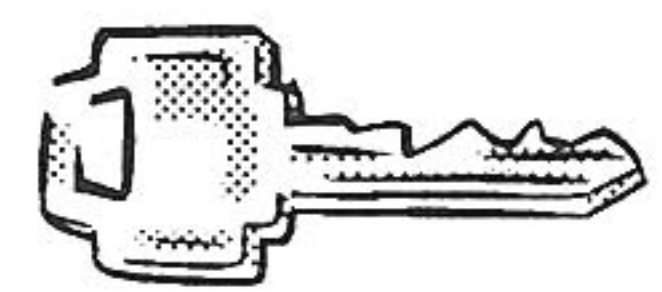


4 Curriculum

A strong curriculum with a series of detailed lessons to teach the children is essential to developing strong, confident teen teachers. The subject matter can be anything that is of interest to children and teenagers. Science, nutrition and cooking, health, gardening, and reading are popular subjects.



Key Research Findings

- Teenagers taught many different subjects, including science, health and safety, nutrition and cooking, arts and crafts, and personal development.
- A strong curriculum consisted of at least five lessons of 1 to 1½ hours each.
- Most sites initially provided detailed lesson plans for teenagers. As teenagers gained confidence and skills, lesson plans became more flexible.
- Teenagers were particularly effective when using hands-on and interactive learning activities.
- A strong curriculum enabled teenagers to gain a high level of teaching competence quickly.
- Becoming competent, successful teachers was fundamental to the teenagers' self-confidence.

“For the children, there was always an agenda. There was always something to do...something about their culture, some holiday, or the community.”

—TEEN TEACHER



Tips from the Field

- Select curricula content that is relevant to both the teenagers and the children.
- Select curricula that are relatively simple so that teenagers can understand the content quickly and teach with more confidence.
- Provide full, detailed lesson plans, particularly at first when teenagers may lack the experience and skills to improvise during a lesson.
- Plan lesson activities so that there is something for every child to do at all times. Keeping every child busy with positive activities is the best way to avoid behavior problems.

Sample Curricula for Teen Teachers

Reading Curriculum. *One Book at a Time: Teens Engaging Young Readers* is a curriculum based on five books, each accompanied by activities that promote oral language literacy in 5- to 8-year-old children in after-school programs, day camps, and community centers. Contact: Shelley Murdock, UC Cooperative Extension, 75 Santa Barbara Rd., 2nd Floor, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523; (925) 646-6540; swmurdock@ucdavis.edu.

Science Curricula. *4-H Youth Experiences in Science (Y.E.S.)* and *Science Experiences and Resources for Informal Education Settings (S.E.R.I.E.S)* projects offer hands-on, inquiry-based, science activities for children ages 5 through 12 years. Contact: Y.E.S.: Publication #3404A, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Communication Services, 6701 San Pablo Avenue, 2nd Floor, Oakland, CA 94608-1239; (800) 994-8849 or (510) 642-2431; <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu>. S.E.R.I.E.S.: Human & Community Development, One Shields Avenue, UC Davis, CA 95616-3969; (530) 752-8824.