but done in the context of stamp prices, "I don't have math homework, I have stamp homework".

What I have attempted to do in using this narrative format to describe the post office is to give the reader a more realistic sense of how the job evolves in the classroom. You will notice that problems are solved once the VIIIs run into them during their actual work, not before. You will also notice the intensity of this job in its first few days, as well as its meticulous development over the following weeks. This was done to highlight how

one of the most important aspects of the jobs program at City and Country - that each job is real - with all the necessary trials and rewards that come with it, is realized.

The consistent and everyday nature of this job is also important for the VIIIs. As this is their first community-wide job, the need for a genuine feeling of importance is tantamount for their success. Since it is clear very early on that some of the everyday tasks of the job, particularly the handling of Attendance Cards and After School Slips, are of great importance to the functioning of the school, the VIIIs quickly realize their essential role in the community. This daily role of importance is the way the VIIIs first realize and conceive of their job as a real job. It is this consistent reminder of importance that gives this experience the validity it needs to truly become a shared common purpose.

Academic Curriculum Integration

Science

There have been many Science topics over the years of the Post Office that have been in one way or another related to the job. For many years, as mentioned earlier, the VIIIs would learn about electricity as they made the

buzzer mechanism to be used by the front desk for special deliveries. While the VIIIs no longer recreate the buzzer every year, and therefore have no purpose for studying electricity in relation to the job, there are other Science topics that do lend themselves to the job.

As the VIIIs start to develop the supplies aspect of the Post Office, there are Science related issues that naturally arise. For instance, the making of stamps for interschool mail is a yearly activity that raises scientific questions for the VIIIs. The most intriguing of the questions that arise out of this activity is how the lickable glue is made for U.S. stamps. This may lead to an exploration of glue and the making of similar adhesive for use with their stamps. Other questions arise about paper and ink and their interaction. Often, the VIIIs first experiences with microscopes are in relation to examining paper and ink printing. This also acts as a wonderful taste of their future job with the XIs printing press.

There are, of course, many other scientific activities that might grow out the Post Office. There have been years in which the VIIIs in their trip to the main New York City post office have observed pneumatic tubes and become interested in the study of air pressure and currents.

Covering a wide range of topics, from electricity to chemistry, is possible in relation to this job.

Art

While the work done on the Post Office might not lend itself to a formal Art program, there are Art skills used throughout the job. In setting up the Post Office, there are several projects that call upon skills the VIIIs have learned in their previous years of art making. Painting the Post Office store front, as well as both sets of mailboxes calls upon their skills as painters, carefully mixing colors and brainstorming designs. The VIIIs also learn how to carve linoleum blocks to make intraschool stamps and they design posters for the Post Office, which are then made by the Xs.

Shop

Many items needed for the Post Office are made in Shop class (or using skills learned in this class). One of the most surprising things to observe in the VIIIs room is how confident, safe and efficient all the VIIIs are at using saws, hand drills, hammers, etc. These skills are put to good work throughout the development of the Post Office. As mentioned previously, the permanent mailboxes are made

during Shop class over the first two months of school. These mailboxes are much more complex than the simple temporary mailboxes made the first day of school. The permanent mailboxes tend to have one or more hinged doors. Additionally, they are often shaped in a similar way to U.S mailboxes and generally have separate openings for depositing and collecting the mail. The VIIIs carefully design the paint job for their boxes and while they all adhere to a uniform base color to avoid confusion in the community, they usually also add designs of their own.

Another yearly activity for the VIIIs is repairing and adding to the Post Office storefront. They use problem-solving skills along with their Shop skills to figure out the best ways to stabilize walls, re-secure the sign and repair the doors. The VIIIs also find something, large or small, to add to the storefront. In recent years, these additions have included a display case, sorting slots and storage boxes.

Social Studies/Research

Thus far, I have shied away from calling the Post Office job a social studies because there is an important and fundamental difference between the usual conception of social studies and the Jobs at City and Country. The common conception of social studies usually involves the

study of a people outside of the school context or time period. The study involves learning about other people, though there may be some ties made between the students themselves and these people. The jobs program is not one of those social studies. If it were, the Post Office Job would center around learning about the U.S. Post Office, its origins and its impact on the country, etc. While this might be a valuable topic, it is not the focus of the Post Office Job at City and Country. Additionally, I am weary of the current trend to call almost any study done in school that does not center on Math or Reading: Social Studies. However, at its core, the Post Office Jobs as well as the rest of the Jobs at City and Country are Social Studies. Social Studies is defined by the National Council for the Social Studies as:

> The integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994, Section 1.1).

At first glance it could be said that the Post Office Job does not seem to fit the definition of social studies

because, as discussed above, it does not focus on a group outside of the school context (i.e. it is not a study of the U.S. Post Office). However, it is a study of the social/communal workings of the school. If we define the subject of this study as the school community, we can comfortably define this study as social studies. The school then, is the society that we are studying. In essence, the Jobs at City and Country are living social studies, embodying many of the disciplines cited above. The point is not to understand the full scope of postal work in the world, the point is to understand the scope of serving the community of the school in a cooperative way that involves a variety of curricular applications and individual and group responsibilities. In fact, if our goal for social studies is to realize the primary purpose cited above, I can think of no better social context for this age group to study.

The Post Office provides an opportunity to introduce many of the practices that will be developed throughout their time in the Middle/Upper School at City and Country in Social Studies, particularly in the area of research. There are many skills associated with City and Country's practice of Social Studies that are a part of the Post Office. The Social Studies research process at City and

Country centers on an integration of many sources of information. This results in a fuller, more complex, often more accurate, and usually more meaningful understanding of the topic. As discussed earlier in this paper, the VIIIs use trips to U.S. Post Offices and neighborhood stores, interviews with older groups, post office books, examination of U.S. Post Office materials and prior knowledge to gather information to be used in their Post Office. The decision-making the VIIIs do in relation to their job is informed by the information they gather and discuss. In this process, the VIIIs practice gathering and integrating information from different sources. This process prepares them for their upcoming yearlong study of the Lenape Indians and for their future Social Studies and Jobs at City and Country. Although there is no longer a strong link between the VIIIs job and their social studies curriculum, this link does exist with many of the other jobs.

Writing

The Post Office naturally lends itself to the study of language as a form of communication. The idea that language is primarily used for communication between people is solidified in the VIIIs with little effort from their

teachers. As they get to know the various forms and letters the City and Country population send through their Post Office, they recognize the usefulness of the written word, as well as various conventions used in writing.

The VIIIs become wholeheartedly interested in receiving and writing letters. They seem to automatically recognize the value and pleasure in communicating with the written word. As they observe the flow of correspondence throughout the school, they long to participate in it directly, rather than simply facilitating the process. They experiment with writing letters to other groups or administrators. These first letters usually represent communications about Post Office rules or practices. It is almost always the response of the teacher when the VIIIs recognize a group or individual in the school who is not following the standard practices of the Post Office to write the offending party a letter (see Appendix B).

The VIIIs may also experiment with sending letters through the U.S. Post Office during the first few weeks of school. A common activity is for students to write two letters to themselves and mail one letter to their home and one to the school. This provides them with more information about how the Post Office functions, as the

letter they expect to arrive first does not always come in that order.

Inherent in their explorations of letters and other correspondence is a recognition of important syntactic and grammatical structures. The conventions for addressing envelopes and writing letters are explored by the VIIIs with an easily connected purpose in mind. They soon find, in their sorting of the mail and reading correspondence, that these conventions are useful and needed. Commas, periods, indentations, and formats are all explored in this context.

After some work with letters, the VIIIs are commonly offered pen pals. While it is usually presented as a choice, the children are always wild with excitement about the possibility of trading letters with a child their age in a different part of the country or world. They find their experience with letters useful in writing to their pen pals and it provides a natural opportunity to practice their skills. This is often the setting in which the VIIIs are introduced to the Writers Workshop style editing process (rough draft, revising, editing, publishing). The writing of letters provides a good introduction to this process, with publishing becoming automatically meaningful because the result of this action leads to their pen pal

reading their letter. From this point, the full Writers Workshop experience is developed during a separate writing time, where the brainstorming and journal writing aspects of the process are introduced.

Math

The math work that is implicit in the functioning of the Post Office, specifically the storefront, may be the most obvious of all the subjects to the observer. The activities that look most obviously like math include two, three and four digit addition and subtraction, which is needed to add up purchases and make change. While the VIIIs have a fairly firm grasp on simple addition and subtraction when they enter the VIIIs, the work they do in this area in connection with the Post Office will solidify the concepts of borrowing and carrying; and further, will introduce the need for efficiency in these processes because they will perform them while customers are waiting for their orders.

Some of the VIIIs begin to recognize the convenience of using multiplication instead of addition to total purchases and this conversation is used to start their study of multiplication and subsequently division. The VIIIs go on to learn their multiplication tables with the more concrete and meaningful purpose of using them to do

their job more efficiently. Other math topics implicit in the Post Office's functioning include large amounts of work in problem solving, organizing, mapping, graphing school opinion polls, measuring for workshop related projects, etc.

Function within community

As has been stated previously in this paper, a major factor of the jobs at City and Country are that they are needed by the community. The Post Office is of real importance in this regard. The community as a whole, and particularly the after school program rely heavily on the VIIIs.

Each morning the groups in the middle and upper school fill out After School Slips, made by the XIs, indicating which activities they will participate in after school. These slips are then mailed in the VIIIs mailboxes. The VIIIs pick up the mail and as part of their delivery process sort these slips and deliver them to three locations: the front desk, a bulletin board outside the middle/upper school director's door and a bulletin board outside the library. As part of this process, the VIIIs also make sure that all the groups have properly filled out their slips and that all the slips are present.

The After School Director picks up the slips at the front office. This is the only way he knows what children will be doing on any given day. Additionally, the other two sets of After School Slips that are hung on the bulletin boards serve to inform parents and teachers of

where a child is and they serve as a reminder for any forgetful students.

In much the same way as the After School Slips, the VIIIs also collect Attendance Cards from every group in the school. Again, these cards are produced by the XIs and sold at the Post Office storefront. The VIIIs check that all cards are mailed and that each card is filled out properly. These cards are then delivered to the front desk, where the attendance for the day is noted by the school receptionist. It may seem strange, when comparing the VIIIs Post Office to the U.S. Post Office that they have this task of checking the After School Slips and Attendance Cards. If a letter is addressed improperly or a form is filled out incorrectly, the best one could expect from the U.S. Post Office would be for the item to be returned to the sender. However, the VIIIs Post Office is not just a business, it is a community service and it makes great sense to assist the members of the community. Additionally, it helps the VIIIs job in the long run, as the community members get better and better at completing their forms correctly with the diligent oversight of the VIIIs.

Both the After School Slips and the Attendance Cards are daily tasks. Each day the VIIIs know that they will,

at the very least, have those two tasks to perform. This is an incredibly important facet of the job, as the daily routine involving important tasks keeps the job as a focal point for the VIIIs. This factor may be one of the most important for the VIIIs and their feeling of ownership of the Post Office and a place of importance in the community.

The VIIIs also play an essential role as the bearers of school wide announcements and as messengers for time critical material. As noted previously, the school is housed in two brownstone buildings, not in a regular "school" building. Therefore, there is no public announcement system at City and Country. The VIIIs perform the function of a P.A. system by going room to room, calling the room to attention and making the announcement. The VIIIs usually send out one or two pairs of students to perform this task and it is completed in a relatively short amount of time. This process is called a "Round Robin" at City and Country. This process not only saves the school from the need to buy P.A. equipment, it also lends a personal touch to an announcement. The VIIIs will note who was not in the school building at the time of their round robin and will make sure to come back at another time, later in the day, to inform the group. Additionally, if a group has a question about the announcement, the VIIIs

happily relay it to the person who requested the round robin.

When there are urgent messages to be delivered to particular students or groups, such as reminders about medications or changes in a child's pick-up time, the front office rings the aforementioned buzzer and the VIII who is messenger for the week responds to the call. The front office staff often cites this aspect of the VIIIs Post Office as an essential part of their own jobs. Since the front office staff answer the phones and take care of the medical needs of the children, it would be extremely inconvenient for them to leave their office. Instead, they simply call upon an VIII to deliver the message.

In addition to all of the duties mentioned thus far in this section, the VIIIs deliver letters of any nature within the school. They also make a daily trip to the U.S. post box to mail any outside letters that have been entrusted to them. This service facilitates letter writing between classes and between individual students. It is also the major mode of communication between students and administrators.

The combination of all of these services makes for a job with incredible importance to the school's function, both overtly, as with the After School Slips, etc., and

more covertly, as with letter writing between classes. The VIIIs become the communication masters of the school. While there are threats to the P.O.'s importance, including the use of e-mail and the temptation of teachers and administrators to deliver items on their own, the community building function the VIIIs job facilitates is unmatched by these other methods.

Responsibility of community to job

As with any business process or service, the most important factor as to whether or not the Post Office, or any of the other jobs are successful and sustained, is if they are actively used. The usefulness of the jobs must be continually examined by the teachers and administrators of the school. At City and Country there are annual full-staff meetings to examine this question. After the decision has been made regarding the value of the job to the school, it then falls on the teachers and administrators, along with the students to actually use these systems. In other words, it may be decided that the Post Office is an effective and needed job, but this decision or declaration is relatively meaningless if the service is not used at nearly every reasonable opportunity.

While, as I have mentioned before, a main factor in the success of the Post Office is its consistent nature, what makes it a richer experience in the long run is the variable part of the mail, various letters and packages that are not necessarily daily occurrences. Letters sent from group to group, teacher to teacher, or any of these groups to administrators or vice versa, are an important part of this job truly representing the communication within the school, not just in serving an administrative function. It is, of course, of great instructional value to encourage letter writing in all the groups of the school, whether they are dictated in the younger aged groups or written independently in the older groups.

There are threats to the central role the Post Office enjoys throughout the school. In particular, e-mail and a teacher's tendency towards immediate resolution of questions, whether necessary or not, are the most obvious of these threats. While there is a place for e-mail to run alongside the Post Office, much like there is no need to supersede the U.S. Postal Service with e-mail, a distinction between what messages should be sent by one means versus the other is useful. For instance, the scheduling of faculty meeting and the solicitation of agenda items for those meetings seems to lend itself

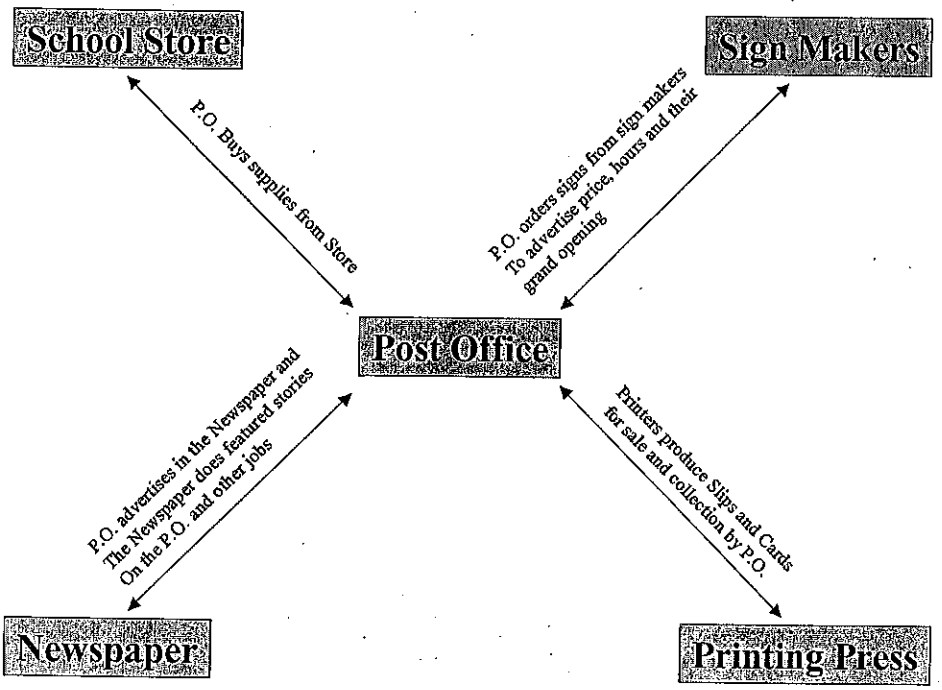
naturally to the e-mail format, where thoughts can be shared with many people simultaneously and quickly. On the other hand, notes from administrators to teachers often lend themselves to the Post Office. Additionally, any school-wide distributions to parents, such as a weekly news bulletin, are more appropriately handled by the Post Office, who delivers this correspondence to each classroom to be taken home.

Drawing lines, however blurry they may be, between the use of e-mail vs. the Post Office is useful and necessary for the success of both of these systems and for productive communication throughout the school. These systems ought not be seen as opposing forces, as we often view new technologies versus the old. In fact, these media are, at least for now, fundamentally different. Clarification of these differences is important, not only for the survival of the Post Office job, but for effective communication for the school community as a whole. Just as faculty meetings might be better scheduled on e-mail, I'm sure a group of IIs would be much less impressed by an e-mail from another group than a letter. In fact, it is particularly true that the younger groups at City and Country take great pride in participating in the concrete nature of the Post Office and other jobs.

In this age of electronic technology and living in a city such as New York, it is tempting to rush towards answers to questions that may not, in fact, be urgent in reality. To take the time to write a letter, rather than dropping by and delivering a message oneself does necessitate a conscious decision about communication that may not be automatic. However, it is necessary when living in a structure, be it corporate, scholastic or communal, to learn to operate in the system most effectively. Just as a thank you card is generally more appreciated than an e-mail, or a memo to most presidents of a company may be more appropriate than barging into their office, there are always rules to follow for effective communication in various situations. City and Country is no different in this respect. There is a standard for communication within the school that must be constantly monitored in order to protect the jobs program, particularly the Post Office. Teachers, administrators, and possibly most vehemently, the VIIIs examine the adherence of everyone in the community to the communication standards required by the Jobs. It is especially important for the adults at City and Country to be sensitive to these communication standards. While in other situations, the effect of inconsistent communication practices might principally effect only the executor, in

the City and Country context it poses a threat to the Jobs program and as a result, to the core of the schools' curriculum.

Interconnectedness of the Post Office with other jobs



*Please note that this diagram is limited to the interaction between the Post Office and the other jobs and does not attempt to show the entire complex relationship of all the jobs to each other

It is, quite possibly, just as important that the Post Office has direct interaction with the other jobs as it is that the job fulfills all the requirements for a real job, as outlined earlier, particularly when examining the job from a school community perspective. Not only are the VIIIs responsible for the correspondence of the school, they are part of a collection of groups, from the VIIIs to the XIIIs, whose jobs combine to represent a significant responsibility and influence on the school.

The Post Office purchases most of its operating supplies from the IXs Store, including paper, ink and labels to produce their stamps. The Post Office also uses both the Xs Sign Makers and the XIIIs Newspaper to advertise their store and their grand opening. Additionally, the Newspaper often writes articles about the Post Office and other jobs. Perhaps the job with which the Post Office has the most interaction is the XIs Printing Press. The XIs are responsible for producing the Attendance Cards and After School Slips, among other items, on their two printing presses. These items are then sold to the Post Office at wholesale prices and repackaged and sold at retail prices to the school community through the Post Office storefront. Price negotiations, as well as the relaying of customer comments about the XIs merchandise are also a part of this relationship.

Chapter 3 - Developmental Orientation

Introduction

The field of child development is an evolving study. There are shifts in perspectives and interpretations and new theories that develop over the course of time. The function of these theories is often to explain behaviors of children and to provide a language with which to describe those behaviors and what is causing them, as well as to explain apparent developmental delays or dysfunctions: behavioral, emotional, social and cognitive. Given this new language and deeper understanding, this knowledge sometimes influences adult behaviors as they relate to children, particularly, in this case, how teachers interact with students. However, in some cases, adults may have such a keen ability to observe children that they create this knowledge of children without the precursor of theoretical knowledge. Such was the case, at least in his beginnings, of Jean Piaget, as he was a trained biologist, not psychologist, and such is the case with Caroline Pratt.

One of the most striking experiences in my young teaching career was student teaching in the VIIIs at City

and Country while attending graduate school at Bank Street College. As I learned various child development theories, many of which were developed decades later than Pratt started City and Country, I was struck by how well these theoretical frameworks were addressed in the VIIIs curriculum, particularly with the jobs program. This is the learning that Pratt is referring to in the title of her book, "I Learn from Children". It is an ability to listen and observe children in a way that allows for a more extensive understanding of their lives and needs.

Typically in child development theories, there is a marked developmental shift at about eight years of age. This change in development has been recognized for centuries as evidenced in the "age of reason" theories present in Europe dating back at least to the 16th century (White, 1996, p.17). For Jean Piaget this shift is a progression from preoperational to concrete-operational thinking and for Erik Erikson it is a move to Industry vs. Inferiority. Though these theories may be quite different in content, they do combine to affirm some shift in the behavior and cognitive functioning commonly found around this age.

Piaget

For Piaget, eight year olds are beginning their transition to concrete operational thought. They are leaving behind preoperational thinking in which their ability to reason was limited to their observations of the immediate world. With their new capabilities as concrete operational thinkers, this age group of children begin to form their opinions about the world and problem solve based increasingly on logical thought, rather than purely upon perception. The most salient example of this for Piaget is the ability of middle childhood children to conserve much more commonly than their younger counterparts. However, "concrete operational children cannot yet apply logic to problems that are hypothetical, purely verbal, or abstract" (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 92). Therefore, while children of this age are more able to use logic in their thinking, they are still in need of direct experiences in order to apply their logic.

Concrete operations is also marked by a great shift in egocentrism. Essentially, Piaget sees the concrete operational child as one who, "constructs the understanding that others can come to conclusions different from hers" (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 93). As a consequence of this newfound perspective, or ability to decenter, socialization

of the concrete operational child takes on an entirely new and expanded scope. If others can come to different conclusions than the child, the child is now burdened with the responsibility to explain their perspective to others and attempt to persuade. At this stage, Piaget makes a subtle break from his usual biologically centered developmental perspective and notes that, "Argument is, therefore, the backbone of verification" (Piaget in Wadsworth, 1996, p.93). For him, interaction with peers is what is responsible for developing the move away from egocentrism.

Affective development also advances based on this move away from egocentrism. Piaget sees a great leap in cooperation at this stage. Children develop what he calls "the will" which regulates the balance between what a child wants and what they feel morally obligated to do. This moral obligation is defined by, "a permanent *scale of values* constructed by the individual" (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 103). Additionally, children of this age develop a sense of mutual respect with adults when previously they were capable of only unilateral respect. Again, this is an effect based on the child's ability to decenter.

Piaget also sees an advance in the ability to classify at this age. Whereas children of earlier ages primarily

base their classifications on similarities, children of this age begin to classify items based on differences as well. They, "are able to reason about the *relationships* between classes and subclasses" (Wadsworth, 1996, p. 99).

There are several aspects of the Post Office job that support a Piagetian perspective. The job can be seen as an opportunity to exercise the new logical sense of the concrete operational stage by providing situations that require problem solving and logic while keeping them on an experiential level. The VIIIs are not asked to imagine the workings of a post office; they are tasked with actually creating a functional one.

In their daily functioning as a post office, the VIIIs run into many instances in which children may have different opinions about any number of problems or decisions. This is particularly true in the setup of the post office storefront, but also true in the daily functioning of the mail groups. In these situations, the VIIIs exercise their ability to communicate their ideas to others. This can be seen as supportive of their ability to decenter, or at least as a reasonable request of their abilities to do so.

Additionally, there are many opportunities to classify items in relation to the Post Office. Classification of

items ranging from Post Office supplies to remaining tasks needed for the storefront to open is done in relation to this job. This classification is done in groups ranging from the whole class to individual students. Again, these activities correlate to a Piagetian perspective for this age group.

Vygotsky

A notable theme in Piaget's theory is that, "knowing precedes a capacity to verbalize and to apply this knowledge" (Maier, 1965, p. 140). This is, perhaps, the defining difference between Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories. In contrast to Piaget, who generally put the onus of development on the physical progression of the child, Vygotsky focuses development on the social world of the child. The primary tool of the social world being language. Piaget seems to admit that language may play a role in development where, "language assumes significance and becomes equally a tool of thinking and of communication" (Maier, 1965, p. 141). Vygotsky sees language, "first as a vehicle of communication between people and then as the central means of communication with self" (Berk and Winsler, 1995, p. 22). While these

statements may seem similar, the major difference is that for Piaget this language ability is an outgrowth of development, while for Vygotsky it is the driving force behind development. Therefore, Vygotsky sees development as a product of the social world and Piaget sees it as a more formulaic result of the child's biology.

There are several factors that make Vygotskian theory more desirable than the Piagetian for educators. First, if we believe that social interaction drives development, teachers can design learning opportunities that further cognitive development. Second, we can address delays in development directly. Third, because these differences may be social rather than biological, delays may be seen as less damning for an individual child. Fourth, a theory embracing the social context of development is able to explain developmental differences between cultures in a more satisfying way than Piaget's theory.

Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky's theory is not a stage theory. Development occurs on a more variable basis dependent on the social environment. If a culture engages a child more regularly in a certain activity, the child will develop more rapidly in that area. A lack of development, then, can be attributed to less engagement in the activity. For example, if children don't have

opportunities to think critically, they will not develop that skill or will take longer in developing the skill than children who have many opportunities to practice.

For Vygotsky, it is essential that we recognize the child's own involvement in and effect on development. Children's minds are, "inseparably joined with other minds" (Berk and Winsler, 1995, p. 12). Indeed, it is not just that our social environment effects our social development, but that our cognitive development and our development as a whole is, "a consequence of social experience" (Martin, 2000, p. 76). In social interaction, there is no more powerful tool than that of language. Therefore, Vygotsky cites language as the most important tool for development.

Though Vygotsky saw the environment of the child as essential to development, he was careful to point out that the environment should not be considered as separate from the individual.

> The process by which the acquired reactions and conditional reflexes are formed is a two-way, active process in which the individual is not only subjected to the influence of the environment, but in which he influences the environment in particular ways through each of his reactions, and also influences his own being through the environment. (Vygotsky, 1926, p. 53)

Indeed, Vygotsky promoted a larger picture in regard to development, with all types of development interacting with

several active participants: the self, others and the environment.

A central concept in Vygotsky's application of his theoretical work is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This term refers to the distance between what a child can accomplish on their own vs. what they can accomplish with the guidance of a more advanced partner (peer, teacher, parent, etc.). This idea helps to focus attention on collaboration as a key to cognitive development. In working with children in their ZPD, we enable them to accomplish tasks that they are unable to do on their own. If done effectively, children will then increase their development at the particular task and will be able to accomplish more of it independently in the future. Therefore, their ZPD has been moved to a higher level. This process is referred to as scaffolding, which is a, "metaphor [that] connotes a support system for children's efforts that is sensitively tuned to their needs" (Berk and Winsler, 1995, p. 20). Another term used to describe effective activity within the ZPD is guided participation, which is defined as, "active involvement by children in culturally structured activities with the guidance, support and challenge of companions to transmit a diverse array of knowledge and skills" (Berk and Winsler, 1995, p. 20). If

we look at education with these concepts in mind, we can see that Vygotsky saw education as leading development and that new skills are first learned in collaboration. It follows that an educator's job is to create opportunities for experiences for children that are within their ZPD and provide support for those activities.

In this sense, the Post Office job is quite effective. The nature of the job is, in fact, collaborative. Small and large groups, as well as pairs of children are the norm for Post Office work. Students bring a range of skills to their groups and the teacher often makes intentional groupings based on these skill differences. As noted previously, much of the work of the class centers on how these groups will interact and be most productive for both Post Office goals and group development goals. It is in this last piece that the application of Vygotskyian theory is realized. We can consider the presence of a group and of varying skills as ingredients for cooking and the examination of group process by the children and teachers as the recipe. While having the ingredients is a good start, the important information of the recipe is necessary in order to have the desired outcome.

Additionally, there is an acceptance, and this is certainly not unique to the jobs program, at City and

Country of the interrelatedness of the social, physical and emotional worlds of children and their effect on development. The effect of the teacher, the materials, the classroom structure, the other children and the particular child are all commonly viewed as playing roles in development. Therefore, the theoretical framework provided by a theory such as Vygotsky's is easily integrated into discussions of practice at the school.

Erikson

Erikson, writing in the psychoanalytic framework developed by Freud, has established a detailed developmental stage theory. His stage theory describes several psychological tasks to be grappled with from birth until death. There are eight total stages described in "The Eight Stages of Man", the fourth of which refers to middle childhood, which includes eight year olds. This fourth stage is that of industry vs. inferiority. As with any of Erikson's stages, he views the task for this age against the consequence for failure. If the child does not achieve a feeling of accomplishment when performing industrious tasks, the child risks growing frustration and doubt, which lead to a general feeling of inferiority. For Erikson, the possibility for failure in any of his stages

is reason for concern, for it generally results in a regression to previous stages and disbelief by the child of their ability to achieve success in that stage.

Erikson explains the stage of industry as a time when the child, "learns to win recognition by producing things" (Erikson, 1964, p. 258). This is the time when the child, "can become an eager and absorbed unit of a productive situation" (Erikson, 1964, p.259). The risk is that failures in this stage will result in a child who, "considers himself doomed to mediocrity" (Erikson, 1964, p.259). Pratt carries the idea of industry further in her discussion of what may be legitimate tasks for the child to truly feel, "the pleasure of work completion by steady attention and persevering diligence" (Erikson, 1964, p.259). She is concerned not only with the opportunity for children to test their skills in what Erikson refers to as the tool world, she also makes a distinction between busy work and work that is truly part of the wider society that includes the child. In her words, "The job must be real. It must be of actual service or the essence is lost" (Pratt, 1948, p.101).

I cannot think of a more direct link between school curriculum and this stage of Erikson's theory than the link to the jobs program. The Post Office provides the VIIIs

with the opportunity to try their hand at a job that at once provides a context that is both large enough and holds enough importance to have real value in the community, and small enough to be managed in a way that makes failure an unlikely outcome.

As the children get older, the jobs in the following years become larger with their growing capacities for performing required tasks. Each job is intended to provide new challenges to the group, while still allowing a high level of success.

Summary

Caroline Pratt was a keen observer of children. More importantly, however, she was able, with the help of other teachers, to translate that ability into a program that was highly responsive to children and contained a conscious effort on her part to take responsibility for their socialization. Therefore, the task of relating City and Country's program to child development theories is relatively simple.

Just as Piaget and Erikson noted a great shift in development around eight years of age, City and Country's program shifts from a blocks centered program to performing a school-wide job. This is another example of Caroline

Pratt's ability to observe children and match the school's program to what she concluded. Whether we think of how to address the shift to concrete operations, industry vs. inferiority or the need for scaffolding and awareness of the ZPD, we can see that there is a place in the jobs program for all of them. It is this mode of thinking critically about what children need at each stage of life and finding ways of attempting to meet those needs that is perhaps the most valuable piece of learning to take from the jobs program. The current challenge then, is to continue to hone these methods and continue to learn from children.

Chapter 4 - Topics for discussion

The topics explored in this section represent matters for which full explanation and exploration are beyond the scope of this paper. However, I would be remiss in not including some discussion of their implications. Therefore, they are highlighted below with the intent of expanding the scope of thinking around the jobs program and, in some cases, education in general.

Subject Area Integration with Job

Though there is a great deal of energy, both past and present, involved in creating opportunities for integration of the subject areas (math, science, art, etc.) with each job, it is still necessary to continue to look for new opportunities. Integration is a constant discussion that must continue, even though there are many points of integration that have continued through the years. Additionally, while there is great opportunity for subject integration inherent in the jobs program, it may not be possible to include everything the children need to learn into the jobs. Therefore, we must also examine what the children do not get from the jobs and find ways to include those items elsewhere.

Over time, there have been connections within the Post Office curriculum that have been lost. The Post Office has not, for many years, directly connected to the VIIIs Social Studies as many of the other jobs, such as the Xs sign making, do. Further, there are aspects of integration, such as the messenger's buzzer mentioned earlier, that no longer exist, mainly for efficiency's sake. While it was a logical and useful point of integration for the VIIIs to learn about electricity by constructing a buzzer for their room, it was inefficient, particularly because the messenger job is needed immediately by the school. Therefore, this connection was abandoned.

While past points of integration have been lost, there are also some aspects of what most schools think eight year olds should study that are very difficult, if not impossible, to relate adequately to the Post Office. The study of Geometry, for instance, is not easily examined in the context of the Post Office, though it may be in other jobs. It is one of the jobs of the teacher to admit when the connections are not likely to be made between some material and the Post Office and to find ways to provide opportunities for those experiences as well.

To keep the Post Office vibrant as a curriculum, it is important to look both at where integration is possible and

where it may be too difficult. With a critical eye, we must examine past connections that have been lost and future integration possibilities. In addition, we must keep in mind all of the things we wish children of this age to experience and admit when some of them do not fit. It is in this way that we can provide the fullest job experience to the children while also providing them with as many learning opportunities as they need.

Different Populations, Different Times, Different Meanings for Jobs

As previously stated in this paper, the population of City and Country students in its very early years was more working-class than the current population. As such, some of the original intention of the Post Office and jobs program is no longer directly related. In reading Caroline Pratt's writings as well as accounts of her life, it seems likely that part of the motivation behind the jobs program was rooted in the labor movement and centered around fair labor practices, as her partner Helen Marot, discussed in Chapter 1, was a labor activist. The students were paid for their contributions and they could bring grievances as a group to the attention of the teachers and administrators.

At present, City and Country student are, on average, more affluent. While much of the union-like quality remains in the degree of control students have over their work conditions, there seems to be a different tone about the work made possible by this affluence. For instance, the students are no longer paid for their work directly; work is done largely in a "community service" vein. While it is commendable to instill this sense of community service, it is a luxury of this economic class. In this sense, while the jobs program still works to develop a worker's perspective and recognize worker's rights, it does so now with a population of children who largely do not expect to serve in that role as adults. Rather, it provides them a chance to understand a kind of work and its function that they may not experience directly in their older years.

How do the jobs currently fit their old requirements?

It is important that the effectiveness of each job is examined regularly. Care must be taken to avoid keeping jobs or aspects of jobs in place simply for sentimental reasons. On the other hand, we must also be wary of changing a job merely because we desire some innovation.

In either of these instances, we risk having jobs that do not fit Caroline Pratt's three basic requirements:

- The job must fulfill a need and be useful to the school community
- It must be real, in that the job is experienced in its entirety, as a job would be in the adult world.
- It must be designed from a developmental perspective and fulfill an educational need for the group.

It is true that some of the jobs at City and Country use processes that have long been abandoned by much of the adult world. Printing presses are not used nearly as much now as they were in the early years of the school. With the advent of Xerox machines and computers, printing has largely taken on a new face. For similar reasons, sign making by hand has also virtually disappeared. Yet, the XIs and Xs jobs remain, done much as they were many decades ago. The question then must be asked, why are these jobs relevant in school if they are not relevant in the adult world? Part of this answer is that there is value in teaching the craft of careful, precise and difficult work.

This is a quality that will be useful in anything these children do. Additionally, there is some value in the preservation of old methods, as the understanding of those methods has the capability of increasing understanding of the new. It is also important to realize that these two jobs, of all the jobs in the school, are the most intimately linked to their social studies and therefore carry value beyond the job. Finally, these jobs carry with them a value that could not be achieved by using other means. For example, when the VIIIs get their first batch of Attendance Cards and After School Slips from the XIs, they are immediately enamored by the feel of the printing on the paper. The raised letters of these documents proves that they were not made by any usual means or copied using the regular methods and they are valued by the VIIIs and the rest of the school for this uniqueness.

However, just because there can still be value gained by the old methods of performing these functions does not mean there will not come a day when the pull of technology becomes too much for these jobs, as well as other jobs, such as the Post Office. When and if that day comes, it will be important to admit the antiquation of the jobs and work to find appropriate alternatives. Indeed, technology will likely be where most alternatives are found. It is

not at all impractical to imagine that the maintenance of a computer network, or other similar function, could serve as an appropriate job in the future.

Sociopolitical Implications of This Kind of Learning

In effect, through the jobs program, City and Country is, in part, run by the students. Of course, most of what goes into the functioning of the school on a large scale (i.e. budgeting, various administration, educational philosophy, most school policy, etc.) is done by adults in the school. However, there is much of the day-to-day functioning of the school that is at least touched by the children, particularly the VIIIs - XIIIs. This creates a vastly different power dynamic within the school and a different attitude between City and Country students and their school. Whereas in most schools, there is little control by the students, and therefore little control expected by the students, it is the opposite for City and Country students.

Students at City and Country expect to participate in their community. They expect to have an influence over decisions, large and small, that effect themselves, each other, and the school as a whole. They come to expect that they will know the why of what teachers want them to do,

not just the what and how. There are frequent conversations in the classroom, with other groups and as a school that, keep them involved in these decisions.

City and Country students are involved in much of the decision making that goes on in the classroom. Additionally, as the children get older, they increase their participation in the school's functioning. Indeed, the XIIIs school newspaper can be seen as creating a venue in which the older groups can debate school policy openly and can hear from parents, faculty, staff and administrators via the letters to the editor section. The older groups may also be involved in the planning of school functions, as was the case recently with the XIIIs taking on the planning and coordination of the school's diversity dinner. This is a vastly different model of power. Indeed, it is found to be quite jarring to some teachers. There is little perfunctory respect shown by the children. Much as adults often expect children to earn the respect of adults, at City and Country it is also the case that teachers must earn the respect of the children. This dynamic is interpreted by some as a pretentious quality of City and Country students. Of course, sometimes this kind of power for a small child may make them seem pretentious. However, for the most part, it is simply that they are

taking their place among the people that have a say in their own lives. Of course, this attitude can be taken to an extreme in which a child or group of children give too little thought to the effect of this attitude on the functioning of the group and/or other individual students. In cases such as this, the work of the group inevitably must suffer. It is the effect on the work of the group that provides the catalyst for discussion and resolution of the offending student or group.

The possible sociopolitical effects of changing the power structure in school could be incredible. In this country, we complain about apathy towards politics and governance and about powerlessness to change our situations. Voter turnout is low and it is thought by some that Americans take their government and freedoms for granted. I would suggest that these factors are the logical outcome of socialization in most schools, at least in part. Children are often taught to respect authority blindly, to accept rules without question and to perform tasks for which they are ignorant of the purpose. In effect, they do not have much of a say in their own lives. This seems to be precisely the behavior that is subsequently shunned in adulthood. I believe we can address this problem by reexamining what we ask of children

in our schools and more clearly aligning that behavior with what we as a country seem to desire from our citizens in adulthood. It is through an environment such as this that children are able to practice democracy so that they may be better than we are at carrying it out.

The jobs program is at least one way to more closely match school socialization to a democratic society. In addition to the social advantages of such a program, it also increases student interest and investment in school:

> Characteristics of a School Likely to Engage Students in a School's Programs:
>
> 1. An atmosphere in which students feel a sense of belonging or membership in the school community.
> 2. A feeling of students' safety, both physical and emotional/psychological.
> 3. Schoolwork with intrinsic interest for students.
> 4. School work that is meaningful not only for school purposes, but also in the real world outside school.
> 5. A sense of student ownership of their school.
>
> (Sehr, 1997, p. 87)

The children at City & Country have input into their own lives, both by taking part actively in decision making that affects them as well as helping to run the community. They hold themselves accountable for the schools functioning and

they let other groups know when that group could be doing a better job. The alternative power structure described here may be intimidating and sometimes disorienting to some educators, but if we admit that a school's role is, at least in part, to socialize children for the adult world, then it is necessary for our own development as a society, particularly a democratic society.

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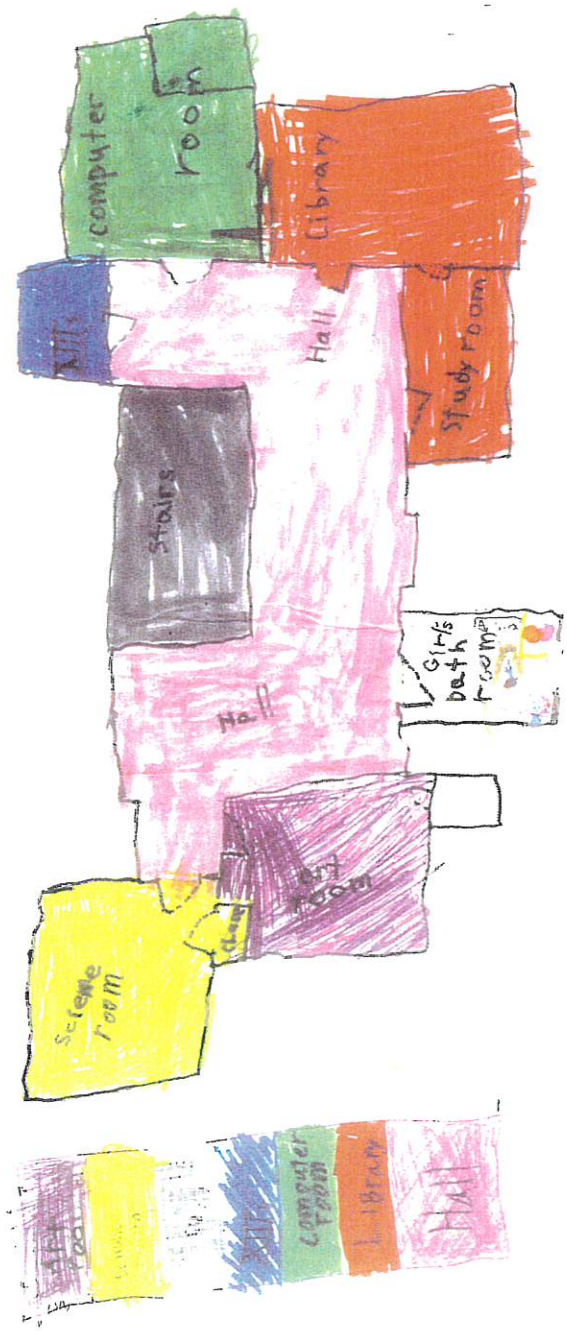
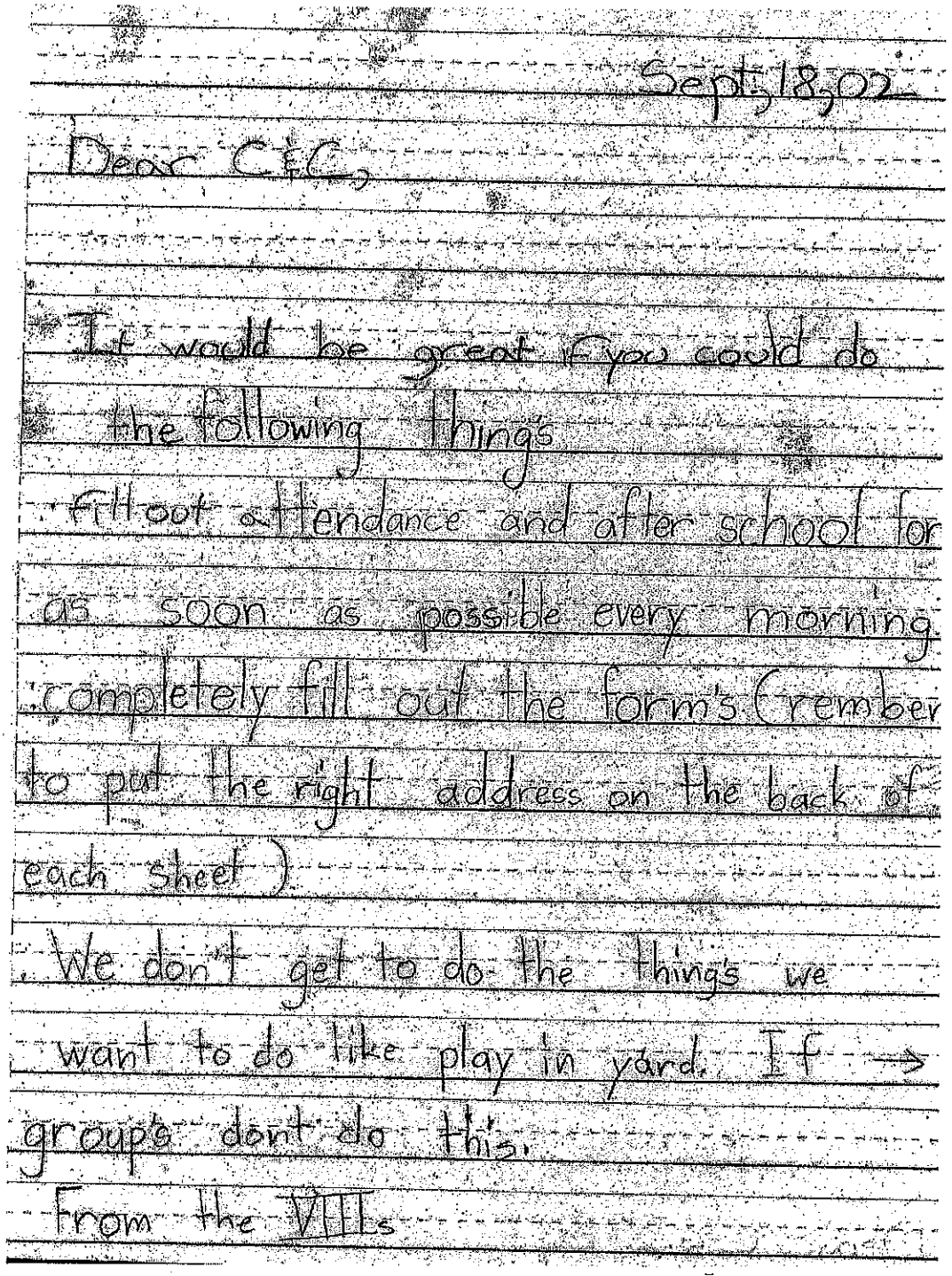
Appendix A

This is an example of a floor plan created by three of the VIIIs as part of mapping the entire school. Small groups map each of the floors in the school and then combine their maps to form a complete map.



Appendix B

This is an example of a letter written by one of the VIIIs to the school community. It calls attention to a general problem that the VIIIs faced in collecting and sorting the mail.



Sept. 18, 02

Dear C.F.C.,

It would be great if you could do the following things

fill out attendance and after school for as soon as possible every morning.

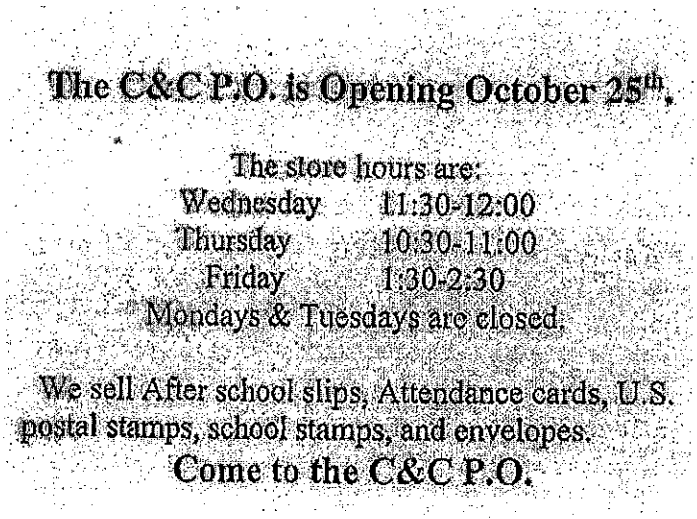
completely fill out the form's (remember to put the right address on the back of each sheet)

We don't get to do the things we want to do like play in yard. If → groups dont do this,

From the VIIIs

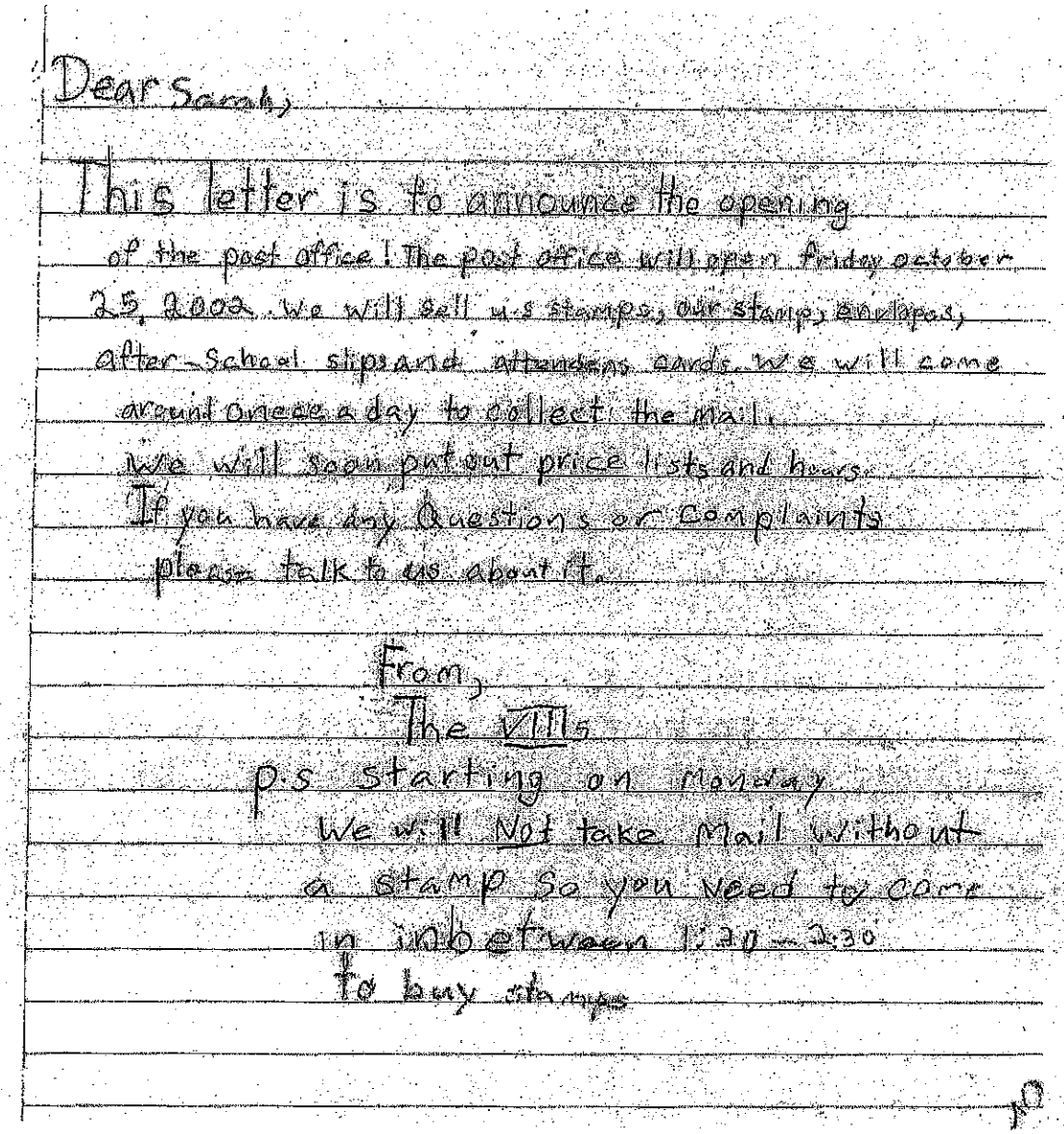
Appendix C

This is an advertisement written by the advertisement committee and submitted to the XIIIs Newspaper for publication. It is shown here as it appeared in the newspaper.



Appendix D

This letter was individually addressed to each office and group in the school announcing the grand opening of the Post Office.



Dear Sarah,

This letter is to announce the opening of the post office! The post office will open Friday october 25, 2002. We will sell u.s stamps, our stamps, envlapes, after-School slips and attendens cards. We will come around Onece a day to collect the mail.

We will soon put out price lists and hours.

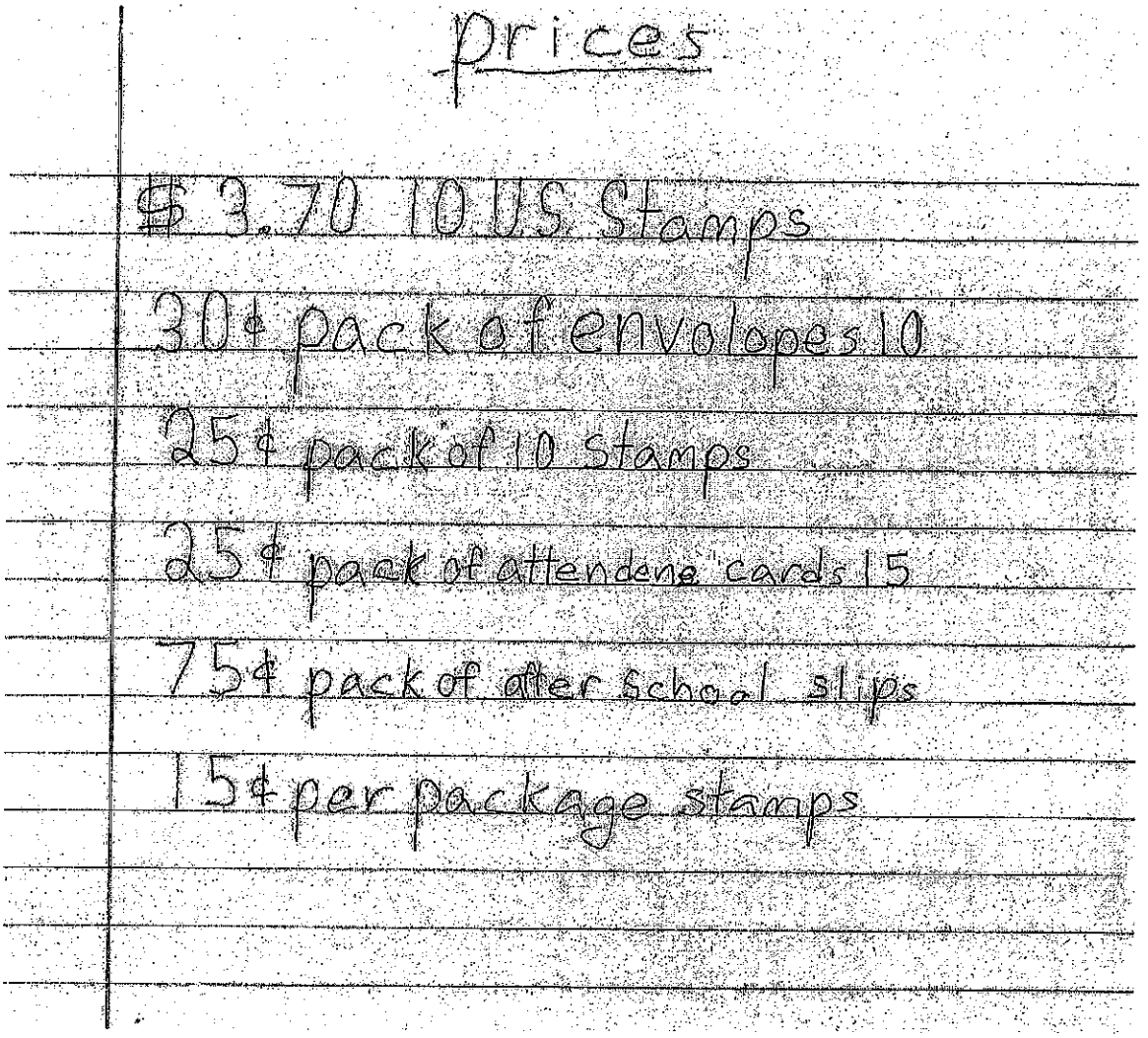
If you have any Questions or Complaints please talk to us about it.

From,
The VIIIs

p.s starting on monday
We will Not take mail without a stamp So you need to come in inbetween 1:30 - 2:30 to buy stamps

Appendix E

This is a pricelist created by the supplies committee after the VIIIs voted on their final prices. This list was then distributed throughout the school.



Appendix F

The following is a transcript of the stamp packaging video:

"Well, I want every group to start out with twenty stamps, because everyday the middle and upper school uses four stamps and they'll use four stamps everyday so then they'll run out at the end of the week and I want them to come at least each week"

Appendix G

The following is a transcript of the cashier training video:

Trainer 1: "Before you do that [trainee], one thing. [trainer 2], how much is that all together?"

Trainer 2: "Three dollars and twenty-five cents"

Trainer 1: "Three dollars and twenty-five cents and she's using a ten dollar bill"

Trainer 2: "She's using a ten dollar bill. OK, what would you write if she had three dollars and twenty-five cents and was paying with a ten dollar bill? OK, what would you write?"

Trainee: "Ummm, ten dollars minus three dollars and twenty-five cents."

Trainer 2: "Great, now do it on there."