A common purpose among all areas of public school education is the recognition that every student—exceptional, dropout, terminal, or college bound—must become an economically productive citizen. The one professional area that can bring into focus all the individual efforts of each educational specialty to reach this common purpose is counseling.” J. W. Edgar, Commissioner of Education, Texas, 1971.

At a time when many within and without the counseling and guidance profession are questioning the role and function of counseling and guidance, this challenge may, indeed, be very welcome.

To reach the common purpose of economic productivity for all citizens, the counseling and guidance profession must demonstrate viability and flexibility through responding and adapting to this new challenge. This challenge was further exemplified when U. S. Commissioner of Education, Sidney P. Marland (1971), speaking at the Pennsylvania Personnel and Guidance Association conference, called upon guidance counselors to assume a far more demanding and complex role in the career education of all students. He defined career education as a structure wherein every young person, no matter where he or she would leave the system, would take from it a marketable job skill; a system which would routinely encourage the opt-out student back into the system at whatever point or age he wished to re-enter. Marland admonished counselors for accepting the notion that college education is the only ticket to social worth and economic success, and called, instead, for counselors to work closely with teachers, curriculum developers, industry and labor, and other professional people to integrate the work concept with academic subjects.

Yet, the challenge of responding to the vocational needs of young people is far from new for the field of counseling and guidance. This challenge is, in fact, at the very heart of the origins of our present counseling and guidance profession. Begun as a “vocational guidance movement” (Miller, 1964; Williamson, 1965), the originators were concerned with helping the individual student find his place in the working community. Compare, for example, the statement by Edgar, reported at the beginning of this article, with that made by Winslow in 1918:

“...a wide gulf between education and the practical affairs of life. Young people wander blindly about for several years after they leave school before they find out what they want to do. The result is confusion, discouragement and waste. I believe that children should learn about occupational opportunities and should discover their own abilities and interests while in school. The transition between education and employment should be a very gradual one. Consequently, guidance should be an integral part of the curriculum, program, and organization of the entire school system. It should begin with the study of individual differences and adjustments in the early grades, and should follow pupils after they leave school during the time they are blazing trails into employment and adult life.” Superintendent Isaac O. Winslow, Providence, Rhode Island, 1918 (Miller, 1964, p. 7).

There is clear similarity between the pressures for vocational guidance expressed during the beginning of the 20th-century, and the pressures for career education and career development cited in the beginning of the 1970’s. However, for some people, it seems necessary to hide the name “vocational counseling and guidance,” and substitute, instead, “counseling and guidance for career development.” The term “vocation” is no longer satisfactory or necessarily relevant in attempting to explain what is meant by an individual’s development into a life of purposeful activity. In a more positive vein, however, counseling and guidance for career development reflects an emphasis upon a more encompassing view.
Confusion in approach and method, plus disappointment in outcome, often accompanies those counselors and teachers who attach meaning to vocational counseling and guidance based on one or two narrow terms, rather than upon the broader based term of career development. Furthermore, the use of a variety of terms tends to "turn off" or confuse people trying to understand career development, since many of the terms are related but not synonymous. Following are some examples: 

**vocation** itself is a rather restrictive term for some who foresee an individual being pointed toward or actually finding that one vocation (job) which he will maintain throughout his working life; 

**vocational education** describes academic coursework or technical training preparatory to employment; 

**occupational information** is data concerning a family of occupations, a single occupation, a position, or job; 

**job development, job finding, and job placement** all describe activities related to a position or job in the work world. Taken separately, these terms fail to convey complete meaning for an individual. Carefully blended in the correct amounts, they can become the basis for a meaningful concept of career development.

The purpose of the remainder of this article is to identify the concepts which appear crucial in career development counseling and guidance, and to suggest how counseling and guidance programs in the schools can respond to our current national concern and appropriately incorporate these concepts into their planning.

**Why Career Development?**

On the one hand, "career" implies more than just a job—it implies a series of employment experiences over a lifetime. Current research indicates that we can expect to hold approximately six jobs during a working career. Furthermore, career need not be restricted to describing only a job or position; it relates also to one’s overall life, hopes and aspirations, life-style, and family structure.

The term "development," on the other hand, holds the key to the dynamic rather than static in this kind of counseling and guidance. Provision of occupational information, use of an interest inventory or job placement help are all rather terminal activities or static events unless connected in a meaningful dynamic manner. Career development is dynamic and encompassing since it has evolved from and is definitely a part of the discipline of developmental psychology or human development. Havighurst (1964) and Super (1953) are representative of the writers who have developed this idea most aptly. Havighurst (1964) describes an individual's vocational development as stages in a life-long process. He identified the following stages and corresponding age levels (p. 216):

1. Identification with a worker—age 5 to 10.
2. Acquiring the basic habits of industry—age 10 to 15.
3. Acquiring identity as a worker in the occupational structure—age 15 to 25.
5. Maintaining a productive society—age 40 to 70.
6. Contemplating a productive and responsible life—70 plus.

Super (1953) describes the developing and emerging self-concept as being composed of many self-concepts: concepts of family roles, responsibility to others, dependence versus independence, work roles—all bearing on the individual's future expression of self. Tiedman (1961) has analyzed vocational development in terms of the successive decisions faced by the individual in the process.

These examples illustrate career development as a continuum from birth to death. Throughout this continuum the individual is involved in a dynamic development process. He is reaching, seeking, growing, choosing and verifying as he moves toward actualizing himself. He is engaged in a continuing process of making choices. This brings us back to one of the underlying bases of vocational counseling—that of facilitating decision-making in normal individuals through helping them learn appropriate problem identification, alternative seeking, plan-making, decision-making, and verifying behaviors.

To summarize at this point, career development is viewed as a dynamic developmental process encompassing an individual's journey from birth to death, and incorporating various narrow tasks such as occupational information-giving and placement counseling into an integrated decision-making model.

**Planning for School Youth**

Effective guidance programming involves consulting
with parents, curriculum developers, and teachers toward implementing the teaching of decision-making behaviors throughout the curriculum. Secondly, it means developing learning experiences in accord with vocational developmental stages and the expectations of performance at each stage. Knowledge of the world of work, the concept of related families of jobs, the relation of a job in one family to a job in another family, the appropriateness of planned job changes, the role of the worker, the role of the non-worker—all these need to be included in a curriculum which attempts to expose the student to a full range of human life experiences.

Classroom or overall school procedure can be designed in such a way as to encourage pupils to make plans, make choices, evaluate effects of choices, revise plans, etc. These examples of training for competent decision-making have supplementary benefits of promoting independence from total teacher domination and of encouraging interdependence with peers.

Although there are many possibilities for planning learning experiences, developing units on “The World of Work” and other practices such as holding “Career Days” are not the only ways to help students learn about the role of the worker and the work-world. It is possible, for example, for teachers of each content or subject area to incorporate into their curriculum, examples and ideas related to workers performing skills based upon the experiences of the class. Another type of related experience is the analysis of the work and life-style of one’s parents. Even minimally creative teachers and counselors can develop many novel ways to provide experiences which aid the pupil in appraising the working world about him in a manner congruent with his perceptual framework and concept of himself.

Hansen (1970) describes the wide range of current practices and programs in career development utilized within schools and in coordinated school-community programs. Most were research and demonstration projects begun as a result of the impact of the Economic Opportunity Act, 1964, and the Vocational Education Amendments of 1963. They include school-wide developmental programs, programs within courses, multimedia techniques, and computer-assisted models.

The Developmental Career Guidance Project in Detroit is an example of a school-wide comprehensive project. The specific objectives are, (1) to broaden the perceptual field of inner-city youth regarding occupations, (2) to help overcome the lack of planning for the future, and (3) to provide better role models. The kinds of activities carried on in the schools include, (1) individual and group counseling, (2) dissemination of educational and occupational information through individual classes and special assemblies, (3) broadening of perceptions through weekly field trips and speakers invited to the school, (4) work with parents, both informational and advising, and (5) work with the community, particularly through close liaison with community agencies and neighborhood organizations. In addition to developing local job handbooks for students, one of the unique aspects of the whole project was the establishment of a simulated employment office called, the School Employment Security Commission (SESC), in an elementary school. Fourth- through sixth-graders use the SECS to apply for various jobs in the school building including, Safety Squad, Service Squad, Boardwashers, Audio-Visual Aides, and Office Helpers. Wide-ranging experiences based upon a developmental model are exemplified by the Detroit program (Hansen, 1970, pp. 23-27).

In comparison with the school-wide approach, is the Introduction to Vocations Project organized as a part of the statewide educational and guidance program in New Jersey. Designed to help students gain in occupational awareness and to give them a better foundation for later career and educational choices, the emphasis has been on short-term, manipulative, cycled exploratory experiences. Students are exposed to field trips, speakers, films, filmstrips and occupational literature on a particular occupational field, in a cycle which includes a flexible two- or three-week period of emphasis in the industrial arts, home economics, business education, and science. Another unique aspect is the opportunity for students to try out jobs for two weeks in one of a number of large businesses (Hansen, 1970, pp. 41-42).

As a final example, Hansen (1970) describes multimedia techniques and computer-assisted approaches which incorporate information and activities into a system or package which utilizes our advanced technology to aid in the presentation to students. These efforts have been stimulated by the realization that career guidance objectives are often not met because of two
basic information-handling problems: (1) human fallibility in memorizing and recalling educational-vocational facts, and (2) the inability of the counselor and student to devote sufficient energy and time to perform the numerous information-processing tasks related to career information. Notable examples of responses to these concerns are the multi-media Vocational Information for Education and Work (VIEW) system in the Regional Career Information Center in San Diego; the computerized Educational and Career Exploration System developed at Columbia University in conjunction with SRA and IBM; and the computerized Information System for Vocational Decision (ISVD) developed at Harvard in cooperation with the Newton, Massachusetts, school system and the New England Educational Data System (NEEDS).

In considering these approaches to career development counseling and guidance, one of the many important aspects is the very active, preventative, planning approach, in contrast to a passive, reactive counseling and guidance program that often misses those students who have not yet learned to take advantage of available services.

A Point-of-view and a Plan

No matter what package, program, or system is chosen, effective guidance programming is essential to the preventative career development model of counseling and guidance which has been suggested. However, direct infusion or other teaching-oriented attempts are not the processes suggested for most effective results. In fact, involvement-in-the-process is probably the most important product for the pupil. To be involved, however, implies responsibility on the part of students in their own planning and decision-making. Large group (approximately 35) student-oriented discussion groups, along with opportunities for small group (approximately 8) and individual contacts with teachers and counselors are suggested formats for maximizing student involvement. Students should be free to call on various consultants (parents, other community representatives) who can aid them in focusing upon current and projected ideas and information related to their future in the working world. To help maintain a proper balance and perspective, an overall format and conceptual plan must be developed.

Each category in this very simplified system has both forward and feedback (F) arrows indicating the interdependence and dynamic nature of each unit. Although numbered in sequence from left to right, one can enter the system through any category, since at time of entry, for example, number 2 might be more relevant than number 3 to the individual or group. Each category can be viewed as a large group of work packages or tasks which, if successfully accomplished, will provide tentative answers to the question posed.

Category 1 permits a host of possibilities extending from a focus upon individual differences, abilities and interests, to an appraisal of family role, preferred life-style, dislikes as well as likes. Category 2 includes, in addition to identifying fantasies and personal expectations, a thorough study of one's phenomenal world as well as the world as seen by others. Furthermore, an identification of various economic, social, and psychological factors surrounding the world of work and the worker are essential. Category 3 instructs the system-user to engage in plan-making. Active alternative-seeking, plan-development, plan-evaluation, tentative choice-making, and further planning are necessary to the individual's experiencing, as fully as possible, the effect involved in various decisions and alternatives. The system can be enlarged; sub-categories must be developed and detail added in order to make it operational.

But making it operational relates to the involvement process, previously mentioned. Using the system as a base, the curriculum developer, guidance counselor, and/or guidance teacher can plan to engage students in the process of their own career development planning. The age, experience, socioeconomic level or vocational maturity level of students will be some of the critical factors relating to method of system use and the individualizing of the process. Multi-media and
computer-assisted techniques will serve to enhance and/or speed the movement of individual(s) through the system.

Inherent in this kind of system is the opportunity for evaluation. Incorporating the concepts of stages of vocational and career development in conjunction with concepts of vocational maturity (Crites, 1969), the system provides continuing opportunities to compare maturity level of system use with that expected by either counseling and guidance personnel or the student himself.

Conclusion

The career development system exemplifies the intent of this brief look at counseling and guidance for career development. As with any meaningful learning experience, it cannot be routine and impersonal. If it becomes nothing but a group of workbook exercises through which students are prodded by an uninterested teacher or paraprofessional then it has been killed. All counseling and guidance, if meaningful, is alive, real, and personal. It is a process involving the individual or group—not an experience to which they are subjected.

References

2. Edgar, J. W. Quote reported in Guidepost. 1971, 14, No. 4, p. 4.

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