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The future role of the vocational counselor

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The future role of the vocational counselor

Abstract

Future society may demand flexibility in many aspects of a person's life. One certainty is that there will be change throughout life, and proliferation of choices will likely characterize many aspects of a person's life space. Walz, (1975) emphasizes that an individual will continually be required to make critical life decisions under short time limits with little information.

THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE VOCATIONAL COUNSELOR

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Department of Educational Administration
and Counseling
University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

by
David M. Goswick

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Future society may demand flexibility in many aspects of a person's life. One certainty is that there will be change throughout life, and proliferation of choices will likely characterize many aspects of a person's life space. Walz, (1975) emphasizes that an individual will continually be required to make critical life decisions under short time limits with little information.

According to Walz, (1975) a competent citizen must smoothly and artfully change from one life style to another and comfortably assume the role appropriate to any given situation. In the transient society of the future people will need a zesty appetite for mastering the new and challenging. Permanence of ideas and skills will be an atavism to be combatted. Feingold, (1979) states that man's skills and talents can become obsolete even faster than can a machine's.

Walz, (1975) says people will be demanding rewards other than money for work experience. Work will also place greater demands on workers. Occupations will require workers with skills in learning, relating, making decisions, and resolving conflicts.

According to Feingold, (1975) an expanding role of the vocational counselor will be necessary in order to fulfill

society's need for workers who are able to implement skills required by the future's complex jobs. The counselor may serve in the role of "broker" between providers (workers) and those needing services (employers). Counselors will become agents for change in order to help create the future they want, a future in which all individuals are able to work up to their capabilities in many aspects of their lives. A better job should be done to assure that all people able and prepared to work do in fact have jobs. According to Feingold, (1979) society is expected to provide for the dignity that comes from having a productive role in that society. Counselors can help provide the means for maximum development of all people.

Walz, (1975) states that in order to best accomplish the goal of maximum development of all people, vocational counselors should assign a high priority to assisting individuals to project into the future so that they may better make decisions and plans that are consonant with their future image. One challenge is to design career guidance programs that emphasize all aspects of career development. Each individual is then given the opportunity to experience areas in which he or she must make critical plans and decisions. Career development is a lifetime process involving an individual's experiences and the capacity he or she possesses for identifying and developing alternatives and choosing among them. Walz, (1975) believes that the role of the counselor

is to assist clients in developing the philosophical bases, skills, and competencies necessary for becoming contributing members of society. According to Stillwell, et. al. (1976) counselors of the future will need the skills of learning development consultants. Specifically, there must be more effective multitrait, multisource assessment techniques in order for vocational guidance to occur.

Today the role of the high school counselor is often loosely defined. The profession needs to determine what specific roles, duties, goals, and qualities would be included in future-oriented guidance programs.

The following are among the many questions which need to be answered in order to help specify the counselor's role:

1. What qualities and training should a vocational counselor possess?
2. What competencies must clients develop in order to make career decisions?
3. What methods are most effective in teaching these competencies and in helping clients make choices?

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this paper is to examine methods of counseling which may be useful in assisting future clients in the career decision-making process. The school counselor's role as well as competencies necessary for life career development will also be discussed. Specifically, the study will

emphasize methods which may enhance the development of competencies in the career decision-making process.

Significance of Problem

It is hoped that through this study vocational counselors will realize that vocational guidance is in constant change and we as counselors have to keep up with the ever changing job market. In this study several methods will be discussed which can help counselors in their everyday dealing with clients.

Assumptions

The following assumptions are made throughout this study:

1. It is assumed that clients of vocational counselors need vocational guidance.
2. It is assumed that future vocational counselors will possess or learn the skills needed for vocational guidance.
3. It is assumed that the vocational guidance clients receive can and will benefit them in the future.
4. It is assumed that literature reviewed is accurate.

Limitations

1. Research may not be empirical.
2. Many of the materials are not accessible for examination.

Definition of Terms

Life career development. Process consisting of a series of work-life decisions that begin early in life and culminate (over a period of time) in occupational involvement and (over a life span) in evolution of a career. It is experiential in nature, necessitating trial, and calling for exploration behavior that allows the individual to explore self and the self in situation (behaving). Life career development is a progressive and compromising process of achieving self identity in work roles.

Method. Procedure or technique which is used by one individual to facilitate the learning or behavior change of another.

Counseling. Activities a professional counselor undertakes in an effort to help the client engage in those types of behavior which will lead to the resolution of the client's problem.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

This research study centers on methods of vocational counseling which may be useful in assisting future clients in the career decision-making process. In this chapter the school counselor's role and competencies necessary for life career development will be discussed. Later in the study a few programs used by counselors will be discussed which can help clients in their vocational search.

School Counselor's Role

The vocational counselor has the capacity to become a major force for change in society. Because of their unique role as "broker" between future workers and their employers, vocational counselors may direct people towards development of a life career which best benefits society and utilizes the competencies of the individual.

The Department of Rural Education (1969) states that proper development and utilization of human talent represent one of the most important considerations facing any nation in its effort to achieve maximum cultural and economic progress. It is a great challenge to change the world in directions that will be oriented towards people. According to Feingold (1979) individuals and society must maintain their heritage

and identity in an age of alienation in which technology feeds on technology to defeat human personality.

The Department of Rural Education (1969) says vocational counseling has two purposes: to help people make good vocational adjustment and to facilitate the smooth functioning of the social economy through the effective use of manpower. The danger exists that authoritarian policies might influence the philosophy and method of vocational guidance. It's clear that principles of freedom of choice and self-determination must predominate.

Vocational counselors need to be on guard against possible errors which prevent development of a free society. The Department of Rural Education (1969) expresses the belief that counselors must be careful of such errors as a) conceiving of vocational courses as a means of preparing students for a specific job rather than as a broad base for later training, b) relating counseling or instruction to the needs of the major employers in the community or to traditional occupations, thus neglecting new fields, and c) directing less able and poorly motivated students into vocational areas on the grounds that their educational needs can't be met in any other way.

According to Walz (1975) career guidance should assign an especially high priority to assisting individuals to project into the future and make decisions and plans that are consonant with their futuristic image. The future will be

constantly changing, and for this reason people must develop a flexible attitude and be able to adjust quickly to new situations in all aspects of their lives. Rather than decide on a career and stay in it until retirement, people will hopefully become career managers. Walz (1975) says individuals will have to be able to adapt their career goals easily to the needs of work force and to their own abilities and desires.

Being a career manager will be no simple task. Because there are constant changes to the meanings of work, people need to be able to define their jobs in terms relevant to themselves. People are challenging the traditional work ethic, by no longer being content to work simply for the sake of working. Concerted efforts must be made to achieve a balance among a person's multiple life roles. A tight labor market may limit occupations so a person may have to adjust his or her job expectations. According to Hansen & Tennyson (1975) an information deficit is created because of our fast-changing society in which it is difficult for one to know the range of options available or the means to achieve them.

According to Swann (1981) counselors need to sharpen their own skills if they are to help students expand their possibility-thinking and identify values, express objectives, assess priorities, take risks, and execute decisions. Feingold (1979) says counselors should be aware of new developments of every aspect that affects their clients, from

the expanding job market to new trends in education. Counselors should have on the job training of all kinds including working in mines as well as white collar occupations. Feingold (1979) believes that counselors often lack expertise in the appropriate use of community resources. Counselors need to know local resources, vocational information and the location of referral centers.

Counselors themselves must be able to adapt their role to fit the needs of the job. According to Feingold (1979) a counselor will have to assume several roles to be effective in helping clients make vocational decisions including a) being a source of career information or being able to refer client to the appropriate resources, b) being an expert on the changing world of work, c) being one who is able to devise information systems, use them, and serve as a link between the systems and the students they counsel, and d) being a person knowledgeable about the use of data banks or where to refer students to necessary resources.

Counselors are in the position to shape the individual's career thinking to fit the current job realities. Vocational counselors need to admit to the client that only minimal career planning is possible or desirable. It is important for the counselor to help clients realize that certainty about career choice need not be a goal. According to Baumgardner (1977) a desired outcome of counseling should be the client's recognition of irreducible uncertainties in the

career process, the likely sources of career conflict, and the inadequacy of conventional career wisdom. The counselor has an opportunity to instill the philosophy of life career management, that the development of a career is based on a multitude of decisions made over the entire life of an individual.

The challenge for counselors is to develop career guidance programs in which all aspects of life career development are explored. According to Walz (1975) individuals must be given opportunities to experience areas in which they make critical plans and decisions. The emphasis needs to be on exploring and experiencing as it is unlikely any meaningful choices and plans can occur without them.

Competencies Necessary For Life Career Development

According to Baumgardner (1977) the career goals most students have are simple, satisfying work and an adequate wage. A simple combination of these goals is difficult to achieve. The realities of the job market seldom offer fulfillment of both goals. Meaningful work is becoming harder to find. Society has produced meaningless and robot-like work in many jobs. Individual career uncertainties are partly based on the inability to predict or control the world of work.

In their article, Hansen & Tennyson (1975) warn us about several myths counselors must be wary of when dealing with clients in career counseling, a) somewhere there is a perfect

job for everyone that is 100% satisfying and 1% frustrating, b) every job carries with it a predetermined life style, c) students should be encouraged to make career decisions as early as possible, and d) a job can be arranged on "career ladders" where individuals start at the bottom and work their way up. According to Hansen & Tennyson (1975) education that narrows students' options in life is a contradiction in terms. It is critical that education teach skills that allow students to adapt quickly to a lifetime of work changes.

Changing faulty beliefs and misconceptions is a central theme of several therapies. According to Thompson (1976) misconceptions are the root of many vocational concerns for which students seek counseling. They start with the idea that vocational planning and decision-making are scientific and that the end product is an exact vocational plan. According to Thompson (1976) clients need to be made aware that complete certainty in vocational planning is not possible. Rather, it is more productive to consider and evaluate several vocational alternatives and then eliminate those that are not feasible. A comparative approach that evaluates the relative advantages and disadvantages of various plans will result in a number of good alternatives for a realistic vocational plan. Several authors including Baumgardner (1977) and Hansen & Tennyson (1975) infer that clients need to be encouraged to pursue and experiment with

several directions so that they will develop the flexibility needed for coping in a world where there are no absolute certainties.

Vocational decision making can be viewed by clients as an ongoing process. According to Thompson (1976) misconceptions that vocational decisions are made at one point in time and are final can be dispelled. The more specific the vocational goal and the sooner the vocational decision, the better. The pressure of not making a mistake because of deciding for a lifetime is counterproductive and inhibit an individual's flexibility. According to Thompson (1976) clients need to develop the self-concept theory of vocational behavior which views decisions as being made within the context of changes in life. Clients should discard the idea of entering and retiring from the same job.

Although psychometric instruments can be helpful tools in vocational counseling, Thompson (1976) feels that clients need to change the unrealistically high expectations they have for these tests. There's an alluring security in the belief that psychological tests will painlessly plot one's vocational future with guarantees of success and satisfaction. Thompson (1976) further states that testing should be demystified for clients by limiting psychometric jargon. Counselors need to be able to explain the strengths and limitations of the approach to clients.

Many clients have an incorrect assumption that a direct causal relationship exists between interests and ability.

Clients operate on the notion that if they can discover what they are interested in, a successful vocational goal will result. Most occupations require a sustained high performance in such a variety of activities that a person can not reasonably expect to be highly interested in all of them. Thompson (1976) says clients need to recognize and accept the fact that high interest is just as likely to grow out of good performance as for good performance to follow high interest.

Most people describe chance-situational events and encounters with others as having the greatest impact on both occupational choice and career development. According to Baumgardner (1977) only 28% of college alumni felt career planning led to their job. Systematic career planning may provide only an artificial means of escaping the unsystematic nature of career realities. Baumgardner (1977) states that counselors need to prepare their clients for life career development so that they will be able to change jobs as necessary.

To be life career managers and develop a life career plan, students need to have the necessary skills. Campbell (1978) has identified the following career management skills, a) self-evaluation or adjustment skills focusing on evaluating individual attributes, and applying that knowledge to career planning, b) career awareness skills focusing on awareness of educational, occupational, and leisure opportun-

ities, c) career decision making skills focusing on the processes by which individuals decide what to do with their lives, d) employment-seeking skills focusing on students' ability to locate and obtain jobs, e) work effectiveness skills focusing on work attributes, job holding and adjusting, and career advancement, and f) personal economic skills focusing on student possession of money management skills essential to survival.

According to Walz (1975) people will have a large number of choices to make in every aspect of their lives, including in schools, occupations, buying products and services, and life styles. Individuals will be called upon to make critical life decisions with little information or time.

The richness and vibrance of an individual life career will depend on a person's capacity to recycle and renew ideas and skills. According to Walz (1975) individuals will need to utilize information technology to assist in assimilating large bodies of information. They need to evaluate the quality and usefulness of the information and quickly draw valid inferences.

In conclusion, for individuals to be contributing members of the society of the future they need to develop the skills necessary for life career development. They need to develop competencies in decision-making, relating to others, flexibility in changing smoothly from one job to another, and the ability to adapt quickly to new situations. In order for

this to occur, it will be necessary for counselors to undertake an active role in implementing these skills in their vocational guidance programs.

CHAPTER 3

Career Development Methods and Programs

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of the counselor including the competencies necessary in assisting students in their life-career development efforts. In this chapter several methods will be discussed which can help counselors in their everyday dealing with clients. The future role for vocational counselors will rest upon their knowledge of the world of work as well as upon their ability to use various methods in helping clients make decisions concerning their future. The basic methods to be dealt with in this chapter are a) information systems and their uses in making career decisions, b) simulation games as an effective method in learning about work situations, c) work experiences as a source of career information, and d) counseling methods in group or individual settings. The group counseling method will be discussed in more depth in helping future clients deal with their vocational job search.

Current Status of Vocational Guidance

Vocational guidance, as it has been traditionally labeled, seems to be on the threshold of change. According to Allen (1980), antiquated approaches to vocational guidance, based on the belief that work is the central life interest of all individuals, are no longer consistent with

contemporary society. People are reassessing their priorities and goals based on the changing conditions in the work world. Allen (1980) stresses that in keeping with these changes, vocational guidance has taken a much more comprehensive view of the importance of various life decisions facing the individual. According to Salomone, et. al. (1982) increasing specialization in industry and business, clearly delineated occupational requirements, and increased differentiation of job types are creating additional needs for realistic, sound vocational counseling.

In order to make life career decisions a student needs to understand him-or-herself as a person and also needs to understand the world of work. An effective vocational program needs to provide opportunities for learning in both areas. Many methods may be used by the vocational counselor to accomplish these goals. Not all the methods presented here will be effective for each counselor; he or she must choose methods which will fit the individual needs of those served.

In his study Swann (1981) found that counselors need to be able to use several different approaches as well as combination of methods. Synergistic approaches combine two or more separate elements in order to achieve a greater effect than could be obtained if either of the elements were used alone. When using synergistic approaches to life-skills development, counselors need to be careful to select only those strategies that meet the particular needs of a

particular client. It may be necessary to design an individual model of career development for each person. Skill, sensitivity, flexibility, adaptability, creativity and eclecticism are primary tools the effective counselor will keep sharp in his or her counseling activities related to career development.

Information Systems

One goal of career counselors is to help students process information related to life decisions. This is a difficult task because of the large amounts of data and the limited time available for counseling. Campbell, et. al. (1973) reported that a computer system can facilitate the task of offering a means of storing and assessing the quantity and types of data required to make intelligent decisions.

According to Ryan, et. al. (1980) information systems are being developed and revised constantly as technology increases. They can become a valuable tool in career guidance if used effectively. Not all vocational counselors accept the systems. Counselors tend to be awed by the reputed power of the computers. Ryan, et. al. (1980) believe professionals in education have resisted the encroachment of computers in what has been accepted as uniquely human functions. However, a number of systems are in use today. Drier (1980) found that nation's schools need to develop improved career information systems.

The most popular and interesting examples of model systems are computer-based, hands-on packages, mobile guidance services, and career resource centers. Informational Retrieval Systems include any system designed to facilitate the total process of gathering, analyzing, indexing, filing, and making available information using human resources and/or hardware to carry out the process. It is important that the system not only transmits information to the user but also that it allows the user to give feedback on the usefulness of the system for the individual. Campbell, et. al. (1973) says the system should help the user learn how to effectively use information received. It is essential that the information is relevant to the needs and characteristics of intended users.

There are a number of operational computer-assisted systems in use today across the country. The Guidance Information System (GIS) (1980) has been field tested in secondary schools and human services agencies in the state of Maine. Most students found the system interesting, valuable, and useful. According to Drier (1980) the commercial, vocational information system offers data files in the areas of a) college, b) graduate schools, c) specialized schools, d) occupations, and e) financial aids. In their study Ryan, et. al. (1980) found that eighty percent of the students checked the statement that the computer was an excellent vehicle for providing information that could be used in helping them make

career decisions. Other positive results were: a) students learned a great deal about occupations, b) GIS helped students confirm career plans they already had, c) the system helped clarify educational plans students needed to make, d) students later talked to people working in occupations they were interested in, e) students learned more about their interests as they related to career planning, and f) students did more follow-up reading on occupations and/or educational opportunities.

Ryan, et. al. (1980) report that the use of GIS stimulated professional and educational development activities on the part of the career counselor. The career counselor reported being stimulated to do more reading and studying in the area of career guidance. Many counselors became believers in computer approaches because they could see individual cases in which GIS had an impact.

Another computer-assisted system, the Computerized Vocational Information System (CVIS) described by Drier (1980) is composed of elements of a) vocational exploration b) information on colleges, c) local job search, d) financial aid, and e) user registration. This system was developed for students at Willowbrook High School in Illinois in 1966. According to Herr (1974) CVIS usage had spread to twenty locations across the nation by 1974.

The GIS and CVIS are only two of several retrieval systems used in our schools today. Other occupational

information systems include 1) the Vocational Guidance in Education Program (VOGUE) (Herr, 1974) used in New York, 2) the Information Needed for Occupational Entry (INFOE) (Herr, 1974) developed at Tennessee Department of Education, and, 3) the Wisconsin Occupational Information System (WOIS) (Herr, 1974) developed at the University of Wisconsin.

These systems can be very beneficial for use in our schools today since large amounts of information can be collected, stored, and made available upon demand. Computers can allow for individual instruction insuring that each student receives only relevant information. With the information dissemination functions performed by the computer, the vocational counselor is freed for other activities. Many information systems are in developmental stages so counselors should keep informed on new trends in this field.

Simulation Gaming

Another method in career counseling is simulation gaming, a method which provides experiences for the student which parallel real-life situations. The client is expected to participate in activities which involve seeking and obtaining information, decision making, and acting on feedback. This method enables individuals to test out a real situation and to investigate the extent to which it is satisfying to him or herself in a non-threatening environment. In a sense, the student is enabled to take on

an experimental stance. Campbell, et. al. (1973) states that students who are provided experiences in simulation games are able to practice new behaviors, to explore alternatives, and to make mistakes without pressures and consequences.

Social interaction games, a form of simulation gaming, enable the learner to better understand the nature of interaction between self and the environment (Campbell, et. al., 1973). The student is given the opportunity to explore the nature of a social environment through possible roles he or she might play and to develop strategies which enable him or her to exert control over the environment.

The Life Career Game (Chick, 1970) developed at Johns Hopkins University in 1962 was one of the first in career information simulations. The Life Career Game (Chick, 1970) stressed student involvement in the information gathering process. This game combined features of the labor market with other crucial career decision areas.

MOLD (Making of Life Decisions) Johnson (1972) is another popular simulation game. According to Johnson (1972) this game was designed to dispense occupational information and to help formulate career decision making. The simulation activities used by MOLD ask students to construct profile sheets and to make tentative decisions about their future careers.

Gaming can be a very effective method for helping students develop career goals. It can provide information about various occupations. Gaming enables students to experience the nature of work by solving occupational problems which may arise in a job. This method helps students explore various alternatives before making a final career decision. Gaming can be an effective motivator for students to become actively involved in vocational decision making (Chick, 1970).

Work Experience

Work is now being seen by many workers as not just a source of income, but as a major means of life satisfaction. Knowdell (1982) reports that this has placed a strong emphasis on the careful examination and selection of appropriate job options. Work experience programs allow students to test their vocational choices in real work situations in order to explore how appropriate particular jobs are to their life-career design. This gives students the opportunity to test their vocational choices prior to entry into an occupational field. In an effective work-study program students learn vocational skills under actual conditions of employment. They gain technical and related information that will enable them to work successfully in their chosen occupation. Campbell, et. al. (1973) study indicated that students will learn to make necessary adjustments to the work situation,

including the acceptance of responsibility, development of relationships with other workers and acceptance of supervision.

Knowdell (1982) concludes that there are several weaknesses in many current work experience programs. Occupational experiences offered are often not relevant to students. The experience may be narrow with the student only completing routine tasks. The training provided may not be for high demand occupations so students will be unable to find employment.

More and more high schools across the nation are implementing cooperative education programs in their curriculums. Campbell, et. al. (1973) state that cooperative education programs are the most common work experience programs implemented in our high schools today. The student works part-time and studies in formal classroom setting part-time. The learning which occurs on the job should relate to that which occurs in the school.

Other work-experience programs include a) work-study programs designed for special populations, the disadvantaged, drop-outs, or the unemployed, b) volunteer work experience programs in which students volunteer their time in order to get experience in education or health care fields, and c) simulated experience programs which provide opportunities for students to experiment with a number of different types of occupations.

Campbell, et. al. (1973) reports that work-experience programs have great possibilities, to expand vocational aspirations, and to make tentative career choices. Some have argued that the real work experience as compared to simulated experience, such as gaming, is more effective in helping the student learn some work related behaviors such as punctuality, relationships with fellow workers, and ability to take supervision.

Interest in career guidance in the workplace has been steadily growing in the late 1970's and early 1980's (Knowdell, 1982). In addition, training programs in our high schools are beginning to prepare students for employment in the business and industrial sectors by modifying curricula and developing fieldwork and internship assignments in the business world of work.

Counseling Methods in Group or Individual Settings

In a large number of situations a counselor interacts with more than one client. Campbell, et. al. (1973) defines a group as a combination of individuals who share goals and norms of behavior while providing certain learning conditions. The nature of learning in a group situation allows members to learn about interpersonal relationships, provides opportunity for members to help each other perceive reality more accurately, establishes group support for individual behavior changes, and provides a role model in the form of counselor.

Campbell, et. al. (1973) states that learning objectives should be the most important factor determining the make-up of the group. Since group procedures facilitate learning, especially about self, they can be used effectively to further vocational exploration. Considerations other than learning objectives include common interests of the group members, size of the group, physical setting, length of meetings, and procedures used to accomplish group goals.

Large group instruction is particularly useful for disseminating vocational information. Counselors may employ various educational media to convey vocational information. However, this method does not allow for group interaction or for individuals to clarify information by questioning the leader.

Group guidance methods involve a small number of students. The purpose of the group may be instructional or informative. Because there is ample opportunity for interaction, this method is more effective for communicating information about self than is large group instruction (Campbell, et. al. 1973). Group guidance may be used with all students and may or may not be used in changing attitudes of the members. Some of the same procedures may be used for group guidance that are used in large situations such as the classroom.

A growing emphasis in current research on vocational development is on the process rather than the act of career

choice (Tolbert, 1974). Group counseling methods can be a very beneficial tool in the individual's search for vocational development. It is not simply the ability to make an occupational decision at one point in time that is important, but rather the pattern or sequence of choices one makes throughout the developmental process. Butcher (1982) reports in his study that career counseling efforts need to expand beyond the immediacy of finding a job or selecting a school to considering the client's long-range goals and life-style preferences.

In the last decade the use of fantasy has been accepted as an appropriate technique in helping clients make long-range goals and life-style preferences. Fantasy has been used to raise the level of cognitive complexity clients employ in their solution of career problems (Keller, et. al. 1982). During a counseling session fantasy may be employed in a brain-storming fashion to establish an awareness of alternate career choices and life styles. Crabbs (1979) believes the counselor should play an active role in introducing, guiding, and processing the fantasized activity. Dialogue is established through which the counselor assists the client in realistic appraisal and application of the fantasy to the client's life.

Crabbs (1979) speaks extensively about fantasy being a rich resource in assisting clients in career planning. The counselor may use this technique in both group and individual

sessions. Nicholson (1975) reports that fantasy had an extremely powerful effect when used with small groups. Whatever the format, the counselor should remain constantly aware of needs, concerns, and career goals of the client. Implementation of this method should occur only after considerable thought and preparation on the part of the client. The content, language, and directions of each fantasy must be explicit and appropriate for the level of sophistication of each client.

According to Crabbs (1979) the counselor first prepares the group or individual by explaining the rationale behind the use of fantasy and by answering any questions clients may have. Individuals need to be made aware of the length of the activity and what is required of them as well as expected goals of participation.

Examples of fantasy sessions found by Morgan & Skovholt (1977) relating to vocational counseling include a) an award ceremony fantasy in which clients picture themselves receiving an award for excellence in their career, b) an opposite sex fantasy in which the client imagines himself in a job usually held by the other sex, c) an other-race fantasy in which the client imagines being a member of another race, d) a mid-career change fantasy in which clients fantasize about changing careers, e) a retirement fantasy in which clients imagine their life style after retiring from the world of work.

Crabbs (1979) states that the counselor may bring in outside stimuli to begin a fantasy. Pictures of people at their jobs, homes, or participating in leisure activities may be brought in and discussed. Clients are asked to fantasize about pictures and later to share the fantasy. After several fantasies are discussed, each person is given blank paper and draws themselves in a picture 15 years into the future. They are to include various details of a typical day such as surroundings and people. The pictures are then shown and discussed.

After implementation of a fantasy technique, a follow-up or debriefing period needs to be provided with the objective of soliciting client reaction to the fantasy exercises and stimulating further exploration of career ideas and goals. The counselor could then ask the following questions: a) Could you describe your reaction to the fantasy activity? b) Did you experience any unusual feelings, thoughts, or experiences? c) What have you realized about yourself and your career plans that you hadn't thought about before? d) How have you and your career goals changed as a result of the fantasy? e) What career goals have you set for yourself right now? How can you implement them? f) What is the first step you need to do to meet these goals? g) How can I (counselor) help you to meet your goals (Crabbs 1979)?

Morgan, et. al. (1977) claim that fantasy appears to be important in reducing stress and increasing creativity in

career decisions. Career counselors may aid clients in their integration of complex career related life events through the use of fantasy and imagery. Keller, et al (1982) reported that an additional attribute of this cognitive developmental method is the fantasy is essentially timeless; allowing the counselor to inject the client into past, present, and future career dilemmas or triumphs.

In this chapter several methods have been presented from which the vocational counselor may choose in order to develop a program that best fits the needs of the individual student. Ideally, a combination of methods need to be available so that each individual's needs can be met. The counselor needs to be flexible in using methods that will enable his or her students to design life-career models which they may implement on an experimental basis while they are yet high school students.

CHAPTER 4

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine methods of counseling which may be helpful in assisting future clients in the career decision-making process. The future role of the vocational counselor as well as competencies necessary for life career development were also an integral part of the study.

In Chapter 2 the literature was reviewed regarding the school counselor's future role. The literature indicated that vocational counselors have the capacity to implement major changes in the ways in which students perceive the world of work. In order for this to occur the counselor needs to possess competencies for assisting students in their life-career development efforts. It was also found that future counselors will need to be prepared to understand and implement a wide variety of methods in vocational development in order to enhance the student's vocational search and action.

Several methods considered to be effective within the profession in the area of career development were researched in Chapter 3. The methods chosen in the study included information systems, simulation gaming, work experience, and

counseling methods in group or individual settings. These specific methods were also those which were treated most extensively in the professional journals reviewed.

There is a plethora of methods and techniques available for counselors to implement in their vocational guidance programs. Ideally a combination of these methods and techniques would be available so that individual needs of students could be met.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be made.

1. There are a variety of methods and techniques available for counselors to implement in their vocational guidance programs.
2. High school students need career guidance which provides experience and practical knowledge of specific occupations.
3. A major responsibility of the counselor is to provide the opportunity for change in an individual.
4. Our future society is likely to use counselors as agents of change.
5. Counselors are in a favorable position to assist clients in developing a futuristic outlook.

6. The goals of futuristic vocational counseling, which are job satisfaction for the individual as well as a productive labor force for society, will likely continue to be supported by public education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made.

1. School counselors need to make themselves aware of innovative career guidance procedures.

2. Continued research is needed in the area of career development specifically as it relates to simulation gaming and information systems.

3. Career information system courses at the college graduate level need to be kept in tune with changes and fluctuations in the labor force.

4. State professional organizations need to be encouraged to organize and support vocational education workshops for the purpose of keeping counselors in the field aware of new career development methods, techniques, and programs.

5. Counselors within reasonably accessible geographical areas should hold regular meetings for the purpose of sharing methods which are effective and for considering new and/or different approaches for vocational development.

6. Increased attention needs to be given to the shifting work values of students. Seminars, workshops, and short courses which could be provided by professional organizations, school districts, or small groups of interested counselors are possible approaches for addressing this need.

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