

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT: A SUMMER SCHOOL CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION CREDIT COURSE FOR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### Abstract

The author in 1978 designed and taught a six-week course for credit for senior high school students. The course was listed in the North York summer school calendar in the usual way and taught in a school centrally located in the borough. Fourteen female and two male students enrolled. The curriculum for the course was obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Education publication *Senior Guidance Guidelines 1977*. The North York Co-operative Education Department arranged with the author for each student to work in an institution or commercial establishment of his or her choice for one week without pay. The author visited each student at the work location at least once during the week. Class projects and a final examination were given. Two instruments were used to measure student growth: the Crites Vocational Maturity Inventory and the Secondary Self Concept Questionnaire developed by the North York Board of Education Research Department. Gains on these instruments between the first and last day of the course were significant at the .05 and .054 level respectively.

### Résumé

En 1978, l'auteur a mis sur pied et enseigné pour crédits un cours de six semaines à l'intention d'élèves secondaires. Ce cours figurait dans la brochure des cours d'été de North York. Il fut offert dans une école située au centre de cette municipalité. Quatorze filles et deux garçons étaient inscrits. Le "Senior Guidance Guidelines 1977" du Ministère d'éducation de l'Ontario servit de curriculum pour ce cours. Le North York Co-operative Education Department de concert avec l'auteur vit à placer chaque élève dans une institution ou un établissement commercial pour y travailler sans rémunération pendant une semaine. Les élèves travaillèrent aussi sur des projets de classe et écrivirent un examen final. Pour mesurer la croissance chez les élèves, on utilisa deux mesures: le Crites Vocational Maturity Inventory et le Secondary Self Concept Questionnaire conçu par le département de recherche du North York Board of Education. Le changement révélé par ces deux mesures était significatif aux niveaux .05 et .054 respectivement.

The publication of *Guidance Guidelines 1977* by the Ministry of Education of Ontario provided any qualified teacher-counsellor with the authority and many resources with which to teach a credit course in career planning or career development.

I had desired for some time to teach such a course, but hesitated to offer it on a year-long basis in the school where I am Head of Guidance. The reasons were that such a course requires a commitment in time and personnel I could not justify making because I felt that perceived student needs in the area of career planning were being met by various other extra-curricular methods. Some such methods are: student self-directed field trips to post-secondary institutions; the Student Guidance Information Service and

in-school follow-up counselling; visits to the school during the lunch periods by professionals practising in various career fields.

On receiving the Guideline, I decided to initiate, organize, and teach a summer school credit course in career development, and in pursuit of those objectives drew up the following course outline.

### CREDIT COURSE IN CAREER PLANNING

Completion of this 112-hour credit course in Career Development earns the participating student one credit in the Social and Environmental Studies area. The level of instruction is 3, or Advanced level. Students applying for admission to the course are advised to have 21 credits by June 1978. The reason for this suggested requirement is that the activities in which the students are expected to involve themselves will require

a moderate to high level of social and intellectual competence. In addition, the occupational interest surveys are designed in content and vocabulary for persons not much less than 17 years of age, with a reading level of grade 10 or above.

#### PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

The purpose of this course is to assist the participating student to learn in both the cognitive and affective domains and to grow in the following areas of competence:

1. increased understanding and acceptance of self and others.
2. increased awareness of a wide variety of career and educational options.
3. increased abilities in decision-making skills.
4. ability to advise a specific, but flexible, plan of action related to the pursuit of future goals, bearing in mind the students' increased knowledge about themselves and the world of work.

#### *Achieving the objectives*

By means of various media, self/others awareness develop through student classroom presentations and experiences. Students are encouraged to:

- (a) develop a personal value system;
- (b) get to know well the other persons in the group;
- (c) discover their own abilities, aptitudes, interests, and needs.

#### *Career and Educational Awareness*

By means of the *Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations, Volumes I and II*; various books and publications on occupations and careers; college and university calendars and summaries; by interviewing and listening to various persons having different careers and life-styles, students are expected to learn or discover:

- (a) how and where to find information about any existing occupations or careers;
- (b) where and how to find the educational requirements for entry to any educational institution for study for its own sake or for entry into a career;
- (c) that career-planning is an on-going process which develops at a different rate and with different objectives for each individual;
- (d) that one's career is very closely related to one's lifestyle.

#### *Decision-making Skills and Strategies*

By the use of a problem-solving model, the students get a considerable amount of practice in each of the steps necessary in problem solving. The students are shown how to transfer the skills they have learned, first, to some real life but hypothetical situations, and then to their own particular problems. The values section of objective No. 1 above become an integral part of the decision-making process.

#### *Devising a Specific and Individual Career Plan*

At the mid-point of the course, the student, who has been participating in many experiences in terms of self-knowledge, information gathering, and problem solving techniques, is expected to begin, and to complete by the end of the course, his or her own short- and long-term career plan.

#### *Student Evaluation*

Students will be marked on the basis of their daily participation, completion of individual and group assignments, including the career plan mentioned above; and by a final examination.

#### *Course Evaluation*

1. Two objective measurements are used. (a) *The North York Self Concept Test*, and (b) *Crites' Measurement of Vocational Maturity*. These are administered at the beginning and end of the course, and are scored to determine significant differences in the respective variables.

2. Students are asked at various stages of the course for a subjective evaluation of their experiences so far. This evaluation is used to assist in achieving objective "decision-making skills and strategies" above. The students could see at first hand formative and summative evaluation of curriculum in process. This experience may assist them in modifying or changing their own career plans when the need arises.

After the preceding course outline was made and an announcement printed in the Summer School calendar, the Co-operative Training department of the Board approached me with the request to include in the six-week summer school time frame one week of co-operative training for the students.

Co-operative training is defined as "a Community Training program that is designed to provide the student with part-time on-the-job training in an occupation or vocation of personal choice while attending school. Coupled with formal in-school training, the program provides an opportunity to develop self-confidence, social awareness, and a keener understanding in the selection of careers."

Because many students participating in the co-operative training program for a week or two during the school had told me of its value to them personally, I decided to schedule co-operative training for the fourth week of the course. By that time, all tests and questionnaires done by the students should have been scored and returned to me.

When I greeted my first career development class early one July morning, I found there were 14 women and 2 men enrolled. I had been prepared for the disproportionate number of female students. Women in general appear to be more interested than men are in systematic career planning, according to the observations of teachers of careers courses with whom I've talked.

We moved into the tasks of career planning immediately after completing two measurement questionnaires, the *Crites Vocational Development Inventory* (now known as the *Career Maturity Inventory*) and the *Secondary Self Concept Questionnaire*. Our first exercise was to get to know each other well. We used Pfeiffer

and Jones (1974) exercise #5, entitled "Who Am I". This is a very basic getting acquainted exercise. For the remainder of the first two weeks we completed the *Differential Aptitude Test Battery* with the *Career Planning Report*; the *Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory*; the *General Aptitude Test Battery*. The latter tests the same aptitudes as does the DAT, but requires about 60% less time for administration, and can be easily hand-scored. I used the GATB for two reasons: first, to compute a correlation between it and the DAT; second, the only effective way of using the *Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations* is by having available the GATB aptitude scores converted to levels 1, 2, 3, or 4, which are used in the Occupational Aptitude Pattern Structures.

The course under discussion here, although entitled "Career Planning", would more properly be called "Life and Career Planning", for without more than a cursory examination of one's self and one's life, no true vocational planning is possible. One of the most compelling reasons for my getting this course in motion was that I wanted to assist as many younger people as possible to discover and to develop their individual talents for the most appropriate and fitting service to their fellow human beings. I had and have little desire to assist people to shape themselves solely according to the demands of the market place.

An excellent film to assist in introducing the main theme of the course as Life Planning is *Everybody Rides the Carousel* by Erik Erikson. In three 40-minute reels it depicts the stages of the human being from birth to old age graphically and sympathetically. Other worth-while films on this theme which I used are: *Development of Individual Differences*; *The Fine Art of Aggression*; *Putting Yourself Together* (from the series entitled *Guidance for the Seventies*); and from the same series, *Who's Responsible?*

I attempted to keep the theme of life planning before the students throughout the course. This was done mainly by means of the individual assignments given to the students at the beginning, at mid-point, and the last week of the course.

Following is the first class assignment (to be done individually):

Interview 2 people at least ten years older than you are who have been employed for a minimum of 5 years. Obtain their educational development, formal and informal; their socio-economic background. Trace their career development under the following headings: Jobs held (with dates); Reasons for taking the job; Reasons for leaving the job. Under the heading "Meaning of Work", list their satisfactions with work and their

dissatisfactions with each job held. Find out from the interviewee how his or her occupational choice has affected:

- (a) amount of leisure time
- (b) leisure time activities
- (c) family relationships
- (d) type of home
- (e) other areas of life.

After a discussion with the students early in the course, a decision was made to invite practising professional persons to visit the class to speak about their particular careers. We decided to ask one person who would represent one vocation from each section of Holland's Classification of Occupations: Realistic, Conventional, Social, Artistic, Enterprising, and Investigative. The persons who actually did visit us in the classroom represented the careers of marketing research, personnel, financial writing, sales, advertising, and government service. Three of the six were women. Those speakers who achieved the most rapport with their audience usually spoke for 10 to 15 minutes to provide a picture of the environment or setting in which they worked, then invited questions. From the students' questions they derived a sense of the direction in which the students would like to move, and took them there.

Mr. Ed Pinder, of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Toronto, put me in contact with the people who had previously signified to him their willingness to reach out to the schools in this liaison work.

The students found the co-operative training week very interesting and very valuable. I believe that having completed the first assignment described above enabled them to look at employees and employment in another light.

An additional assignment was thoroughly discussed beforehand, to be started during the co-operative training period and completed at home or in class later. Here are some sections of it: (Students were required to do any one section of their choice).

*Place of company in society:* Objective is to perceive the company in a wider setting. Suggested headings:

- (a) Laws governing company operations;
- (b) Employee, union & professional organizations;
- (c) Socio-economic level of employees;
- (d) Contribution of company to society;
- (e) size and number of employees.

*Job Models:* The objective here is to explore what a typical day might be like on a variety of jobs and observe the responsibilities that may go with these jobs. Students' impressions of what is involved in certain jobs is often erroneous, and sometimes superficial. It is important that the

student become aware of the negative as well as the positive aspects of jobs and of the relative degrees of responsibility of various jobs.

During this week, I visited each student at least once at the work location. It was a valuable experience for me to see the complete change of attire—even on the first day. The students had accepted, without question as far as I could see, the pressure from a different group and dressed themselves according to these new dictates, rather than according to the pressures from their school peers.

My main purpose in visiting was to assure myself that each student was suitably employed and adequately supervised. Following are some of the co-operating employers: Ontario Government (Children's Psychiatric Treatment Centre), a natural gas supplier, a computer manufacturer, a travel agent, a hairdressing establishment, a real estate agency, and a trust company.

One of the main enjoyments for the students on co-operative training was that *they* have to evaluate someone—instead of always being the subjects of evaluators. The Co-operative training department forwards to the respective employers the student's answers to questions relating to the values of the training week as perceived by the student. In return, the student is handed an evaluation of his or her performance while on cooperative training by the supervisor.

When the students returned to the school for the last two weeks of the course, all their interest surveys and aptitude tests had arrived also. I then taught them how to use the CCDO with the additional aid of their interest and aptitude scores.

The final class assignment read as follows:

Using all the data which you now have,

(a) select up to three occupations that you consider *suitable for you*;

(b) in each case describe the educational and other preparation necessary for the occupation;

(c) in each case describe the work involved in the occupation;

(d) justify your belief that each one is a suitable occupation for you with respect to your:

interests (refer to your activities and test results)

abilities (refer to school achievement, tests, part-time jobs and co-operative training experiences)

values

interpersonal relationships

(e) make some attempt to project your total life pattern as it might develop in each of the three occupations.

The last day of the course I asked the students to complete a questionnaire to evaluate the course as they saw and experienced it. Also, for the second time, they completed the *Crites Career Maturity Inventory* and the *Secondary Self Concept Questionnaire*. Results on these two instruments were significant at the .05 and .054 level respectively.

From all the data accumulated during the course, both objective and subjective, I believe that the course was a valuable learning experience for the students. I think that resources should be made available for the teaching of such courses to interested senior students during the regular day school program.

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