

DEVELOPMENTAL CONSULTATION IN IMPLEMENTING CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

RICHARD A. YOUNG and WILLIAM A. BORGEN*

University of British Columbia

Abstract

A model is proposed for the implementation of career education programs in schools. Career education is defined as having goals coincident with many of the objectives of education itself and is placed firmly within the context of psychological education. The process suggested for implementation of these programs is developmental consultation which is described as involving the counsellor in: (a) increasing staff awareness of the need for career education through recognition of commonality of goals between academic and career education, (b) focusing on priorities for implementation of specific programs, (c) assisting in their operation, and (d) facilitating assessment of the effectiveness of career education programs implemented.

Résumé

Cet article propose un modèle pour la mise sur pied de programmes d'éducation de carrières dans les écoles. L'éducation de carrières partage beaucoup des mêmes buts que l'éducation et se situe au coeur de l'éducation psychologique. Le processus suggéré pour l'établissement de ces programmes suit des étapes qui implique le conseiller à différents paliers:

- (a) sensibiliser le personnel de l'école en les amenant à reconnaître que les buts de l'éducation académique et vocationnelle sont connexes,
- (b) établir des priorités pour inaugurer des programmes spécifiques,
- (c) aider à l'opération de ces programmes, et
- (d) prêter main-forte à l'évaluation de leur efficacité.

INTRODUCTION

Among the many pressures exerted on counsellors is an increased demand for career education programs for students (Penner, McLeod, Nichols & Grant, 1976; Peters & Hansen, 1977). Various groups within society, reacting to high rates of unemployment and underemployment among the young, dissolution of the work ethic, and job dissatisfaction among those employed, have different expectations for career education. Such expectations range from suggesting that career education should be directed at adjusting students to the demands of a highly technological workplace to approaching career education as a vehicle for social change in the labour force (Watts & Herr, 1976). A major challenge facing the school counsellor is to resist the political issues which are at stake in favour of deciding for what is truly of lasting value to the individual. A second important issue involves the development of effective vehicles for implementing such programs. It is the purpose of this paper to suggest an approach which meets these challenges. More specifically, the authors

propose a model of developmental consultation which is premised on educational and psychological bases and which can be used as a vehicle for implementing career development programs.

DIFFICULTIES WITH TRADITIONAL CONSULTATION

Although several models of consultation have been developed, most are fraught with difficulty which has impeded their actual implementation by school counsellors. The primary difficulty is that of much of our understanding of consultation is based upon the mental health model which is not conducive to meeting educational and developmental goals. Historically, the prototype model has been one in which experts were employed directly to solve the most difficult problems. Although consultation has broadened its perspective recently, the basic conceptual model remains. For example, Berlin (1977) has described consultation as a process in which a consultant attempts to help a consultee from another profession with a work-related problem. Included in this process can be a diagnostic appraisal of the conflict between the consultee and the client, development of understanding of

* As this article has been co-authored, the order of authorship is interchangeable.

the consultee's anxiety, and suggestions regarding how similar problems might be handled in the future. The assumptions which underlie this approach to consultation include such notions as the following: (a) the consultee needs assistance in defining the problem and finding a solution, (b) there is a chain link from client to consultee (caretaker) to consultant, (c) a problem solving strategy can be used in determining a solution, (d) the consultant comes from outside the school's immediate environment, (e) consultation can oftentimes be a one time intervention, (f) frequently assessment of the consultee is involved (Berlin, 1977), and (g) the consultant is recognized as an expert in human relations but not in education (Plog & Ahmed, 1977).

While some of these assumptions fit for certain remedial dimensions of the counsellor's work, they do not facilitate the process of the counsellor implementing developmental programs through consultation. These assumptions need to be challenged if more functionally developmental models of consultation are to be forthcoming. One way to challenge these premises is to examine the educational and psychological characteristics of career education. Such an examination suggests a developmental approach to consultation which can facilitate the implementation of career education programs.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CAREER EDUCATION

A perception among a number of educators, that career education has nothing to do with education and that its goals are to socialize the student to the workplace, inhibits the possibility of implementing career education, and, subsequently the use of developmental consultation. Providing an antidote for this perception at the conceptual level is the first step in eventually advancing a developmental model of consultation. The antidote lies in the consideration of career education as educational and developmental.

Diamonti (1977) has examined career education in light of three criteria for education initially proposed by Peters (1970). These criteria are that education be voluntarily entered into, as a guest; that something of value be passed on; and that what is transmitted has its place along with the other things in life. Diamonti has suggested that, while the principles of career education meet these criteria, in practice career education is reduced to having a socializing effect. It becomes contingent on practitioners to develop career education programs which are in harmony with the overall goals of education.

One way to accomplish this is to conceptualize career education as having a developmental

focus. Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) have presented the concepts of developmental psychology as a central guide to educators. Recently, a number of authors (Van Hesteren, 1978; Gazda, 1977; Knefelkamp, Widick & Stroard, 1976; Widick, Knefelkamp & Parker, 1973) have identified career development as an integral part of psychological education which in turn is founded on developmental psychology. Van Hesteren (1978), for example, has suggested that psychological education is a "potentially useful medium through which career development might be fostered" (p. 232). The identification of career development as part of psychological education is heuristic for career education. Of primary importance is that a broad range of developmental literature is tapped in which career development can be examined and practiced in relation to cognitive development (Piaget, 1970), moral development (Kohlberg, 1969), and ego development (Loevinger, 1976). Moreover, career education profits from a concern with teaching styles and models (Hunt, 1975, 1976; Joyce & Weil, 1972) and the conditions of the learning environment (Blocher, 1977).

CAREER EDUCATION AND CONSULTATION

Once counsellors conceptualize career education as having educational and psychological goals, there are immediate implications for the consultative model. As counsellors demonstrate a new understanding of career education within their schools, a type of cognitive restructuring on a part of teachers is possible. They begin to understand the commonality of goals and the possibility of collaborative consultative relationships. Both teacher and counsellor are educators who broadly speaking can be said to be concerned with the encouragement of knowledge and skills, self-understanding, moral development, and the development of the intellect. The common experience of both teacher and counsellor results in their consultation with each other in reaching commonly held goals.

Once common goals are acknowledged, the counsellor can bring to bear specific knowledge about career development. Of more practical use to the teacher is the counsellor's cooperation with the teacher in fostering a learning environment conducive to reaching developmental goals. Specifically, an improved learning environment assists the teacher and the counsellor to reach separate as well as common goals. Recent work in learning environments has indicated that the traditional expertise of the counsellor is needed. Blocher (1977) has elaborated seven conditions of the learning environment which are to exist if consistent and generalizable developmental

change is to occur. Included among his conditions are support, challenge, and feedback in which counsellors traditionally have developed skills. As well, Joyce and Weil (1972) and Gazda (1977) have proposed styles of teaching which include personal models most familiar to the counsellor.

THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Initial Contact

In beginning to implement developmental consultation, the counsellor is typically placed in the role of advocate regarding career development issues. This is in contrast with a remedial consulting role in which the counsellor typically responds to requests for assistance from staff or families.

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Goals</i>
I Initial Contact	Increased consultee awareness of career development issues.
II Focusing	Commitment to address career development needs of students.
III Operating a Program	Translation of the commitment into specific programs for students.
IV Assessment	Revision and re-application of programs in view of overall objectives.

Figure 1: Consultation Process.

The counsellor's initial goal is to heighten staff awareness of the interdependence between developmental career issues and more traditional educational concerns (Van Hesteren, 1978). Skill competences required of the counsellor in initiating discussions include: (a) acute sensitivity to the initial level of awareness of prospective consultees with respect to career planning needs of students, (b) a solid understanding of developmental career needs of students, and (c) empathy, genuineness, and respect in communicating with consultees and hearing their concerns regarding educational issues in relation to student needs (Gazda, 1977).

It may be helpful in these discussions to begin with the theories that the teacher has about learning outcomes (Hunt, 1974, 1976) rather than to immediately begin with the relationship career development has to the curriculum. If career education is educational and developmental, the common goals should emerge.

Focusing

Once the goal of the initial counsellor contact with the teachers is realized, the result should be

a commitment to direct greater energies to the developmental needs of students, some of which will be career in content. Other energies will be devoted to a learning environment which will enhance developmental goals. The next logical step involves three components: (a) examining possible programs which may be implemented in the school, family, or community, (b) within the purview of the school, considering and evaluating alternate approaches to program content and implementation, and (c) deciding on an order of priority for implementation. The programs to be implemented can incorporate one or more of the following foci: a content focus, that is, on learning goals; a process focus, that is, on the method of intervention; or a student focus, that is, on the specific needs of a population.

Activities of the counsellor in this place of the process centre on determining areas of perceived responsibility and the program possibilities in each area. The counsellor acts as a resource person in facilitating problem solving strategies among consultees. The goal here is to develop a series of curriculum learning environments, including teachers and counsellors and students, various combinations of which will comprise viable programs within the context of a particular school.

Operating a Program

One of the main drawbacks in implementing career program arises from a failure on the part of school personnel to have a thorough understanding of the objective of career education and a consequent inability to perceive specific activities within the context of an overall program. The result is often that either specific programs are adopted for which there are no clearly defined goals, or the entire concept is rejected as being too overwhelmingly large to implement.

The approach suggested to this point may seem equally intimidating. However, it is basic and necessary to present views regarding career needs of students to raise staff awareness and to put within a viable context specific programs or activities which may be attempted.

Assuming that initial discussions result in the recognition of issues which the counsellor and staff consider important to implement, the consultation process begins anew. This involves clear definition of the activity under consideration, delineation of a division of labour, identification of resources needed, vehicles for implementation, and assessment procedures.

Some examples of career development issues which may be considered and consultation activities implied follow:

Occupational groups. The junior secondary

school student is expected to identify broad occupational areas and the abilities required in each. In facilitating this process, consultation possibilities exist with teachers who may be able to incorporate an examination of occupational grouping into an on-going curriculum (eg. social studies).

Responsibility. The goal of assuming responsibility for one's career planning is present at both levels of secondary school. This goal has been linked to the student's need for a broader understanding of personal responsibility (Miller-Tiedeman, & Niemi, 1977). Consultation with teachers who may be interested in assisting students to develop management strategies for personal resources would encourage reaching this goal. Similarly, it may be possible to consult with local businessmen in developing a work experience program which encourages the reflection on the discussion of the moral issues in the work setting (Scarf & Wilson, 1976).

Locus of control. Gradually, the secondary school student should be able to balance the sense that the student has control over the outcomes of his or her behavior and that there are factors which will influence the outcomes of behaviour which are beyond the student's control. Consultation with teachers in the area of achievement motivation will lead externally-oriented students to develop a more internal sense of control. Another consultation possibility exists with teachers who can examine some of the social factors, for example, sex stereo-typing, which limits the control one has over the outcomes of his or her behavior.

Decision-making. An understanding of the decision-making process is a commonly held goal of career development programs. Consultation with teachers whose courses may be conducive to teaching decision-making strategies is possible. Specific examples of such courses are mathematics, in which the mathematical dimension of decision strategies are discussed, english, in which the decision strategies of literary figures are examined (Miller-Tiedeman & Niemi, 1977), and social studies, in which curriculum material may be presented using the case study method.

Independence. A continuing task for the adolescent is the development of a sense of independence. Consultation possibilities exist with the school administrators who may be interested in developing a school policy which encourages independence and responsibility. Teachers whose expectations regarding students' independence are not in harmony with the students' developmental level may profit from consultation.

The skills of the counsellor in acting as a resource to staff, assisting in implementation, and

facilitating assessment procedures are vital. It is at this point that the counsellor will be evaluated in terms of his/her ability to implement a career development program. The counsellor's performance at this stage is instrumental in determining the future of further programs.

Assessment

It is important to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of specific program activities in the light of the overall career planning objectives originally formulated. Evaluation procedures provide a reinforcement to staff involved and basis for revision of the activities for future use.

CONCLUSIONS

The model just presented suggests a role for the counsellor as a resident consultant working with other professional educators and the community in meeting students' developmental career needs. The consultation process involved four steps: initial contact, focusing, operating a program, assessment. The authors suggest that it represents a viable approach for counsellors to: (a) enhance their credibility as educators, (b) impact school curricula, and (c) impact school learning environments.

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