

CATHERINE VU-THU-HUONG,
*Memorial University
of Newfoundland.*

DECISION-MAKING AND VOCATIONAL INFORMATION

ABSTRACT: Presented in this article is the rationale on Career Information and Career Education. With the expansion of world modern technology, career development has become very important in guidance. In educational institutions, the Information Service of a guidance programme is fulfilled by the Career Information Library. Illustrated in this article is a classification system based upon the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* and the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*.

Decision-making and vocational information are areas of high priority in the field of guidance and counselling in our contemporary epoch where man is more than ever threatened with a very complex and changing technology. From an historical perspective, and throughout its evolution, since the turn of the century, guidance has been consistently concerned with assisting individuals to plan, to choose, and to decide. Counselling helps in making judicious decisions, in choosing among several alternatives the right course of action, and in making realistic plans for the future. According to E. L. Herr, (1970), "decision-making includes the identifying and the defining of one's values, what they are and what they are not, where they appear and where

they do not appear. . . . An initial step is to ascertain within the context of a particular decision the relevant value dimensions, to create a hierarchy of value factors relevant to the student's uniqueness and the specific kind of decision being considered (p. 7)." This could apply to decision-making in an educational and vocational context through vocational information. The purpose of this paper is to stress the use of the Career Information Library as a means of facilitating the student's process of decision-making.

THE CAREER INFORMATION LIBRARY

Any guidance program, be it organized within the elementary, secondary, or higher system of education, usually comprises the following services:

- a) Student Inventory Service
- b) Information Service
- c) Testing and Counselling Service
- d) Placement Service
- e) Follow-up Study

The Information Service is that part of a guidance program which is devoted to the analysis of the current and future environment of the student with emphasis on educational, vocational, and personal-social information. It is concerned with the identification, the evaluation, and the presentation of relevant information in the above three information areas during the total school experience of the student.

Occupational information is defined by Norris, Hatch, and Zeran, (1972), as "valid and usable data about positions, jobs, and occupations, including duties, requirements for entrance, conditions of work, rewards offered, advancement pattern, existing and predicted supply of and demand for workers, and sources for further information (p. 29)." "Educational information is valid and usable data about all types of present and probable future educational or training opportunities and requirements including curricular and co-curricular offerings, requirements for entrance, and conditions and problems of student life (p. 29-30)."

In a well organized guidance program with its pertinent services, the Career Information Library, if it is to fulfill its role of information, will be the focal point for materials available to young people preparing their future through career planning and decision-making. Modern technology has in fact enhanced the role and the importance of the Career Library in the Information Service.

A. Objectives:

Depending on the philosophy and the attitudes of the professional guidance personnel, the objectives of a Career Information Library *per se* and of the Information Service as a whole, could be summed up within a conceptually developmental framework as follows:

1. To provide information on the wide scope of educational, occupational, and social activities in terms of broad related

categories of activities;

2. To acquaint students with realistic problems related to educational planning and educational possibilities so they can be helped to select the institution, or one curriculum most appropriate to future educational plans;
3. To help students in developing an understanding and acceptance of self;
4. To assist in the mastery of techniques of obtaining information, and of its interpretation for progressive self-directiveness;
5. To help students to develop an awareness of responsibility in making personal decisions;
6. To provide assistance in narrowing choices progressively to specific activities which are appropriate to the student's aptitudes, abilities, and interests in view of definite and realistic decisions;
7. To create an awareness of the need and a motivation for accurate and valid educational, occupational, and personal-social information;
8. To assist in the integration of self-awareness with one's knowledge of the world of work;
9. To develop an awareness of possible vocational pursuits.

B. Nature of Publications:

Despite increased awareness of the role and importance of the Career Information Library, its existence has not become universal in educational institutions where guidance services or student personnel services have been well established for years. Several reasons account for this situation:

1. Guidance specialists are so overwhelmed with the work of testing and counselling students that they have no time left for the Information Service;
2. The scope of educational and occupational information has become so broad and so diversified that the organizer of the Career Information Library would need a broad, up-dated, and well-informed knowledge of the needed materials;
3. Since educational and occupational materials should be continuously renewed in order to keep pace with educational renovations and technological changes, organizing the Career Information Library is a time consuming task, if one considers meeting the objectives of accessibility to materials.

Hoppock (1967) suggests several filing systems and evaluates each of these in terms of efficiency. Primarily, the purpose of the filing system of the Career Information Library is to keep at hand, in a standardized format, all materials which a counsellor may receive which deal with educational and vocational information.

Here we may turn to the facilities available at the Counselling Centre of the Memorial University of Newfoundland. The available materials are listed below, according to the category of the publications:

1. Calendars of Canadian, American, and British universities; calendars of community colleges and of several professional institutions;
2. Directories and Guides. This category includes an alphabetical or classified list of institutions, public or private, offering an educational or training program. Admission requirements, entrance examinations, accreditation, etc. . . . are described in these publications. Belonging to this group are also publications from the U.S. Department of Labor: *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, *Encyclopedia of Careers*, etc.;
3. Financial assistance and placement. This group includes information which concerns the provision of financial support to students and their assistance in job placement;
4. Publications in the field of guidance and counselling; marriage, family life, drugs, etc.;
5. Several reviews and journals in guidance and counselling; in psychology; in drug addiction;
6. Occupational monographs. Each one describes the nature of a profession; the qualifications required for the job; level of education; salary range and opportunities.

Our file possesses approximately 1,000 booklets and reprints of occupational monographs dealing with about 50 different specialized occupations which students could make use of as perspectives for future vocational pursuits while studying at the Memorial University.

C. The Filing System at the Career Information Library of Memorial University:

The system of classification aims at cohesion. All materials are classified into two separate files:

1. THE PROFESSIONAL FILE: Occupational monographs and reprints are filed in a numerical order in file folders within a filing cabinet;
2. THE INDUSTRIAL FILE: All other materials belong to this file. They are located on the book shelves; they bear a code number and are arranged in numerical order.

D. How to find Materials:

1. Each publication in the library has a card index which bears the title of the publication, and/or the title of the profession, the date of publication, and the name of the file: "professional or industrial." The left top of each card index bears the "code number" of the material. All card indexes are classified in the card index box in alphabetical order. Guide cards give the reader an overall view of subject content.
2. Based upon the code number which is typed at the left top corner of each card index (or cross indexing), the reader retraces publications from the filing cabinet or on the book shelves of the Career Information Library.

To sum up, vocational information, to be effective in guidance, needs

to be guided by a conceptual framework. A well-devised classification system for Career Information materials makes them more accessible and more attractive to students as well as to guidance staff. Since decision-making is partially influenced by what students know about occupations, exposure to Career Information materials is necessary and important during the students' developmental process of choice.

RESUME: Dans cet article l'auteur présente sa conception personnelle sur l'information professionnelle. Avec la trépidité de l'évolution de la technologie moderne, l'information professionnelle a pris une importance et un essor grandissant en orientation. Elle revêt en même temps un caractère développemental. Dans les institutions éducationnelles, la bibliothèque des Carrières joue le rôle de dissémination vocationnelle. L'auteur expose une façon de classifier le matériel d'information scolaire et professionnelle basée sur la classification suggérée par le "Dictionary of Occupational Titles" et le "Standard Industrial Classification Manual".

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