Empowering Rural Parents to Support Youth Career Development: An Interim Report

Gary H. Jeffery
Ron Lehr
George Hache
Marjory Campbell
Memorial University

Abstract

Work being done on a three-year project aimed at developing innovative ways to help rural parents support the career development of 15-25-year-old youth is described. The project makes use of an innovative data-gathering strategy and innovative techniques for analyzing qualitative group interview data. The paper describes identified rural career-related needs and discusses proposed products designed to address these needs.

Résumé

Cet article décrit un projet visant le développement de moyens innovateurs pour inviter les parents, du milieu rural, à supporter le développement à la carrière des jeunes de 15 à 25 ans. Ce projet s'étend sur une période de trois années. Le projet utilise des stratégies et des techniques innovatrices pour la cueillette de données et pour analyser les données qualitatives de groupes d'interviews. L'identification des besoins spécifiques reliés à la carrière dans le milieu rural est décrite et les alternatives proposées destinées à adresser ces besoins sont discutées.

The rural situation presents unique challenges to the career decision-making process of young people. Unlike their urban counterparts, youth in rural and remote areas generally have to leave home to attend post-secondary school and more often than not, have to leave home to partake in any type of training which would put them on a career path. Rural parents are faced with difficulties that are somewhat different than urban parents. One of the major factors for rural parents is the financial cost of sending their children to urban centres to pursue their career goals. Making ill-informed decisions could lead to personal emotional crises and could result in their children prematurely ending their training or studies. Successfully making the transition from home to the world of work and post-secondary study is very important for all involved. Because parents play a major role in the lives of their children, there is a need to try to systematically involve parents more in the career decision process.

Parents want to help their children but often feel unable to do so. Many have had little world experience. Most have been unable to keep up with the ever-expanding information necessary to make well-informed decisions about careers. Encouraging parental involvement and enhancing their willingness and ability to support the career devel-

opment of their youth becomes very challenging, especially since most career-related information and resources are located in distant centres inaccessible to most rural parents. Professionals who have the required career-related knowledge are more concentrated in larger urban settings. Encouraging rural parents to actively promote and support the career seeking of their children poses a major challenge to counsellors.

The project described explores the unique needs of rural parents with respect to how they help their youth make career decisions. It also describes proposed career support products. Early in the project, it was assessed that one of the major problems faced by rural parents was a lack of career-related information. An even more important lack was knowledge of how to obtain available information. If sources of information were identified, how could this information be delivered or obtained by rural parents? How could parents themselves be motivated and empowered to become more informed and involved in the career decision-making process of their youth? How would parents interact with their youth if they had access to needed information? What kind of transportable, cost-effective delivery system could be set up that would truly help parents help their youth, especially given the remoteness of many rural communities? These questions are the focus of the present research. From the needs assessment to the development of materials which would be used by parents, many of these questions are beginning to be answered and other questions are being added to the list. A more comprehensive picture of rural parents' needs as they relate to helping their children make more informed career decisions is emerging.

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is a limited amount of literature which outlines career development programs specifically designed to involve parents of youth (Castricone, Wright & Gumble, 1982; Hoyt, 1984; Whiston, 1989). The importance of such programs is supported by recent literature which documents the significance of parental role-modelling for youth making career decisions (Bearg, 1980; Goodole, 1976; Lavine, 1982; Leung, Wright & Foster, 1987). Literature discussing the provision of particular types of educational information to parents can also be found. This work deals with providing parents with problem-solving strategies for assisting their children with career decisions. Several authors also describe value systems of families relative to work patterns (Conger & Hiebert, 1990; Hohenshil, Hummel & Maddy-Bernstein, 1980; Hopson & Hough, 1976; Krammer, 1985; Levine, 1985; Lopez & Andrews, 1987; Lyson, 1986; Schulenberg, Vondracek & Crouter, 1984). Very little work has been done on supporting the needs of rural parents.

Parental Influence on Careers

Poole (1983), after studying almost 800 Australian 14-year-old youths, stated that ". . . parents today are no longer adequately equipped to assist their children in making job choices, e.g., in terms of information about the range of jobs available and in understanding what certain jobs entail" (p. 23). This situation exists even though "studies assessing the relative influence of home- and school-related sources of advice have invariably placed family influences ahead of the formal school structures set up to provide vocational guidance" (p. 24). Poole's "data indicated that those students who spoke frequently with their parents had far more definite ideas on both job choice and educational plans. Conversely, those who never talked to parents were most undecided about the future" (p. 25). She also found that those students who had good relationships with their parents were more willing to seek guidance from various other sources. This data suggests that at age 14 a major influence on students' occupational aspirations and expectations are parents. Poole cautions that this reliance on parents may partly reflect the inadequacy of guidance facilities offered by schools and other organizations. While parental influence is strongly evident in any decision students make, one must ask whether parents can provide adequate career advice (in terms of information, training prerequisites, labour market forecasts, etc.). There is also the question of whether parents possess the skills to obtain career resources (Poole, 1983).

Otto (1989) points out that "One of the most widely held and uncritically accepted myths in our society is that parents don't matter when it comes to young people's career plans, that 'my kids don't listen to me.' Yet the evidence indicates that young people do listen to parents in such basic areas as religious beliefs, political beliefs, and career plans" (p. 38). Otto cites a 1984 work by McDaniels and Hummel which reviewed 56 books, 33 journal articles on parenting and 25 articles on special problems and developmental issues. References to parent programs concerned with their children's career development were nonexistent in this literature.

Palmer and Cochran (1988) found that, although research had shown that children's career development and choices were influenced by parents and that parents wanted to assist their children in these areas, there was nothing in the way of empirical data to support the success of programs that were already in existence. Vodanovich and Kramer (1989), in a study of the work-related values of parents and their children, found that the level of work values held by daughters was just as different from their parents as those stated by sons. "In addition, the level of work values expressed by students is quite different from those stated by fathers as well as mothers" (pp. 369-70). These findings are contrary to results of studies done in the past. Vodanovich and Kramer believe that

this is due to the measuring tools used in their study which were "more sensitive in their assessment of parent-child work value differences" (p. 369). Another interesting finding in the study suggested that male and female students expressed work values which did not reflect traditional sex-role stereotyped orientations. This finding is in contrast to the finding regarding parents' values. Fathers' scores on "traditionally masculine" work values were significantly higher than mothers; whereas, mothers' patterns of work values stressed "stereotypical feminine" patterns. These authors state that ". . . it is likely that most college students have not experienced as many sex-role stereotyped work environments as their parents. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that such differential work experience of students and parents could lead to the development of varying levels of work values" (p. 372). Because Vodanovich and Kramer studied the career-related values of college students, it cannot be assumed the group studied is representative of non-college youth. Because college students have more formal education they may also have and the possibility of greater social mobility which in turn may have influenced their results. Urban-rural differences were not a factor in this study.

Miller (1982) provided vocational educators, seeking to better understand the needs of rural America, with a fact sheet offering information on rural schools, people and labour markets. One of the "facts" reported was the strong influence parents have on the career choices of their children. It is important to note that the fact sheet did not recommend any programs to tap this resource.

McCracker and Odell (1988) studied the career-related views of rural students and parents. This research which involved 491 rural Ohio secondary students found "that rural schools emphasize preparation for college attendance and that rural parents hold educational expectations for their children higher than their own attainments. Students also had high expectations, especially with regard to salary" (p. 1).

Elliott (1987), discussing counsellor-parent partnerships in rural areas, believes there is a great need to develop "strategies for improving parental impact on adolescent career plans" (p. 5). This study, conducted in three rural American communities with populations of 350, 550 and 800, found that rural students, because of geographic isolation and the economic decline of the communities, are "decidedly disadvantaged." Elliott found that teachers described the rural students as responding in ways which included "apathetic," "unmotivated," "indifferent," and "depressed." Because of this, she suggests there is a need to create community support at a level which encourages co-operation between and among students, teachers, administrators and parents. She believes rural communities can co-operate with each other to make use of technological advances which normally cannot be obtained by rural schools. By

altering the curricula in rural schools, either of two purposes could be served. Students could be encouraged "to appreciate and remain in their rural communities as contributing citizens" or be provided "with the confidence and necessary skills to move out" (p. 4). She adds that it is vital rural schools be equipped to offer the high-quality guidance and counselling, both in personal and career areas, needed to help deal with the myriad of factors impinging on their lives. One of the outstanding points made here is the effect which the decline in economic situation has on students' goals. Elliott quotes Lillian Rubin who stated that "In order to plan for the future you must believe it possible to control your fate, a belief that can only be held if it is nourished in experience." In this study, Elliott found many rural students had expected to follow in their parents' footsteps by either taking over the farm or accepting blue-collar employment; and although they acknowledged this was no longer possible, they appeared powerless and therefore unable to replace their expectations with more viable ones.

Otto (1989) noted a 1985 Gallup poll which reported a need for greater knowledge concerning the different facets of careers including types of jobs and careers, the prerequisites needed for the jobs and careers, and the rewards expected. He also noted that the school system is not able to provide the type of individual career counselling required by youth.

Research suggests strongly that parents do significantly influence their children's career choices; therefore, it is time parents were considered important agents in the task of helping young people make informed career choices (Herr & Cramer, 1988). It must also be remembered that information and guidance are not the same thing. Career guidance is "a systematic program of counsellor-coordinated information and experiences designed to facilitate individual career development and, more specifically, career management" (Herr & Cramer, 1988, p. 18). In other words, the process of making career decisions needs to be managed, from the knowledge of how to find career information to ensuring the achievement of the desired outcome.

As suggested in this section, few programs for parents of young adults have been offered. A review of the literature found virtually no programs for parents from rural areas. A few related programs were found which offered suggestions for activities potentially utilized in this project. For the sake of brevity, these programs will not be described, but interested readers may want to look at the work of Rubinton (1985) whose project offered parents career-decision courses and workshops on career development; Richmond, Lynch, Fick and Lisansky (1982) who used counsel-mime to help parents with handicapped children; Daniels, Karmos and Presley (1983) who described four programs which could be of help to parents by making them aware of the many facets of career decision-

making; Otto (1989) who designed a program intended to meet the needs of parents wishing to help their children discover careers; and, Lewis, Rimai, DePalma-Meyer and LeFevre (1981) who offered a manual on training parents of handicapped children in career development. These are a few of the programs directly related to helping parents.

Parents and Career Literature: Some Conclusions

When one reviews the very limited literature focusing on the role of parents and their impact on the career-related activities of their children, several significant trends and issues become focal. It becomes apparent that parents are what might be considered an untapped resource. Parents, with support, might be able to be both counsellors and information providers. Research suggests that while parents can have a significant influence on their youth's career aspirations and expectations, few programs exist to help them.

Many parents, especially in rural communities, have limited access to and knowledge of the wide array of jobs or careers potentially available. This is because of the lack of economic diversity in most rural areas (i.e., most communities are one-industry or one-resource towns). In rural communities there is also often a lack of diverse and powerful role models who might affect the career aspirations of youth. This lack has, as an apparent consequence, resulted in lower career expectations. While school programs designed to facilitate career discovery exist, these programs do not tend to involve and reach out to rural parents. It would seem appropriate to help school personnel to recognize the value of this important career education resource.

In addition to questions about rural programs, several questions which the literature leaves unaddressed include:

1. What impact does rural parents' education have on their children?

2. What are the differences between those leaving and those staying?

3. What are rural youths' feelings about moving away from home and what are the implications of these feelings?

After reviewing the few programs designed for parents of youth (as contrasted to junior high and younger age groups) it becomes evident that there is very little designed to meet rural needs. Because the rural context is different than the urban, programs which involve notions such as job shadowing, mentor identification, and visits or contacts with persons engaged in diverse occupations, are simply not feasible. There are few "specialized" or "alternative" careers represented in the rural community. There simply is not a diverse range of occupations being practised within "travelling distance" of most rural communities. A parent or youth often knows little about such jobs and because of distance (travel cost) and non-availability of models, mentors and "real" opportunities to

observe, there is virtually no chance to explore wide-ranging occupations. It was to address these sorts of concerns that the project reported in this paper was undertaken.

THE RURAL SITUATION

Defintion of Rural

A single, widely held definition of "rural" does not exist. Most definitions are tailored to meet the needs of the problem being addressed. Recognizing the distinctiveness of rural from urban areas along the lines of economics, cultural variables, etc., the present research focused on population size as the distinguishing factor in defining rural and remote. The operational definition used includes a combination of the following two definitions taken from the Newfoundland Statistics Agency (NSA) (J. Warren, personal communication, October 24, 1990). One definition uses postal-code boundaries as the geographic identifier. The second common definition used by the Newfoundland Statistics and the Rural, Agriculture and Northern Development agencies (NSA/RAND), states that urban includes census agglomerations, with populations of 5,000 and over. Using this definition the rural population of the province would be 50 per cent.

For remote areas, postal codes were used as the geographic identifier and for areas which are rural, but not remote, the NSA/RAND definition was adopted. The NSA/RAND definition appears to be a functional definition as the aim of the project was to identify and deliver services to rural and remote areas. It is important to reduce the impact of close physical proximity to larger centres as we believe an agglomeration of communities will have resources similar to urban areas.

Rural Concerns

Based on available literature and the experience of the research team, a hypothetical needs list was derived prior to meeting with the parents. These were viewed as hypotheses, to be confirmed empirically in our study. This list was split into two groups, one reflecting family, community and cultural reviews, the other job, career and labour-related concerns.

Family/community/cultural concerns. A number of problems and situations related to family and community and to the traditions of each which could hamper a young person's chances of making a successful career adjustment were hypothesized. They were:

1. Problems resulting from very close bonding of the young person to parents, peers, home and community. (This might be reflected in very close ties between the youth and both parents and the community. The youth might, for example feel that "They'd be lonesome if I were away" or "I'd be lonesome if I were away.")

2. Widely held beliefs that home community is best or only place to be (ethnocentrism).

3. Fears held by young persons and perhaps parents that young people are unable to compete successfully elsewhere.

4. Situations where the young person is socialized into non-creative solutions/non-provocative stances when it came to the pursuit of careers.

5. Many members of the community (the potential role models for both the parents and the youth) demonstrating that they have adapted successfully to what is in many respects a difficult local situation. In other words, there were many role models who were "surviving" as unemployed people.

6. Many gender-related issues and problems.

7. Problems resulting from early pregnancies.

8. Widely held views that it is easier and cheaper to stay at or near home.

9. Inter-generational patterns of welfare or unemployment insurance dependency.

10. Common parental strategies, which encourage the young person to return home when there is stress.

11. A limited number of role models in communities capable of demonstrating good career decision-making skills.

12. Tendencies for young people (who are leaving the home community for career purposes) to go primarily to those settings where there already is a support network rather than to unfamiliar communities.

13. Greater problems for youths associated with leaving the old situation, then with their ability to cope with a new situation.

14. Some people having problems because of substance abuse.

Jobs/career/labour market information concerns. A number of problems and situations related to information on job availability, alternative careers, the nature of the labour market, etc., were also anticipated. A list of factors was hypothesized to include the following types of problem areas:

1. An absence of jobs available in the area.

2. An absence of information on places (local or distant) where one might get work.

3. A limited amount of knowledge about the wide range of career options that exist.

4. Limited parental and youth knowledge about how to identify persons or services (i.e., Employment Canada resources) who can supply or lead them to information.

5. A lack of parental and youth awareness that there are often support services in a new community from which one might seek help (i.e., the "Y," churches and social clubs).

6. Extensive misinformation about what it is like in other centres (i.e., a person may have only heard about or had experience with a boarding house in Toronto). If there has been travel, it is often only one parent who has travelled, hence there may not be unanimous support for a youth's choice(s).

7. A relative absence of "mentors" or persons who encourage or challenge youth to search more widely.

8. A relative absence of parents with strategies for finding work. (It might be found that one of the few available strategies involves following the "booms" to places like Toronto or Calgary.)

METHODOLOGY

The Rural Communities Studied

To test our hypothesized concerns three representative rural communities were chosen. One had a population just less than 1,500 and the other two each had a population of about 500. All were located at least 85 kilometres from a larger centre. A series of visits was made to each community by the research team. A total of 11 needs identification meetings were held each attended by 2 to 9 persons. The views of a total of 60 respondents were heard. In addition to the meetings held with parents and community members, in two of the communities, meetings were also held with youths from two local senior high school graduating classes. In one community, members of a class made up of older rural youth, all of whom were attending a retraining program for early school leavers, were also interviewed.

   The first two meetings, one with a parent group and one with informed respondents, were quite unstructured. Respondents were simply asked to help the research team learn about local career-related concerns and activities, caareer-related problems and any useful "help" strategies or activities that were utilized. Based on the information gathered here, subsequent meetings were structured so as to collect both new information and to seek comments and elaboration on previously presented views. The data-gathering methodology was based on a much modified Delphi strategy (Butler & Howell, 1980; Kaufman & English, 1979; McKillip, 1987; Myers, 1988).

   Each session, after the initial two, was divided into three parts. First, participants were asked to comment, as had the participants in the initial

groups, on their career-related concerns and the solutions they had for problems. In the second part, general themes which had been raised in earlier groups, but not raised by the current group, were introduced by the researcher for confirmation and elaboration. In the final phase, specific topics and strategies which had also been offered by previous groups but not previously discussed in the current meeting were introduced for comment. Following each session, the research team analyzed all the presented data and derived updated topic and needs lists. These lists were used to guide the researcher's comments or questions in the next set of meetings. Whenever a topic was spontaneously raised by a given group, it was removed from the list of topics to be explored in that session.

Recording Procedures

A "direct-to-print" methodology was used to record the comments of parents, informed respondents and youth. Comments, points and suggestions made by each participant were directly keyed into a computer in a verbatim or paraphrased form by one of the researchers while the person was making the comment. There were no intermediary steps of tape-recording and transcribing the data.

Immediately following the session, notes were re-read and edited by the note-taker and where points were unclear, clarification was sought from another researcher or session participant. Similar points and contributions made by respondents were then collected and sorted. Related comments were grouped and assigned an appropriate "need" or "strategy" label. Master lists of needs (each derived from participants' comments) were thus developed.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PHASE

Preliminary analyses of the needs data appears to support many of the conclusions hypothesized above. Some anticipated findings are less well supported. It was believed that young people would be closely bonded to their families and communities and this bonding would be reflected in a low level of parental encouragement towards job- or career-related activities requiring the young person to leave the community. This initial view was found to be not entirely accurate. It was found that a high parental expectancy of youth leaving the community is inevitable and hence is expected and supported. The parents sampled appear to support, albeit with regret and concern, young people moving out. Support was also not found for the hypothesized notion that parents may encourage their children to return home if confronted with stressful situations "while away." While strategies to help the youth who are "away" were not abundant, the parental desire that youth get training and "make it on their own" was very strong.

There also would appear to be two quite distinct groups of parents. One group which strongly supports career aspirations and separation, if necessary, of their youth from the family and community. The other group appears to be ignoring, denying, or unaware of the limited career opportunities in smaller communities. While members of the second group, not surprisingly, did not attend any sessions, they were frequently referred to by both the parents and the informed respondents.

Parents did not suggest that they felt their youth could not compete. While an abundance of creative solutions were not identified, solutions were being very actively sought by the parents. The parents knew that career identification and preparation problems existed. They were extremely anxious for help or guidance in their personal efforts to support their youth. Some gender- and pregnancy-related issues were identified. There were major problems identified in communities in which youth could easily obtain well-paying, short-term or unsteady work, i.e., in a unionized fish plant. Such jobs often lured young peope from school and, in the opinion of community members, encouraged these young people to marry early, buy cars or become debt-ridden. They were thus often "trapped," or felt themselves unable to go back to school. Staying at home and acceptance of welfare and unemployment insurance solutions were not widely encouraged by the parents, nor was returning home if the young person was under stress. Limited access to role models and high expenses related to travel, lodging and study away were all identified as problems. The youth reportedly chose and were encouraged to travel to places where family or previous neighbours had moved.

Strong parental concerns about limited information on viable careers and the difficulties involved in finding information about alternative and unknown careers were found. Similarly, there were strong concerns expressed about the adequacy of local career-search opportunities. Strong concerns about the limited exposure children have to alternative careers and a variety of role models were also voiced.

Often parents expressed the view that because they had received little education, they felt themselves to be poor role models for their children. Because many had left formal schooling by grade 6 or earlier, they were unsure of the impact they would or could have on their children. They also felt that they lacked adequate experience and knowledge to offer sound educational advice.

A most pervasive theme expressed by parents related to the high costs associated with education. Parents in rural communities felt that they had limited resources yet were faced with very substantial costs when supporting the education or training of their children. They often commented on the very inequitable urban-rural education costs. The rural parent, for example, needs to pay for lodging, travel, extra telephone bills, and miscellaneous costs not encountered by an urban peer whose

child attended a local institution or university. These additional costs resulted in the parent placing additional pressures on the young person to "succeed." The rural parent, again because of costs, felt greater pressure to ensure that any education or training decision be well informed and carefully made. That the young person might seek training for a career in which there is little chance for employment was an especially significant concern.

Virtually all the job, career and labour market information concerns hypothesized to exist were identified in the parent groups. A more detailed analysis of the data is currently in progress and a precise statement of findings will be forthcoming.

TOWARDS MEETING THE NEEDS OF RURAL PARENTS: PRODUCTS AND PLANS

A number of products are being developed and others which are needed have been identified. Two categories of new products were identified as needed, namely those of "an educational/informational" nature and those of an "interpersonal/supportive" nature. The educational products are intended to acquaint rural parents with sources of career information and to offer them specific strategies for obtaining this information. The nature of needed "interpersonal/support" components is less obvious. While these could include help of a type traditional career- or personal-counselling services might offer, limited funding, low population density and a scarcity of trained professionals hinder the delivery of such support. Products aimed at encouraging self-help, at least in the early stages of career exploration, are deemed appropriate and realistic. Materials and guidelines for establishing community support and interest groups are an example of what is viewed as being needed.

Products which seek to empower parents to help themselves, by acting alone or in small groups, are being developed. These are designed to encourage the sharing of solutions and the facilitation of contacts between parents and resource people. The "education/information" products include a video and audiotape and printed materials. All materials support each other but can be used alone. These products will offer suggestions for obtaining information on careers and jobs and give suggestions for utilizing both community and more distant help.

A second type of resource being developed is a community leader's guide and resource book. This will offer "non-professional leaders" suggestions to help them form groups. It will also offer discussion topics and activities for the groups.

At the outset and through the data-gathering phases, the importance and potential of video materials was clearly recognized. These were what parents preferred. It became apparent that several videotapes would be beneficial. Based on the data, parents need tapes dealing with:

- finding career information
- coping with the problems of registration, loans, insurance, etc.
- helping kids leave home
- coping with loneliness and relocation problems
- helping youth anticipate and deal with their new freedom
- helping youth maintain a pride in their roots
- helping youth cope with fears of being "different"
- communicating and staying in contact with a child who is away.

The first videotape has been developed and is nearly ready for distribution. This tape, through a dramatic scenario, depicts rural parents, without professional help, seeking career information which will be useful to their children. Many themes and issues are introduced in the tape. The tape is designed to encourage active problem solving without specifically telling or trying to instruct the viewer as to what should be done.

As a companion to the video, an information booklet is being developed. This identifies activities that might be performed by a parent alone, a child and parent, or a small group. Suggestions for finding information and ways to help youth identify possible career directions are offered. This booklet can be used independently of the video. For lower literacy parents, an audio version of the booklet is being prepared.

The booklet and guide will be similar in structure and content. Much more detailed information and more structured suggestions and activities are found in this guide. It is principally intended to be used by a community leader for career-focused parent groups. The guide will offer background information about roles parents might play, with outlines and work sheets that might be used in group meetings.

There is a wealth of information on careers which simply is not readily available to rural people. Systems for establishing direct contact between such information and rural persons needing that information must be sought. In addition to the work being currently completed, there exists a real need for the development of other solutions. Parents need to be offered access to local discussion groups. Teleconferencing can be used to offer the opportunity for contacts with distant counsellors. A teleconference system could offer parents a chance to participate in information exchange or in peer support groups attended by participants from other rural communities. Structure should focus on the more traditional counselling topics like communication skills, values clarification, interest identification and problem solving. Other sessions focusing on issues such as those related to the videotapes discussed above would be useful.

Video and audiotapes, along with printed materials should be made available to parents through various local sources such as grocery or convenience stores, town offices or school libraries. Mail-order or "800-line" access would be very beneficial to rural populations. Counsellors or

career specialists should be readily available through visits, telephone calls or teleconference meetings. Throughout the study, it was repeatedly made clear that there is a great need for innovative means of supporting rural populations and of getting information to these people. Rural frustration with the absence of such support is extremely high.

A strong need for a rural focus in existing and future products and services was identified. Developers of counsellor-training programs and institutions offering counsellor training have simply not taken into account the rural situation and the needs of counsellors who will work in these settings. Rural youth and parents need information and services which are tailored to their situation. A concern identified by the authors and confirmed by rural parents, youth and counsellors was that virtually all career-counselling packages and supports carry what might be termed "an urban assumption." Most products and approaches to career counselling assume, for example, that the users have relatively easy access to sources of information or job-related experiences. Use of mentors, manpower offices, job shadowing or libraries replete with career information and pamphlets are assumed to be readily available if the end-user has the appropriate guidance and is offered the necessary skills needed to avail him or herself of the resources. While these same assumptions may be valid in the rural settings, there are other factors which must be addressed. Many resources, including exposure to a variety of jobs and careers or an exposure to diverse role models, just do not exist in many rural communities. There may, for example, be very few careers, possibly all very traditional, available in the community. Opportunities for job shadowing may not exist locally and some may only be available several hundred kilometres away. Career-counselling programs and strategies must become aware of this reality.

References

Bearg, E. (1980). Parental role modelling as a career awareness tool. *Elementary School Guidance and Counselling, 14,* 266-68.

Butler, L. & Howell, R. (1980). *Community needs assessment techniques, coping with growth.* Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University, Western Rural Development Centre (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 252 358).

Castricone, A. M., Wright Finan, W. & Gumble, S. K. (1982). Focus on career search: A program for high school students and their parents. *School Counsellor, 29,* 411-14.

Conger, S. & Hiebert, B. (1990). *Creation and mobilization of counselling resources for youth: Counsellor training master plan.* Ottawa: Canadian Guidance and Counselling Foundation.

Daniels, M. H., Karmos, J. S. & Presley, C. A. (1983). *Parents and peers: Their importance in the career decision making process* (Report No. CE 040 500). Carbondale, IL: Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield. Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Serivce No. ED 252 704).

Elliott, J. (1987). *Rural students at risk* (Report No. RC 016 362). Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 285 708).

Goodole, J. & Hall, D. (1976). Inheriting a career: The influence of sex, values, and parents. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 8,* 19-30.

Herr, S. L. & Cramer, L. (1988). *Career guidance and counselling through the life span: Systematic approaches* (3rd ed.). Boston: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Hiebert, B. (1988). *Creation and mobilization of counselling resources for youth: Evaluating counselling endeavours.* Unpublished paper. University of Calgary.

Hohenshil, T. H., Hummel, D. L. & Maddy-Bernstein, C. (1980). The impact of work patterns upon family development. *School Psychology Review, 9,* 312-18.

Hopson, B. & Hough, P. (1976). The need for personal and social education in secondary schools and further education. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 4,* 16-27.

Hoyt, K. R. (1984). Helping parents understand career education. *Journal of Career Education, 10,* 216-24.

Kaufman, R. & English, R. W. (1979). *Needs assessment: Concept and application.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 165 807).

Krammer, P. (1985). Career and life style expectations of rural eighth-grade students. *School Counsellor, 33,* 18-25.

Lavine, L. (1982). Parental power as a potential influence on girl's career choice. *Child Development, 53*(3), 365-63.

Leung, J., Wright, B. W. & Foster, S. F. (1987). Perceived parental influence and adolescent post secondary career plans. *High School Journal, 70,* 173-79.

Levine, J. A. (1985). The college student in conflict with parents over career choice. *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality, 19,* 17-23.

Lewis, M. J., Rimai, C., DePalma-Meyer, F. & LeFevre, K. (1981). *Training parents in career education.* Washington, DC: Department of Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 277 264).

Lopez, F. & Andrews, S. (1987). Career indecisions: A family systems perspective. *Journal of Counselling and Development, 6,* 304-07.

Lyosn, T. (1986). Migration selectivity and early adult attainments. *Rural Sociology, 51,* 328-42.

McCracker, J. D. & Odell, K. S. (1988). Career aspirations of rural secondary students. *Journal of Vocational and Technical Education, 5,* 3-12 (from ERIC Abstract No. EJ 383 464).

McKilliip, J. (1987). *Need analysis: Tools for the human services and education.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Miller, J. (1982). *Vocational education in rural America. Overview: ERIC fact sheet No. 15* (Report No. CE 800 057). Washington, DC: National Institute of Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 237 803).

Myers, A. (1988). Needs assessment: Broadening the perspective on its utility and timing. *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, 3,* 103-13.

Otto, L. B. (1987). Parents: Key career advisers. *Vocational Education Journal, 67,* 37-38.

———. (1989). *Parents and their adolescents' career development.* Paper presented at the Proceedings of the Ohio Middle School and Junior High School Career Guidance Conference, June 28-30, 1988 (Report No. CG 022 028). Washington, DC: Department of Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 312 531).

Palmer, S. & Cochran, L. (1988). Parents as agents of career development. *Journal of Counselling Psychology, 35,* 71-76.

Poole, M. (1983). Job choice and advice. *The Vocational Aspect of Education, 35,* 23-29.

Richmond, L. J., Lynch, L., Fick, C. & Lisansky, R. (1982). *Mime as a career and life style planning technique* (Report No. CG 016 286). Detroit: Paper presented at the Annual convention of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 222 818).

Rubinton, N. (1985). Career Exploration for middle school youth: A university-school cooperative. *The Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 33,* 249-55.

Schulenberg, J. E., Vondracek, F. W. & Crouter, A. C. (1984). The influence of the family on vocational development. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 46,* 129-43.

Vodanovich, S. J. & Kramer, T. J. (1989). An examination of the work values of parents and their children. *The Career Development Quarterly, 37,* 365-77.

Whiston, S. C. (1989). Using family systems theory in career counselling: A group for parents. *School Counsellor, 36,* 343-47.