THE VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF A FIFTH FORM

WORK EXPLORATION CLASS

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ABSTRACT

The development of vocational maturity in a
fifth form Work Exploration class was compared to
that of a similar group of students who did not
belong to the Work Exploration class.   Vocational
maturity was measured by the Crites Vocational
Attitude Test, by subjective assessment in an
informal interview situation, and by the Vocational
Development Questionnaire which was developed
specially for this study.   After two school terms
the results of the Crites Vocational Attitude Test
and the interview showed that the experimental
group (the Work Exploration Class) had developed
significantly more in vocational maturity than
had the control group.   The Vocational Development
Questionnaire did not show the same trend, therefore
in its present state it is not a valid measure of
vocational maturity.

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and vast knowledge of the school, the pupils
and the possible pitfalls of experimental
procedure saved me from many bouts of
depression!

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LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical basis for this study of
vocational development comes from the theories of
vocational choice and career development.   There
are several different points of view as to how a
person comes to make a career decision.   Osipow
(1973)[1] has summarized some of the main approaches
to career development as follows:

(1)   The Trait and Factor Approach.   This is
       the oldest approach to vocational choice and
       it is comprised of a straightforward matching
       of an individual's abilities and interests
       with the vocational opportunities in the
       world at a particular time.   Proponents of
       this approach were -
       Parsons (1909), Hall (1928) and Kitson (1925).
       The Trait and Factor approach led to the
       development of such vocational interest tests
       as the Strong Vocational Interest Blank and
       the Kuder Preference Record, and aptitude
       tests.   Although these tests have limited
       uses they are still often used as a help in
       giving vocational guidance.   Most contemporary
       researchers feel that the Trait and Factor
       approach alone, is not enough to explain how
       a person makes a vocational choice.

(2)   The Sociological Approach.   This model is
       otherwise known as the "accident" or "reality"
       theory of vocational choice.   The approach is
       based on the notion that circumstances beyond
       the control of the individual direct him to
       make career choices.   The principal task of

1. OSIPOW, S.H.
        Theories of Career Development. 2nd ed.
        New York, Appleton Century Crofts 1973
        pp 10 and 11

anyone in the role of helping youth with
vocational decisions is the development of
techniques which will enable youth to cope
effectively with the environment.   Osipow
names Caplow (1954), Hollinshead (1949) and
Miller and Form (1951) as proponents of this
model.   Other more recent researchers to
use a sociological model of vocational choice
are Keil et al (1966) and Musgrove (1967) who
have guided the theory away from the "accident"
model towards a more realistic model which
encompasses personal as well as sociological
factors.   In writing about the sociological
model Sofer states that it is "correct to the
extent that it stresses the importance of
external factors in the choice process but
wrong in that it neglects the fact that the
way in which the person takes account of
external factors depends on the way in which he
perceives and reacts to them."[2]

(3)   The Self Concept Approach or Developmental
Approach.   The central ideas behind this
approach are that individuals develop more
clearly defined self concepts as they age, that
people develop images of the occupational world
which they compare with their self image when
trying to make a career decision, and that the
adequacy of an eventual career decision is based
on the similarity between the individual's self
concept and his vocational concept of the career
he eventually chooses.   Researchers who have
used this approach include Buehler (1933),
Samler (1953), Ginzberg et al (1951), and Super
(1957).   The work of Rogers and other client

2.   SOFER, C.
     Introduction   In W.M. Williams   ed.   Occupational
     Choice.   London, Allen and Unwin Ltd 1974.

centred counsellors has contributed much to the
model.   Coming to a vocational decision in this
model, as in the Sociological model, is seen as
a process.   The Developmental approach, however,
assumes that this process is largely irreversible
and that compromise is an essential aspect of
every choice.   Different writers have seen
different stages in the process.   Ginzberg
(1951)[3] postulates the following stages in making
a vocational decision.

(i)   Fantasy choices (Before 11 years of age)
(ii)   Tentative choices (From 11 years to 17
         years of age)
(iii)   Realistic choices (From 17 years onwards).

Super's theory (1963)[4] is very similar to that
proposed by Ginzberg.   It proposes that a person
strives to build up his self concept by choosing
the occupation he sees as most likely to permit
him self expression.   The most comprehensive
work concerning vocational maturity has been
conducted by Super and his associates.   Super
defines vocational maturity in terms of norms.
He analysed the life stages in vocational develop-
ment and produced a list of "Attitudes and
Behaviours Relevant to Vocational Developmental
Tasks", which are summarized here:

(i)   Crystallization - from 14 to 18 years of
         age.   Crystallization includes
         differentiation of interests and values,
         awareness of contingencies which may
         affect goals, and formulation of a
         generalized preference.

3.   GINZBERG, E. et al.
      Occupational Choice: An approach to a General
      Theory.   U.S.A., Colombia University Press.   1951

4.   SUPER, D.E.
      Vocational development in adolescence and early
      childhood.   In Super, D.E. et al.   Career
      Development: Self Concept Theory.   New York,
      College Entrance Examination Board.   1963.   p 138

(ii)   Specification - from 18 to 21 years of age.   Specification includes the use of resources in specification, specifi- cation of a vocational preference and possession of information concerning the preferred occupation.

(iii)   Implementation - from 21 to 24 years of age.   This stage includes planning to implement the preference, executing plans to qualify for entry, and obtaining an entry job.

(iv)   Stabilization - from 25 to 35 years of age.   This stage includes planning for stabilization, becoming qualified for a regular, stable job or accepting the inevitability of instability.

(v)   Consolidation - from 35 years of age onwards.   This stage includes possession of information as to how to consolidate and advance, planning for consolidation and advancement and, finally, executing consolidation and advancement plans.

As a result of researching vocational maturity, Super and Overstreet (1960)[5] concluded that vocational maturity was related to intelli- gence and that age was of less importance. They also found that environmental factors played a part, for instance, subjects' vocational maturity index correlated positively with parental occupation level, school curriculum, the amount of "cultural stimulation", and negatively with urban background and Protestantism.   Hollander (1971) also found that "Increasing intellectual ability, assessed by scholastic aptitude measures,

5.   SUPER, D.E. and OVERSTREET, P.L.
The Vocational Maturity of Ninth Grade Boys.
New York, New York Teachers College Press, 1960
p 144.

was associated with increasing vocational decisiveness for both males and females"[6] and Maynard and Hansen (1970) found that "disadvantaged students may have different patterns of vocational development".[7]

(4) Vocational Choice and Personality Theories. There has been a large amount of research in the area of personality and career development. The general hypothesis behind these studies is that people choose their jobs because they see in them the potential for the satisfaction of their needs. Most theorists have compiled a list of personality types and a list of jobs which correspond to the personality types. Researchers who have used the personality approach to career choice are Hoppock (1957), Small (1953), Schaffer (1953), Roe (1957) and Holland (1959). Holland's theory, in particular, has been supported by a substantial amount of research. Holland (1966) makes the following statements, "The choice of a vocation is an expression of personality"[8], and, "Interest inventories are personality inventories".[9] These statements epitomize the personality approach to career choice. Holland also says, "The members of a vocation have similar personalities and similar histories of personal development."[10], and "Vocational satisfaction, stability and achievement depend on the congruency between one's personality and the environment (composed largely of other people) in which one

6. HOLLANDER, J.W.
   Development of vocational decisions during adolescence. Journal of Counselling Psychology 18, (3), pp 244-248, 1971

7 MAYNARD, P.E. and HANSEN, J.C.
   Vocational maturity among inner city youths. Journal of Counselling Psychology 17 (5 Pt 1), pp 400-404, Sept 1970

8 HOLLAND, J.L.
   The Psychology of Vocational Choice. USA, Blaisdell Publishing Co, 1966 p 2.

9 Ibid p 3
10 Ibid p 5

works".[11]   In making these statements Holland
shows that there are aspects in all of the main
approaches to vocational choice which apply to
more than just the one approach.   Super would
most likely approve of the last two quotations
cited, with reservations, but he would not be
likely to agree with the assumption Holland makes
that "aptitude and intelligence are less important
than personality and interests in determining
vocational choice."[12]

John Crites (1961)[13] adds a few more catagories
to the list of vocational choice theories which Osipow
did not explicitly include in his scheme.

(5)   Economic Theory - This is an approach which
       states that the individual makes his vocational
       choice because of the nett advantages to him.
       Crites makes the very valid point that this
       theory assumes that an individual has complete
       freedom of choice.

(6)   Decision Theories.   These theories are based on
       alogrithms, for example, the theory put forward
       by Hershensen and Roth (1966).

(7)   General Theories - which are combinations of the
       former approaches, for example, the theory put
       forward by Blau et al (1956).

It is interesting to note that Crites catagorizes
Super as putting forward a "Self" theory of vocational
choice rather than a "Developmental" theory where he
quotes Ginzberg as an example of a researcher using
the model.

11   Ibid p 6
12   Ibid p 9
13   CRITES, J.O.
      Vocational Psychology.   New York, McGraw Hill
      Publishing Co., 1961.

Roberts (1968) proposes another model of vocational choice, claiming that "existing models based upon the premises of developmental psychology have been tested against the occupational behaviours and attitudes of young people in Britain; they have been found inadequate".[14]   Roberts calls his model the Opportunity-Structure model.   Roberts says, "despite the widespread prevalence of the ideology of free occupational choice, different groups of school-leavers do possess differential ease of access to the various types of employment".[15] The opportunities a person has are structured by his achievement at school, and his home background, according to Roberts.   Roberts therefore felt that a person's ambitions were moulded by outside factors.

Osipow evaluates examples of the theories he discusses.   Roe's personality theory and Holland's personality theory receive critical evaluations (on the grounds that they do not bother to explain how "personality" develops).   Ginzberg et al receive favourable comments for their theory which Osipow feels is comprehensive and relates to what is known about human development.   Super's theory receives the most favourable comments of all.   Osipow says, "The theory is a well-ordered, highly systematic representation of the process of vocational maturity. It has the virtue of building upon aspects of the mainstream of developmental psychology and personality theory and demonstrating how these two streams can come together to clarify behaviour in one major realm of human activity ... in its current state it has considerable utility for both practice and research in vocational psychology."[16]

14   ROBERTS, K.
     The entry into employment: an approach towards a
     general theory.   Sociological Review 16, No 2
     p 174 1968

15   Ibid p 176

16   Op.cit. p 168

Not all researchers support Super's theory, however. Tennyson (1968) questioned the theory of vocational development and stated that, "The potential of vocational education for providing exploratory experiences that develop broad occupational awareness needs researching."[17]

In 1965 Crites completed a study which has remained an influential piece of work over the last decade. Crites is strongly influenced by the developmental work of Super. He states that "within the developmental conceptual framework, vocational choice is not a single isolated act of the individual: it is a comprehensive, multi-faceted, ongoing process which encompasses many interrelated points in his pre-work life."[18] Although Crites draws from the work of Roe, Ginzberg et al and other researchers, his basic framework was provided by the theory of vocational maturity put forward by Super[19]. Crites notes that there have been five different definitions of vocational maturity and that none of them have been shown to be related to age.[20] Crites worked at producing an inventory which measured vocational maturity. He states that his Vocational Development Inventory, the result of much labour "has been conceived and constructed to measure more completely than previous procedures the behaviour domains of choice competencies and attitudes in vocational maturity."[21] There are two parts to Crites' Inventory - one to measure attitudes and one called the "Competence Test" which measures comprehension and problem solving abilities. Of the

17 TENNYSON, W.W.
     Career development. Review of Educational
     Research 38(4), p 346, 1968

18 CRITES, J.O
     Measurement of vocational maturity in adolescence :
     1 attitude test of the Vocational Development
     Inventory. Psychological Monographs : General
     and Applied 79, No 2, whole No. 595 p 2 1965

19 Ibid p 4
20 Ibid p 2
21 Ibid p 7

attitude test Crites says, "... the attitude test was designed to elicit the attitudinal or dispositional response tendancies in vocational maturity which are non-intellective in nature but which may mediate both choice behaviours and choice aptitudes. The items for this test were developed from a combination of the best features of the empirical and rational methods of test construction."[22] Crites found that the data he received from his Vocational Development Inventory Attitude Test indicated that verbally expressed vocational behaviour matures with age and school grades. Crites speculates that the importance of grades in relation to vocational maturity may rest on the fact that "the education system is a primary agent of what we might call 'vocationalization'".[23]

The test items, themselves, were based on the average responses of twelfth graders. The results of the test items from 3,000 subjects from grade five to grade twelve were analysed, using different forms of the proposed test.

With the proliferation of theories of vocational choice, it seems reasonable to attempt some serious evaluation of the different models. The schools play a large part in the vocationalization of adolescents and most of the research with this age group has used a developmental model - perhaps because Education as a discipline tends to favour developmental theories. It seems realistic to use a developmental model when dealing with adolescents because their personalities and life-styles are in such a state of flux as they try to deal with adulthood and all the new experiences that this phase of life brings, therefore we need to look at the factors in their lives which have brought them to this point.

22   Ibid p 7
23   Ibid p 27

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

There were quite a number of studies undertaken during the 1960 to 1970 period which showed that work experience while at school was useful in helping students to gain vocational maturity.

In 1969, as a result of a study of vocational maturity ratings of those in a "two year programme of structured, career-related activities" and a group not in this programme, Vriend stated, "The findings of this investigation has indicated that a programme which integrates vocationally related knowledge and activities into the total educational experience of inner city youth can positively modify and influence maturity of vocational development irrespective of sexual or curricular group membership."[24] This implies that the school programme was effective and also that it had more influence on the students in regard to their vocational maturity than did their sex or the subjects they took at school.

In 1970 Gay and Weiss found that their study supported the hypothesis that persons with different amounts of work experience tend to have different levels of specific vocational needs, that the overall level of vocational needs differs with differing work experience, and that differing amounts of work experience result in different levels of clarity in the individual's need structure. They say that "as a person experiences more and varied work environments he will become increasingly aware of vocationally relevant reinforcers and through the process of work adjustment his vocational need structure will be modified and clarified."[25]

24   VRIEND, J
      Vocational maturity ratings of inner-city high
      school seniors.   Journal of Counselling Psychology
      16:   377 - 384, S. 1969

25   GAY, E.G. and WEISS, D.J.
      Relationship of work experience and measured
      vocational needs.   Proceedings of the Annual
      Convention of the A.P.A.   5(pt 2) 663-664, 1970

In a related area Nuckols and Banducci (1974) found that "personal experiences were positively related to the knowledge students held of the occupations considered in this study."[26]

In 1969 Harris [27] found that the introduction of work experience as a part of the ninth grade curriculum improved the self image of those participating, improved their outlook towards school, improved their acceptance of and by others, and improved their perceptions of work.   Sherck (1970)[28] also found that the self concept of students in a work experience programme improved.

Rollings (1968)[29] found that students who were doing Educational-Vocational planning courses, and those doing the courses as well as having counselling, made more realistic vocational choices (when compared with available labour market statistics) than a group which only received counselling. The Educational-Vocational planning consisted of classroom consideration of aptitudes, achievements, interests, examination of materials related to immediate, intermediate and long-range decisions and plans, and a variety of decision-

26   NUCKOLS, T.E. and BANDUCCI, R
     Knowledge of occupations; Is it important in
     occupational choice? Journal of Counselling
     Psychology 21, No 3, p 191, 1974

27   HARRIS, M.S.
     The effects of work experience programs on
     disadvantaged 9th grade students in Corvallis,
     Oregon. Dissertation Abstracts International 30
     (4-9), p 1397, 1969

28   SHERCK, C.P.
     Change in self concept of students in Ohio
     occupational work experience programmes.
     Dissertation Abstracts International 30, (10- A)
     p 4286, 1970

29   ROLLINGS, J.W.
     An evaluation of the effects of exploratory
     experiences on the vocational maturity of 9th
     grade boys and girls. Dissertation Abstracts 29
     (1-A), 126-127, 1968

making situations. Buck (1970)[30] found that students who had indulged in "vocational exploratory" behaviour had firmer and clearer ideas of what occupation they wanted to go into. La Fleur (1971) found that "the use of models and attentional variables provide a viable tool for the teaching of vocational behaviour to individuals."[31]

All of these studies suggest that vocational education and particularly that which involves work experience is successful in improving self concepts of the participants and inducing vocational maturity.

Even as late as 1971, however, some writers were challenging schools about the part they were playing in vocational education. For example Evans (1971) says, "The schools should have a goal of providing adequate information about occupational opportunities, stressing the point that the status of an occupation is of little importance compared to job satisfaction. They should also encourage students to make occupational decisions which can be changed later if the student feels it would be desirable. Practice in decision making with regard to occupations is an essential part of the education process."[32] Writers such as Maizels (1970) have the same point of view, that the school plays a major role in the vocational development of a child. From a search through the literature Maizels is prompted to say, "the decisions, situations,

30 BUCK, C.W.
    Crystallization of vocational interests as a
    function of vocational exploration in college.
    Journal of Counselling Psychology 17(4) p 347 -
    351, 1970

31 La FLEUR, N.K.
    The separate and combined effects of models,
    re-inforcement and attentional variables on
    adolescent vocational behaviour.   Dissertation
    Abstracts International 31 (8-A), 3878, 1971

32 EVANS, R.N
    Foundations of Vocational Education.   Ohio,
    Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co, 1971
    p 43.

events and experiences which arise during this phase
(the transition from school to work) are largely
socially conditioned;   and that the ultimate choice of
occupation, though perhaps regarded by school leavers
and others as frequently self determined, seems to be,
directly or indirectly, the outcome of a collaborative
process of social interaction between school leavers
and others, whose course is largely set by the require-
ments of the social system."[33]   Keil et al (1966) say
that "one of the major features of any adjustment to
a worker's role or position, however defined, must be
the preparation received in school". [34]   They see
entering the work world as a process made up of the
following parts: (a) the socialization of the young
person to the world of work, (b) previous work
experience, (c) the formulation of a set of attitudes
towards and expectations about work, (d) actual job
entry,   (e) experiences as a worker, and, (f) adjust-
ment or non-adjustment as a worker.   In 1968 Chester
modified Keil et al's conceptualisation to apply it to
a wider group by adding "personal variables" and
"facilities and provisions which assist rational choice"[35]
as part of the process.

Many writers have seen the transition from school
to work as a difficult and traumatic time.   Miller and
Form (1951)[36] felt that the shock of going to work

33   MAIZELS, J.
     Adolescent Needs and the Transition from School
     to Work.   London, Athlone Press, 1970 p 5.

34   KEIL, E.T., et al
     Youth and work; problems and perspectives.
     Sociological Review 14, p 118, 1966

35   CHESTER, R.L.C.
     Youth, education and work: a revised perspective.
     Social and Economic Administration 2, Jan p 43,
     1968

36   MILLER, D.C. and FORM, W.H.
     Industrial Society.   New York, Harper, 1951.

resulted from a confrontation of the realities of the
work situation with the expectations carried from the
school situation.   Other writers who have studied the
problem of the transition from school to work are
Dansereau (1961)[37], Carter (1962)[38], Palmer (1964)[39],
and Carter (1966)[40].   All of these writers found that
the transition from work to school presented varying
degrees of difficulty for those undertaking it.

With this body of literature all showing that the
transition from school to work can be fraught with
problems and with the evidence that work experience
helps a person to mature in his vocational attitudes and
knowledge, many western countries have made serious
attempts at adding vocational education to the school
curriculum.   The question that the schools must ask
themselves now is, "What does a good vocational education
programme consist of?"

Several schools in New Zealand are experimenting
with special programmes to aid in the process of
"vocationalization".   In this present period of economic
troubles we must expect some school pupils to find it
hard to get jobs.   It therefore becomes more important

37   DANSEREAU, H
     Work and the teenager.   Annals of the American
     Academy of Political and Social Sciences 338, 4,
     44-52, 1961

38   CARTER, M.P
     Home,School and Work.   A study of the Education
     and Employment of Young People in Britain.   Oxford,
     Permagon Press, 1962

39   PALMER, Y.C.
     Young workers in their first jobs.   An investi-
     gation of attitudes to work and their correlates.
     Occupational Psychology 38, 99 - 113, 1964

40   CARTER, M.P.
     Into Work.   Middlesex, England, Penguin Books Ltd,
     1966

for the schools to be able to help their pupils to
mature in their vocational aspirations so that they are
better prepared to face the world of work. While the
"academic" pupils are in just as much need of help in
the process of gaining vocational maturity, their needs
can be deferred for a little longer than can the needs
of the slower pupil who will not be as successful in
examinations and will leave school much earlier.   It
is presumably for these reasons that most schools have
concentrated on their slower pupils in the setting up
of work experience or work exploration classes. Since
some schools have been running official programmes for
a number of years now the instigators of the programmes
are very interested in finding out how effective these
programmes are.   Ideally longitudinal studies should
be made so that the career paths of pupils who have
been in such programmes could be followed, but there
are obvious restrictions about this type of research at
the M.A. level.