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R.I. tries new way of teaching

November 30, 2001

By Leon Lagerstam, Dispatch/Argus Staff writer

A new way of teaching launched at Earl Hanson Elementary School in Rock Island will
of their education.

Most education strategies and school-reform models are directed by teachers or admir
Kid'' program starts with the students and works its way up, Rock Island-Milan assista
said.

Students using Koalaty Kid guidelines would choose something they are struggling wit
develop an improvement plan, he said.

Koalaty Kid outlines several tools students can use to develop what's called a ``Plan-
include a variety of flow-charts, diagrams and brainstorming techniques, Mr. Marino s

``The process begins by defining a problem,'' he said. ``The student would develop a
able to improve, and then apply what they feel is an effective activity or solution to im

Students then would collect, keep and study data, with a teacher's help, to measure if
getting better, they would keep repeating the process they developed, Mr. Marino saic
would develop a new plan, he said.

Koalaty Kid makes students initators of a plan and owners of information, Mr. Marino :
collecting data and they are the ones making their goals.

``A student defines what quality is for that individual student,'' he said. ``They are d

If an entire class is having trouble with a subject, such as spelling tests, a teacher car
find ways to improve everyone's success, Mr. Marino. It also can be used for school-w
students are having trouble treating each other with respect, teachers can develop a k
said.

A group of seven Hanson teachers and principal Sheila Wildermuth earlier this week a
session, conducted by Mr. Marino and overseen by Koalaty Kid master trainer Ann Hag

Rock Island-Milan becomes the first school district in the Quad-Cities area to launch K
becoming a Koalaty Kid ``hot bed,'' she said. Most of the Koalaty Kid schools, howeve

Hanson Elementary was chosen as Rock Island-Milan's pilot site, instead of other scho
Irving and Lincoln elementary schools or Edison Junior High, all recently listed on the
list. Those other schools already are receiving assistance and trying other ways to imp
removal from the list, Mr. Marino said.

However, he expects every Rock Island-Milan school will eventually use Koalaty Kid pr

The district will save a lot of money when it teaches its other schools how to use Koala
said. Mr. Marino is completing his national certification as a Koalaty Kid trainer, and w
training as part of his regular work routine.

Most districts spend $12,000 to $15,000 paying for a trainer's $1,000 per day fee and
expenses, she said.

Rock Island-Milan spent about $2,600 for Mrs. Haggerty Raines to observe Mr. Marino
was a required step before Mr. Marino could complete his certification. ``But it was a

He expects the district will spend another $1,000 on materials, but said grant funds w

Administrators expect Koalaty Kid will boost Illinois Standards Achievement Test score
and improve school climate because the program will better motivate students, as res
schools nationwide.

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