

Making the Transition to Re-Employment: Social Networks and Their Impact on Social Assistance Recipients

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Abstract

This study focused on the role of social networks in the transition from social assistance to employment. The study consisted of a field experiment that was built into the training program that agencies normally deliver to persons on social assistance as part of the Ontario Works 'work-for-welfare' program. Participants were randomly assigned to a control or experimental group and the sample consisted of 92 in the control group and 40 in the experimental group. For the experimental group, a supplementary treatment, a 'job search management system' was added to the program that social assistance recipients normally receive. A Social Network Job Search Scale (SNJSS) was created and served as the dependent variable in a pre-test/post-test design. A positive correlation between strength of an individual's network and re-employment was found. Understanding the value of social networks is important not only for re-entering the labour market but also for obtaining employment that is above the minimum wage.

A social assistance recipient's return to the workforce is a complex, multifaceted process. Theory and research in this area has focused on the development of interventions such as training programs that assist people in making the transition to re-employment (e.g., AuClaire, 1978; Blumenberg, 2000; Van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992). While this research is important to the development of our understanding of this transition, it is limited by its inattention to factors related to a recipient's actual utilization of their social networks. Recently, researchers have focused much more directly on enhancing our understanding of social assistance recipient's self-efficacy and their own ability to remove themselves from state dependence through existing re-

employment interventions (e.g., Cheng, 1995; Friedman, 1999; Kerlin, 1993). This research, though relatively immature as a field of inquiry, promises to add significantly to theories in this area.

Many attempts have been made to reintegrate the social assistance population into the mainstream economy, and particularly government-sponsored 'employment programs'. These programs have increased in number over the last decade, due in part to the low employment rates experienced in the early 1980s (Statistics Canada, 2003). A more recent example of a government program is Ontario Works, initiated in 1996 by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.

The purpose of the mandatory Ontario Works 'work-for-welfare' program was to force those individuals receiving assistance to actively search for employment. The stated objectives of the Ontario government were threefold: first, to ensure that social assistance recipients took responsibility for looking for employment and becoming self-sufficient; second, to provide an effective transition to employment; and third, to make welfare fair for people who require help and for the taxpayers who pay the cost (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1997).

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between social networks and re-entry into the labour market by participants in the Ontario Works employment-training program. By examining a social assistance recipient's social network, we stand to learn much about how they confront and deal with re-employment. Such data can be instrumental in developing practical applications for assisting people making this transition.

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. Is there a negative relationship

between the strength of social networks and the length of time an individual is on social assistance?

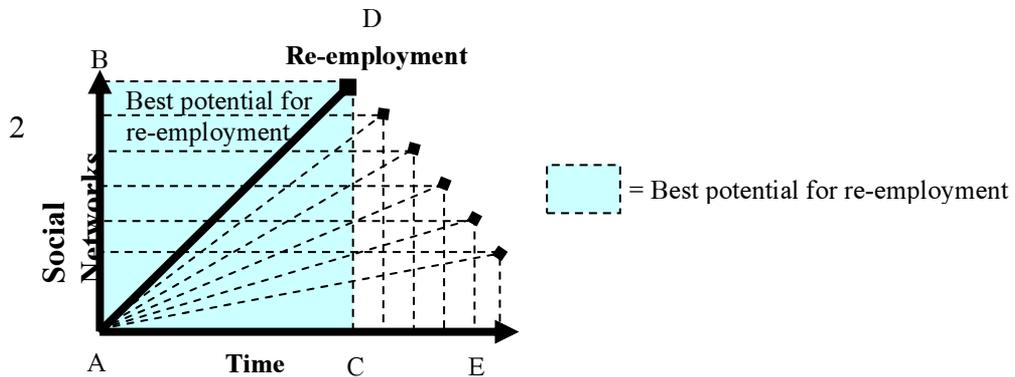
2. Do those participants who have become re-employed have stronger networks than those who have not?
3. Has the treatment in this study strengthened the social assistance recipient's social network?
4. Are those social assistance recipients who become re-employed upon completion of the employment-training program been on social assistance less time than those who do not find employment?

Theoretical Framework

Social network theory was used to explain the efficient movement towards re-employment. By utilizing contacts within social networks and learning the necessary skills for networking, it was anticipated that the opportunity for re-employment will increase. However, not all networks are of equal benefit in facilitating a return to the workforce. Diverse networks, it was expected, will help the social assistance recipient to identify contacts and supports, which may help to decrease the time it takes to move towards employment.

Figure 1 highlights the conceptual framework this article will use. At the beginning stages of receiving social assistance (A), social networks (B) are usually at their fullest capacity and most likely to be of greatest benefit in the transition back to the labour force. With increased time on social assistance, social networks shrink and, it is assumed, will be less useful. If employment training is required, it is most likely to be effective when social assistance is first received. Training programs, it is expected, will assist in strengthening social networks, which assist reintegration to the labour force.

Figure 1 – Conceptual Framework



If no interventions are introduced and time elapses (E), social circles begin to shrink and the length of time it will take for re-employment increases.

Social networks and re-employment

Social Network Ties

Research dealing with social networks has involved the identification of both ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ ties (Granovetter, 1973; Granovetter, 1982). Weak ties have been identified as acquaintances and socially distant; strong ties are close, such as family and friends. Granovetter (1973) conducted empirical studies testing his hypotheses on “the strength of weak ties”, arguing that those individuals with fewer ‘weak ties’ are less likely to be exposed to employment opportunities than those with many.

The study of weak ties has yielded specific observations among marginalized populations. Poorly educated individuals are more likely to use strong ties for jobs compared to those who were well educated (Ericksen & Yancey, 1980). A number of studies indicate that marginalized populations rely more on strong ties than do others, making access to quality employment opportunities less likely (Granovetter, 1982).

If weak ties are in fact the best possibility for a social assistance recipient to find employment, how can government-funded employment training programs expand social networks amongst marginalized populations? One strategy in increasing the probability of re-employment is a program that helps

social assistance recipients to cultivate weak ties. By comparison, a highly concentrated network of strong ties fragments poor communities and weakens opportunities for a broader range of contacts (Auslander & Litwin, 1988; Granovetter, 1982).

Members of low-income communities often rely on strong ties for monetary and social support. Ultimately, poverty places additional strains on social ties and makes it difficult to use these as resources to finding employment. Social assistance recipients lack weak ties and their strong ties may become strained if too many demands are placed upon them. For example, single mothers who have obtained low-wage jobs are forced to utilize their strong ties for child support and are often unable to repay the debt (Garber, 1999). Without that support, however, they may have a high absentee rate at work and eventually lose their jobs (Hanson & Pratt, 1995; Oliner, 1995).

Causes of Social Isolation and its Effect on Re-employment Over Time

Although the majority of studies on the stability of social networks over time have dealt with mainstream populations, it may be possible to extrapolate from those findings to marginalized populations. If utilizing existing contacts represents links to possible employment opportunities, then building constructive social networks is a vital resource for social assistance recipients. If people stay on social assistance for longer periods of time, there is reason to believe that social networks deteriorate (Garber, 1999).

Social network analysis has

attempted to address the question of network changes over time (Feld, 1997; Morgan, Neal & Carder, 1996; Suitor & Keeton, 1997; Wellman, Wong, Tindall & Nazer, 1997). It has been demonstrated that supportive ties are the most likely to persist and that frequent contact between network members is also associated with the persistence of relationships (Feld, 1997). However, the persistence of relationships among the unemployed can diminish over time due to feelings of isolation and depression (Amundson & Borgen, 1987).

Tilly (1968) found that involvement in group activities is related to change, whether personally or for society as a whole. Those who sit at home and are not involved in groups have a difficult time bringing about personal change. Extrapolating from this research, it might be expected that a social assistance recipient’s participation in extra-curricular activity would be an effective means for expanding and maintaining social networks. Increased contacts are likely to correlate with identifying employment opportunities. If social assistance recipients are not encouraged to get involved in the community by either volunteering with charities or through work placements, the research on social networks suggests that the chances of remaining on welfare for longer periods of time dramatically increase. In that regard, shrinking social networks might be viewed as an intervening variable between the degree of community involvement and time on social assistance. More active community participation should lead to enhanced social networks that in turn reduce the time on

social assistance because the networks generate job contacts. In addition, the need to make contacts outside an individual's social network is critical if marginalized populations are to access job-related information. Putnam (2002) indicated that participation is down for unions, churches, and political parties. This is of concern as these forms of social capital are especially important for empowering less educated, less affluent portions of the population. Putnam found more social networking among the affluent than among the working classes. If marginalized populations continue to remain within their social networks, opportunities for receiving information that can benefit their upward mobility will be missed.

While the existing research does not test this relationship directly, there is some evidence that the probability of exiting from social assistance decreases with more time in that role. This evidence comes from the research of Barrett and Cragg (1998), who examined welfare data in Canada between 1990 and 1992. That study found initial welfare spells are relatively short in Canada. For second and subsequent welfare spells, time on welfare increases (Barrett & Cragg, 1998). Recurrent short-term use is the most common pattern of welfare participation both in Canada and the United States (Bane & Ellwood, 1983; Barrett & Cragg, 1998; Gritz & MaCurdy, 1992). Moreover, the Barrett and Cragg study (1998) shows some relationship between the amount of time on social assistance and the probability of exit. Employable single men with no children have an exit probability at one month of 28 percent, at two months of 29 percent and at three months of 25 percent. Unemployable single women with one dependent child have an exit probability of 16 percent at one month, 15 percent at two months and 13 percent at three months (Barrett & Cragg, 1998). Although the relationship between time on social assistance and the probability of exit is not strong, the trend is apparent. The longer an individual remains on social assistance, the probability of exiting the system decreases.

Barrett and Cragg (1998) proposed two explanations for this finding. First, there may be a true duration dependen-

cy, whereby the experience of being on welfare changes the recipient's behaviour. Barrett and Cragg (1998) speculate that welfare spell duration is associated with human capital atrophy, changed patterns of employer screening, or a depressed desire to work. The second explanation may have been a statistical artifact, reflecting the effects of unmeasured individual characteristics or 'population heterogeneity'. Barrett and Cragg (1998) go on to explain:

For example, consider a population composed of two types of individuals, the highly motivated and the less motivated. The highly motivated are more likely to exit welfare early, leaving behind a population of recipients composed of an increasing proportion of individuals with low motivation. The nature of the welfare population changes with spell duration, and if the characteristic (motivation) is not controlled for, negative duration dependence will be observed in the aggregate hazard rate even in the absence of true duration dependence. (p. 174)

Although initial welfare spells have been generally short, statistics show that there is a high level of recidivism rates among participants (Barrett & Cragg, 1998). Fifty-five percent of people leaving welfare return to the system within the first year. For example, although single men without children tend to have very short welfare spells, they also experience a very high rate of return (Barrett & Cragg, 1998). Even though long-term continuous welfare participation may not be characteristic of the typical social assistance recipient, long-term sporadic use is very common (Barrett & Cragg, 1998). However, the longer an individual remains off welfare, and the more work experience and human capital they acquire, the less likely they are to return.

The Barrett and Cragg (1998) study does not deal with the impact of social networks on the probability of exiting from social assistance. However, research by Garber (1999) using multiple logistic regression models does relate to social networks. She found seven variables to be significant, four of which measured levels of social isolation. These were whether the respondent owns her own home, the number of years she has lived in the neighborhood, whether her household has a working automobile, and how many neighbors rely on public assistance.

(Other significant variables were the respondent's total number of years of school, whether she was married, as well as the number of hours she worked per week.) Garber also found that the proportion of neighbors receiving public assistance led to increased social isolation. The larger the proportion, the greater the likelihood of increased poverty.

A Social Network Theory Approach to Employment-training Programs

A social network theory approach to employment-training programs (Auslander & Litwin, 1988, 1991; Smith, 1989; Specht, 1986) suggests that social networks establish norms for behaviour within a training group, including accelerated job-search activity. Social networks may provide information and opportunity that are relevant to becoming re-employed by supplying additional contacts. According to theory, social networks (as they apply to social assistance recipients) may only be helpful if they reach beyond the participant's world, particularly as it relates to generating employment opportunities. This becomes critical in determining the time it will take to move towards re-employment.

On the basis of this conceptualization, employment program interventions must address existing social networks of participants and seek ways to expand them. If receiving social assistance is normative and socially rewarded within a social network, employment program interventions will fail unless the norms initiated within the network are modified (Friedkin, 2001). If, however, networks do not provide contacts necessary to find employment, they must be expanded. A social network analysis suggests that employment program interventions should seek to change social norms that are detrimental to job search behaviour. They should also capitalize on existing social network norms that are favourable to creating positive job-seeking behaviour. The social network approach also suggests that evaluating employment programs should focus on a participant's social network prior to and after the intervention and determine whether network changes are stable over time.

The research suggests that social

network enhancement should be an important objective of any training program for social assistance recipients. Social network theory can provide a context for understanding the dynamics associated with the transition towards re-employment and the elements involved in making that process more effective.

According to social network theory, networks provide support and contacts that are critical to employment opportunities. This theory has important implications for employment-training. If training programs involve introducing social assistance recipients to network knowledge, the task of practitioners is more focused than the diversity and fragmentation that characterize current practice. Training programs must account for the differences in network resources among the marginalized populations, and program delivery must be adjusted to provide participants with the knowledge to develop social networks that are useful.

Method

The research questions were tested through a field experiment in which a supplementary treatment, a job search management system, was added to the program for social assistance recipients normally undertaken by participating agencies through the Ontario Works program. A pre-test/post-test design was used for the primary measure of the study, the Social Network Survey (SNS), which determined the impact of the treatment on the social networking behaviour of the participants. A discussion of the treatment, the sample, measures and data analysis follows.

Treatment

The treatment for this study was a job search management system, designed by the investigator, which was administered in conjunction with the existing curriculum of the employment-training program. The system was designed to help participants to work through systematically the necessary steps to become employed. A central feature of the system was the 'job search board' that enables both a participant and facilitator to monitor job search activity and the number of contacts made during a defined period. The

system encourages facilitators to stress the importance of the number of contacts made by participants and allows them to rate the significance of each encounter to determine the value of job-related information that may be provided by the new contact.

Social network audits were performed on a regular basis to ensure that participants were attempting to make contacts that could assist them in their job search. The results of a social network audit allowed the facilitator to determine the number of contacts each participant was making. If there was a need to increase the number of contacts, interventions were implemented. For example, role-playing techniques were introduced to practice the necessary rapport-building skills and scripts were developed to assist participants in introducing themselves in networking situations.

For each employment opportunity (contact) identified by a participant, a 't-card' was filled out with the company name, name of contact, position title, job description and next step recorded.

There are six columns to the job board:

- *Column 1:* is 'opportunity' and includes possible leads for employment and the specific contact;
- *Column 2:* is 'applied' and includes all opportunities for which the participant has actually submitted a résumé or completed an application;
- *Column 3:* is 'set interview' and represents job interviews that have been set but not yet attended;
- *Column 4:* is 'interview' and includes all interviews that have actually been attended;
- *Column 5:* is 'verbal job offer' and represents actual job offers to the participant, and
- *Column 6:* is 'job' and signals that the participant has actually started employment.

Job board reviews were conducted individually and as a group to determine the status of the participant's job search activity and the number of contacts developed. The job search management system is based on the principle of assisting individuals to move from step-to-step within a normal job-hiring cycle. Using the job search board provides a visual representation of the

job search process and assists participants in monitoring their job search progress. The job board allows participants and facilitators to track job search activity and identifies any corrective actions that may be necessary for making the transition to re-employment. The job board highlights whom the participants are connecting with and how they are utilizing these contacts.

Sample

For the study, local employment agencies in a large urban centre in Southern Ontario, which were offering Ontario Works employment programs, provided access to participants who were asked to volunteer for the research. Of the social assistance recipients asked to participate in the study, 8 did not volunteer (5.7%) giving a total sample size of 132. The agencies indicated that those individuals that chose not to participate were representative of clients. After the social assistance recipients had agreed to participate in the study, the agencies were randomly assigned to the control ($n = 92$) or experimental group ($n = 40$). The reason for the lower number of respondents in the experimental group was due to the time and resources available to the investigator to provide train-the-trainer sessions for workshop facilitators. While both members of the control and experimental group received the employment program of the agency in which they were enrolled, participants in the experimental group also received the treatment. The study employed a pre-post correlation design and all participants completed a survey twice, immediately before the program began and immediately following. For the entire sample, the age ranged from 20-64 years, with 66% male and 34% female. Fifty-seven percent of the sample were single males and never married; 56% did not have any children. This pattern is similar to that found in a study in British Columbia (Barrett and Cragg, 1998) and another commissioned by Toronto Social Services (2001). As for race, 54% were listed as a visible minority, 33% as Caucasian and 14% as Aboriginal. English was the most common language spoken, followed by French. Most respondents had completed high school but had not

achieved a post-secondary school credential, although 19% had completed a Bachelors degree, 6% obtained a masters degree and 1% a doctoral degree. Two to three was the average years of experience in the workplace. The median time on social assistance was 0 to 6 months (31%) with the majority of respondents (62%) having a previous welfare spell. This is at odds with previous studies in the United States (Ellwood, 1986; Gritz and MaCurdy, 1992), which identified the median spell on welfare as two years and a 40% return subsequently. However, studies in Canada (Barrett and Cragg, 1998) concur that welfare spells normally end within six months but have a high level of recidivism, with 25% of recipients returning to welfare within 3 months and 50% within a year. In Barrett and Cragg's study (1998), 30% collected welfare prior to the research; however, that information was not collected in this study.

Measures

The principal measurement device was the Social Network Job Search Scale – (SNJSS) designed and tested by the investigator. The instrument, based on existing social network surveys (e.g., Chin, 1993; Granovetter, 1972; Porter, 1998) and adapted to the social assistance population, measured the strength of a social assistance recipient's social network. The instrument was pilot tested with fellow students and social assistance recipients known to the investigator. In addition to the SNJSS items, sociodemographic information (e.g., gender, age category, marital status) was collected to enable comparisons with prior research (e.g., Leik and Chalkley, 1991; Suitor and Keaton, 1993). Surveys were administered on the first day of the program (Base Line) and upon completion of the training (Post-Test).

Social Network Strength

A major component to this research was identifying the relationship between the strength of a social assistance recipient's social network and the transition towards re-employment. The strength of a social assistance recipient's social network was determined using the following variables:

Number of contacts identified:

Respondents were asked to identify (by first name) up to 10 of the most important persons in their life. Each of the names was coded as a contact. If the same name appeared on the second survey, it was coded and compared to the first survey for ranking.

Number of contacts identified as family or friend: For each of the names identified, the respondent was required to indicate whether the contact was a family member or friend and their responses were coded accordingly.

Number of contacts who would provide financial support: As well as reporting the most important persons in their life, respondents were also required to state whether the individual listed would provide financial support. This was coded as '1' for yes and '2' for no.

Number of contacts who would provide emotional support: Contacts who would provide emotional support were coded as '1' for yes and '2' for no.

Number of contacts who would provide child-care: Those respondents who indicated that they had children were asked if the contacts listed would provide child-care. This was coded as '1' for yes and '2' for no.

Number of contacts who would provide job leads: Contacts listed who were in a position to provide job leads to the respondent were coded as yes or 1, and others were coded as no or '2'.

Number of contacts who were presently collecting welfare: Contacts listed who were also collecting welfare were coded as yes or 1, and others were coded as no or '2'.

Number of contacts who held similar positions the respondents was interested in: Those contacts that held a position that the respondent was pursuing were coded as yes or 1, and others were coded as no or '2'.

Number of job-related discussion with family members:

Respondents were required to indicate how many job-related discussions they had with family on a weekly basis.

Number of job-related discussion with friends:

Respondents were required to indicate how many job-related discussions they had with friends on a weekly basis.

Social Network Strength Formula

A formula was developed based on the above variables to determine the strength of the respondent's social network (SNJSS). Points were accumulated for the number of people identified as part of the respondent's network along with the number of contacts identified as friends, those providing financial, emotional, job leads or who held a similar position, and the number of job-related discussions they had with friends and family. It is assumed that network members who could provide job-related information and support are valuable to the social assistance recipient's transition into the labour market. Points were subtracted if the respondent indicated that the contact was a family member (strong tie) or collected welfare. The rationale for subtracting these scores was so that the purpose of the employment-training program was to grow their networks with members who could provide relevant information or resources. Also, if the respondents network consisted of members who were also on social assistance, the opportunity for job-related information was potentially limited and of no value to the participant. Subsequently, negative points were given for those variables that would not add value to the social assistance recipient's network. Therefore, the formula reads:

$$STRENGTH = (\# \text{ of contacts} + \text{friends} + \text{financial support} + \text{emotional support} + \text{job leads} + \text{similar position} + \text{discussions with family/friends}) - (\text{family} + \text{contacts on social assistance})$$

This formula was developed based on social network research that has described the components of a strong social network and which provides job-related information to include a combination of the above stated variables (e.g., Granovetter, 1973; Ooka & Wellman, 2003; Strathdee & Hughes, 2002; Wilkinson & Robinson, 1997).

FINDINGS

Scoring the Social Network Job Search Scale

The scores for the variable SNJSS for the pre-test ranged from 2.00 to 51.00 points. The mean strength score for the pre-test (n = 132) was 22.94 with a standard deviation of 12.20.

Post-test strength scores ($n = 44$) ranged from 5.00 to 55.00 with a mean strength score of 27.39 and a standard deviation of 11.63. An increase was noted in mean strength scores from pre- to post-test. This may have been due to the participant's exposure to training and other individuals they may have come in contact with during their job search intervention. For the pre-test, the mean length of time on social assistance was 1.71. The range of time on social assistance was from '0 to 6 months' (a value of 0.25 was used in the analyses) to over seven years (8.50). The standard deviation was 2.25. The mean social network strength score was 22.94 with a range of 2.00 to 51.00 and a standard deviation of 12.20.

Q1 Is there a negative relationship between the strength of social networks and the length of time an individual is on social assistance?

Using the pre-test data for the entire sample (control and experimental groups combined), correlation coefficients were computed for the length of time on social assistance and the strength of social networks. Using the Bonferroni approach to control for Type I error across the correlation, a p -value of less than .05 ($05/10 = .005$) was required for significance. The results of the correlational analyses for time on social assistance and social network strength were not statistically significant ($r = -.01$).

Q2 Do those participants who have become re-employed have stronger networks than those who have not?

To evaluate the second research question, an independent-samples t -test was used to compare social network strength for those participants in the study who secured employment and those who had not. The sample available to answer this question was very small, as only 7 respondents in the experimental group and 3 in the control

group indicated that they had secured some form of employment. To answer this question, these 10 respondents were compared to those remaining on social assistance—58.8% for the experimental group and 74.1% for the control group, or 68.2 % of the total sample. The post-test measure of social network strength was used. The t -test was significant, $t(42) = -2.06, p < .05$, thereby supporting individuals with stronger networks are more likely to secure employment. Respondents who became re-employed ($M = 20.80, SD = 9.85$) had higher social network strength scores than those who remained on social assistance ($M = 13.82, SD = 9.31$). Although there are differing interpretations possible for this finding, one is that stronger networks increase the chances for becoming re-employed.

Another indicator of social network strength was the number of people identified as part of a network. This can serve as an activity indicator for the number of people the participant is in contact with during a training intervention. Those participants who became re-employed had a higher average number of people in their network ($M=8.30$) than those who were unable to get a job during the study ($M=5.85$), $t(42) = -2.30, p < .05$. Network size, in this context, probably is associated with a wider range of contacts for receiving job-related information.

The results also revealed the number of new members added to the network since the start of the program. The respondents who became re-employed averaged nearly five new members in their social network ($M=4.90$), while those who did not become re-employed averaged fewer than three ($M=2.97$), $t(42) = -2.22, p < .05$. The theory presented in this paper suggests that building new ties with contacts to the job market is critical to increasing the flow of job-related information. However, this study did not ask specifically whether the new members who were added to the networks between the pre-

and post-tests assisted with the job search.

Q3 Has the treatment in this study strengthened the social assistance recipient's social network?

A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted with control and experimental groups as the independent variable. The dependent variable was the post-test social network strength scores and the covariate was the pre-test social network strength scores. A preliminary analysis evaluating the homogeneity-of-slopes assumption indicated that the relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable did not differ significantly as a function of the independent variable, $F(1, 40) = 1.42, p = .240$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. The ANCOVA was significant, $F(1, 41) = 4.91, p < .05$. The strength of the relationship between the control and experimental group factor and dependent variables was fairly strong, as assessed by a partial η^2 , with the group factor representing 11% of the variance of the dependent variable the social network strength scores.

The means of the social network strength scores adjusted for initial differences were ordered as expected. The experimental group had the largest adjusted mean ($M=31.53$) with the control group having the smaller adjusted mean ($M=25.52$). Through the treatment, the number of contacts a participant makes during a training intervention was monitored, and if network growth did not occur, corrective actions were taken to increase the exposure to job-search resources.

The experimental group was more likely to add new members to their social networks than the control group (Table 1). The average number of new members for the experimental group ($M=4.19$) was nearly double that of the control group ($M=2.69$), $t(42) = 2.03, p < .05$. However, adding new members alone does not increase the strength of

Table 1 – New Members to Network

Group	Total (n)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Strength Mean
Control	27	2.69	2.49	2.58
Experimental	17	4.19	2.96	2.75

social networks. Although new members to both groups increased, the significant difference between the number of new members added by the experimental and control groups suggest that the treatment might have strengthened the participants' social networks.

a respondent participated in was related to re-employment. Respondents who found employment (Table 2) had participated in fewer training programs ($M=0.40$) than those who did not become employed ($M = 1.06$), $t(41) = 2.23, p < .05$. The number of training programs is associated with the length

works were carefully analyzed to determine whether original network members who could continue to provide job-related information were maintained (Table 3). If a social network represents a critical link to re-employment, it is important that members maintained in the network during an employment

Table 2 – Number of Previous Training Programs

	# of Training Programs	Std. Deviation
Got Job	0.40	0.70
No Job	1.06	1.06

Q4 Are those social assistance recipients who become re-employed upon completion of the employment-training program been on social assistance less time than those who do not find employment?

To evaluate the fourth research question, an independent-samples *t*-test was used to compare the length of time on social assistance for those participants in the study who secured employment and those who had not. The test was significant, $t(17) = 2.42, p < .05$, which supports that the length of time a participant is on assistance impacts their ability to find employment. Respondents who did not become re-employed had been on social assistance longer ($M = 2.13, SD = 1.25$) than those who found employment ($M = 1.22, SD = 0.91$). This finding could be interpreted as meaning that the length of time on social assistance has a negative impact on the probability of becoming re-employed.

In addition to the length of time on social assistance, the number of previous employment training programs that

of time on social assistance, with those who are on social assistance longer being more likely to participate in a larger number of training programs. Although the length of time on social assistance did not have a significant relationship to the strength of social network score (research question 1), it does appear to be related to the likelihood of re-employment. These findings will be explored in greater detail in the Discussion section that follows.

Adding Network Members

Respondents were asked if their group of friends had changed since they first started to receive social assistance. There was a significant correlation between social network strength and change of friends for the experimental group ($r = .81, p < .01$); however, there was not a significant correlation for the control group ($r = .07$). This finding may indicate that new contacts were being added in the experimental group, but not the control group.

In addition to identifying new member growth, the respondent net-

training intervention be able to provide job search resources. There was no significant difference between the experimental group ($M=3.53$) and the control group ($M=2.74$), although the difference was in the expected direction.

An additional indicator of social network strength is the number of friends identified as part of a network (Table 4). This serves as an indicator for the number of weak ties the participant is in contact with during a training intervention and were only included if the frequency of contact was not more than once a month. The average number of friends in a network was significantly higher for those who found employment ($M=5.80$) than those who were unable to get a job during the study ($M=3.71$), $t(42) = -2.27, p < .05$. This finding could be interpreted as meaning that the number of weak ties a social assistance recipient is in contact with during an employment-training program increases the likelihood of access to job-related information.

Table 3 – Original Network Members

Group	Total (n)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control	27	2.74	2.19
Experimental	17	3.53	1.84

Table 4 – Friends in Social Network

	Friends in Network	Std. Deviation
Got Job	5.80	2.81
No Job	3.71	2.49

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

Overview

This study has analyzed the impact of employment-training programs upon the social networks for social assistance recipients in their transition towards re-employment. A Social Network Job Search Scale (SNJSS) was developed, which included variables that assessed an individual's ability to gather job-related information. One purpose of this study was to determine whether employment training, and particularly the treatment that was introduced on top of the normal employment training program, strengthened social networks with contacts who could provide information about the job market. The results indicate network strength and access to contacts with job-related information to be positively related to the probability of re-employment.

Implications for Employment-Training Programs

The study demonstrated that higher scores on the SNJSS were positively related to the probability for re-employment. Employment training programs provide an excellent opportunity to network with others in similar circumstances. However, the contacts naturally occurring to social assistance recipients are likely to be others of the same social strata, and therefore, the opportunity for new and relevant job-related information may be limited (Granovetter, 1973; Smith 1999; Wilkinson & Robinson, 1997). Therefore, an intervention such as that used in this study that assists participants to utilize the information arising through their networks may be needed. The treatment in this study, a job search management system, was designed to help the experimental group participants to work through systematically the necessary steps to become employed. Without this intervention, the respondents in the control group did not experience a growth in network value, whereas the experimental group was successful at increasing their SNJSS scores. This network growth might have been due to the job search facilitator's ability to monitor the number of contacts the participants were making

throughout the employment program. This is a point that could be explored in follow-up research.

Placement rates in employment for the Ontario Works employment training programs are generally low (City of Toronto, 2001) due to a number of different factors including labour market conditions, psychosocial issues, and limited skills of the participants. The length of time on social assistance was thought to be a factor in the strength of a social assistance recipient's network, as indicated in Question 1. However, the results indicated that there was not a significant correlation between these two variables. This could be attributed to two factors: first, the sample for this study had not been on social assistance for a long period of time (average 1 to 2 years); and second, the size of the sample was relatively small ($N = 132$). Future studies should use a larger sample and a greater range of time on assistance to determine whether the length of time on social assistance is positively related to SNJSS scores.

As indicated in question 2, there was a statistically significant relationship between re-employment and strength of social network score—that is, those who were re-employed had higher scores than those who were not. Although this significant relationship does not speak to a causal relationship, these data could be interpreted as meaning that network strength increased the probability of finding job-related information. Those with lower scores on the SNJSS networks may not have had the social resources to access the 'hidden' job market that comes about from contacts and may have resorted to more traditional job-search methods such as through newspaper ads. The 'hidden job market' refers to unadvertised job opportunities; in order to access them it is necessary to have active networks. Social isolation becomes a major barrier to re-employment for social assistance recipients who have been on welfare for an extended period of time (Barrett & Cragg, 1998; Boisjoly, Harris & Duncan, 1998; Leahy, Buss & Quane, 1995). Agencies delivering employment-training programs need to address social isolation by developing curriculum that promotes the monitoring and maintenance of contacts that are added

to a participant's network.

For the large majority of the sample who did not make the transition to the labour market by the end of the study, the lack of success in strengthening their networks became evident after the post-test. The increased SNJSS scores for the experimental group indicate it could be useful to have a program that encourages participants to expand their networks with contacts that could provide relevant job-related information. The treatment allowed facilitators to monitor and measure the number of contacts each participant was making throughout the program. If the facilitator noticed that the participant's activity was not focused around attempts to make relevant new contacts, corrective actions were suggested. The most common approach to job-search training by the agencies was to monitor the number of employment opportunities identified by the participant through traditional methods and not focus on sources of job-related information from their networks. However, the treatment in this study encouraged facilitators to stress the importance of the number of contacts made by participants and rated the significance of each encounter to determine the value of job-related information provided by the new contact.

As part of the treatment, social network audits were performed on a regular basis to ensure that participants were attempting to make contacts that could assist them in their job search. The results of the social network audit allowed the facilitator to determine the number of contacts each participant was making. If there was a need to increase the number of contacts, interventions were implemented. For example, role-playing techniques were developed to practice the necessary rapport-building skills and a script was developed to assist participants to introduce themselves in networking situations. In many employment-training programs, facilitators take for granted that participants are able to develop rapport with potential contacts in order to solicit either job-related information or referrals. After a lengthy period on social assistance, research indicates that social skills tend to erode due to isolation (Smith, 1999; Strathdee & Hughes, 2002; Wilkinson & Robinson, 1997).

The inability to generate new contacts may be caused by low self-esteem, depression, and lack of either motivation or self-efficacy (Eden & Aviram, 1993).

Strengthening Social Networks

The treatment not only provided a measurement and monitoring tool for the job-search facilitator but also directly increased the number of contacts who provided job-related information. Traditional job-search programs must go beyond simply introducing networking skills and techniques that assist participants in making contacts, but introduce ways to monitor the number of contacts they make, the value of each contact, and whether new contacts are in a position to provide job-related information. By further determining the value of a social network, job search facilitators can utilize this information to increase the probability of employment.

In this study, over 50% of the respondents had participated in a previous training program, and of those, 25.8% had participated in more than two or more programs. Those respondents who became re-employed were more likely to be participating in their first training program than the other group members. If employment agencies are going to increase the chances of their participants making the transition towards re-employment, they must address this issue and understand that multiple program participation may affect the responsiveness to the intervention. Necessary actions must be taken to address possible reasons for lack of success in previous programs.

Referrals to employment opportunities are the strongest link to re-entering the labour market. Studies have indicated that those individuals that are referred to job opportunities were more likely to be hired than those who were not referred (Fernandez & Weinberg, 1997; Newman and Lennon, 1995). It is common for employers to use the social networks of their employees when they are interested in hiring someone (Livingston, 2002); similarly potential employees tend to use their friends to gather job-related information. Using these ties to hire new employees reduces information costs and most

likely increases the quality of newly hired employees (Livingston, 2002). This evidence supports the notion that through strengthening a social network with contacts that provide job-related information, the chances of re-employment are increased.

Future Research

A number of limitations of this study lead to ideas for future research. A larger sample could be used to determine the effects of the job-search management system treatment across a broader range of participants. As well, a more comprehensive follow-up needs to be conducted to determine the stability of the networks.

The present study provides some evidence of the importance of social networks in increasing the probability of re-employment, as identified in prior research. A careful examination of the treatment yields practical insight into the nature and interplay of social networks and how programs and social assistance recipients can utilize them. Although the treatment has been tested on a small sample, there is reason to believe that it may have more general use. Other populations such as employment insurance recipients and laid-off workers can utilize the job search management system in their attempts to re-enter the labour market.

The network strength increases from pre- to post-test was substantial for the experimental group. However, it is necessary to perform longitudinal studies that track participants and their social networks over longer periods of time. This will add to the understanding of social networks and to developing interventions for adding new contacts to them. In order for individuals to re-enter the labour market, adding helpful contacts is of importance especially if the goal is to increase job-related information. The lack of meaningful contacts within social networks amongst the marginalized segments of the population may exacerbate economic inequalities and further marginalize them from the rest of society because low-income populated communities are less likely to be connected to economic opportunities (Wilson, 1996).

Implications for Practice

The ability of employment training programs to aid social assistance recipients in transition towards re-employment is important. If administrators and program planners are to be successful in facilitating this transition, it is not enough to measure social network strength; it is also necessary to develop practical applications in order to add relevant contacts to them. The treatment in this study provided participants with a job search management tool that not only managed the number of contacts they made during their job search but also monitored the value of each contact. The effectiveness of employment training varies depending on the number of previous training programs. Government needs to take this into consideration when creating new policies for social assistance and develop programs that address social networks and the impact they have in the transition back into the labour market. When implementing employment training it is important that these considerations are at the forefront, otherwise the intervention will not match the needs of the participants and may cause more harm than good.

Conclusion

Four major findings from this study have emerged and offer some insight into the transition towards re-employment. First, although the length of time on social assistance was not correlated to the strength of an individual's network, it was found that the length of time on social assistance is positively associated with the number of previous training programs. Widespread training program recidivism minimizes the impact of an intervention. It is likely that participation in multiple training programs is associated with ongoing barriers to re-employment and therefore a lack of readiness to receive career-related information (Robbins & Tucker, 1986). The social assistance recipient then becomes entrenched in the system with minimal likelihood of benefit from training programs. Further research is required to determine the long-term effect on social assistance recipients participating in more than one program.

Second, those participants in the study who became re-employed demon-

strated stronger networks than those who did not find employment. Adding contacts to a social assistance recipient's network during a training intervention could provide job-related information that increases the chances of them re-entering the labour market. Third, the treatment introduced to the experimental group was successful for increasing the SJNSS scores. Increased SJNSS scores may represent access to job-related information, which in turn, may provide additional job opportunities not found in more traditional job search methods. Although this sequence was not proved in this study, it could be tested in subsequent research. Fourth, social assistance recipients who are on welfare for a longer period of time are less likely to become re-employed.

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Deliberations on the Future of Career Development Education in Canada

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Abstract

In October 2006, a think tank composed of career development educators from across Canada was held to facilitate an in-depth discussion of career development education in Canada. Think tank participants deliberated on educational requirements for career practitioners, curriculum content of career development programs, and the professional identity of the career development field. This paper outlines the summaries of these discussions, reviews relevant research, and poses questions for further reflection.

Introduction

Could we develop a model for career development education that suggests specific educational requirements for those fulfilling different roles within the field? What kinds of enhancements could be made to career development curriculum to ensure that practitioners meet the needs of today's clients? Can education play a role in enhancing the professional identity of the field? These are questions that participants of the "Advancement of Career Counsellor Education in Canada" think tank attempted to answer.

The "Advancement of Career Counsellor Education in Canada" research project was conceived in order to begin a process designed to articulate the educational background that the profession believes is necessary for entry into, or advancement within, the field. The first phase of this project involved the production of the *Directory of Career Counselling/Career Development Education Programs in Canada*, available online at Contact Point at http://www.contactpoint.ca/resources/Directory_of_Education_Programs_2006.pdf. The second phase entailed survey-

ing Canadian career practitioners to gain a better understanding of the career paths and educational backgrounds of current practitioners. Over 1,100 career practitioners responded to the survey, and its results are also published in this issue of the *Canadian Journal of Career Development*. The third and final phase of the research project, the think tank, gathered career development educators from universities, colleges, and private training institutions from across Canada to facilitate an in-depth discussion of career development education in Canada (for a list of think tank participants, please refer to Appendix A). This paper outlines the summaries of these discussions and presents associated research. It is our sincere hope that these deliberations, indeed, this research project as a whole, will strengthen the field of career development in Canada and ultimately enhance the quality of career development services for the benefit of all Canadians.

A Model for Career Development Education in Canada

The Importance of Developing an Educational Model

In most professions, it is clear what type of education is necessary to fulfill different roles at different levels. For example, within the field of nursing, a nurse practitioner is an independent care provider with the broadest scope of practice relative to other types of nurses who, in addition to a nursing diploma or degree, holds one to two years of post-graduate training. In contrast, a practical nurse works under the direction of a registered nurse or doctor and has one to two years of college education. This type of clarity in education/occupational scope does not exist within the field of career develop-

ment in Canada. There is currently much diversity in the training and qualifications of practitioners in the field; furthermore, the training and education programs that do exist do not typically lead to clearly defined occupational roles.

In the absence of similar educational guidelines, it has been possible (even easy in some cases) for those with no career-specific education to practice in the field. Without such career-specific education,

many career guidance practitioners receive no thorough grounding in the basic theories of career guidance, little systematic exposure to the social and economic contexts and purposes of career guidance, and no systematic applied training in the techniques that form the basis of its practice (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004, p. 99).

An educational model has the potential to draw attention to the importance of career-specific education and to ultimately increase the level of training required of career practitioners.

Unlike other countries, Canada does not lack training opportunities for career practitioners – in fact, there are currently 37 programs offered by 28 learning institutions in Canada that either focus entirely on career development or have a significant career development component. Further, several of these programs are offered online and are thus very accessible. What is at issue, though, is that these programs vary significantly in terms of entry requirements, length, curriculum content, hours of required practicum placement, and nature of completion document (that is, certificate, diploma, degree, etcetera). Thus, one still has to ask: What type and level of education is required to enter the field of career development? What type of functions is an entry level practitioner qualified to

do? What type of education is required to advance within the field of career development, and how do the occupational roles of these advanced practitioners differ from those of entry level practitioners? The development of an educational model offers the opportunity to answer these questions.

The development of an educational model is also ultimately in the best interest of our clients. Currently, the array of job titles and qualifications of practitioners within the field makes it very difficult for consumers to know where to go or what to expect when they seek employment-related assistance. In a study designed to determine the extent to which major career theories and research inform the work of career practitioners with varied qualifications, Brown found that

although many clients present with clarified expectations and needs for services, the service options available to clients and the definition of career counseling will largely depend on the training level of the career counseling professional. Consequently, a clearer description and distinction of those who provide services and the types of services available is needed to assist the consumer in the appropriate identification and attainment of his/her goals (2002, p. 125).

The development of a model could also serve to enhance the field's professional identity. Sunny Hansen, in a recent analysis of the career counselling profession's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, states that

one of the threats that seems important to me is what I call the 'deprofessionalization' of career counseling. It seems that increasingly, in some sectors, it has become an 'anyone can do it' profession, a view that actually diminishes the profession (2003, p. 47).

An educational model would certainly go a long way towards reassuring the public and related professionals that the field of career development is a serious one requiring specific training and preparation.

An educational model that outlines the scope of practice at each level will also make it easier for practitioners to be cognizant of, and to adhere to, the boundaries of their level of training. Of particular importance in the field is the extent to which a career practitioner can or should provide personal counselling to their clients. That "career counsellors

are frequently challenged to work with a career dilemma that encompasses a range of diverse issues and factors in their clients' personal lives" (Chen, 2001, p. 524) has been well studied and is an accepted premise within the field. Many would agree, however, that personal counselling requires a higher degree of training than is offered by some of the existing programs, typically at least a master's degree. This is not always what happens in the field, however. In Brown's research, he found that both licensed psychologists/counsellors and non-licensed counsellors indicated that they do, in fact, address both personal and career issues in their work with career clients (2002). This is problematic given that some practitioners clearly do not have the level of training needed to be working with clients on such personal issues, but a model that outlines appropriate roles at each level of education will clarify the boundaries and make it easier for practitioners to know where to draw the line with clients and when to refer them on.

Another benefit of developing such a model is that it will provide a benchmark to see how programs at different levels connect to one another and thereby give us the opportunity to build bridges between certificate, diploma, undergraduate, and graduate programs. This will clarify how practitioners can advance within the field. Since there will very likely be both college and university programs within the field over the long term, an educational model will allow us to begin forming relationships that make sense between and among programs. The planned model will also be beneficial for any new programs being developed with respect to understanding how they can best fit into the current schema.

Finally, an educational model could help set the groundwork for certification requirements within the field. While the advantages and disadvantages of certification are beyond the scope of this research, it does seem obvious that a clearly articulated model could assist in the processes of certification that are beginning to take place in numerous provinces.

The Challenges of Developing an Education Model

Developing an educational model broad enough to incorporate the wide differences that currently exist in career development education across Canada is no small challenge. First, though the field is only in its adolescence, there are fully 37 programs that have either a significant or an entire career development focus. As stated earlier, however, these programs vary significantly; there are no less than seven different types of completion documents represented amongst these 37 programs: certificates of accomplishment, certificates, diplomas, undergraduate degrees, master's degrees, doctorates, and post-master's certificates. While most of these programs are strong in their own right and offer a valuable curriculum, it is the lack of similarity among many of the programs that makes it difficult to integrate them into a model.

Regional differences in career development education pose a second challenge to the development of a model. The differences between Québec and the rest of Canada pose a particular complexity, in that Québec is the only province to regulate the profession:

To be licensed as a career counsellor by the College, candidates must meet the requirements set out in the regulations adopted under the Professional Code of Québec, which state that one must have a master's degree in career guidance and counselling (Turcotte, 2005, p. 7).

It should be noted, however, that not all career development work is regulated in Québec: "The two other major occupations in the field of career development are employment counsellors and career information specialists. These two occupations do not have specific educational and occupational requirements and are not regulated" (Turcotte, 2005, p. 7). In any case, this is clearly a very different picture from the rest of Canada, and once again, poses a challenge to the development of a nationwide model.

A third challenge involves the multitude of sectors in which career development work is carried out. "School counselors, community college and university career counselors and academic advisers, employment counselors, counselors in employee assistance programs, rehabilitation counselors, counseling

and clinical psychologists, and other helping professionals all provide career counseling in organizations and private practice, although with different purposes and intensity. These persons differ in training and knowledge about career counseling and in the approaches to career counseling that they use" (Herr, 2003, p. 11). The question is, how do we deal with these different notions of what type and level of training is appropriate for practitioners in these different sectors? Currently there are educational guidelines or standards for some (for example, guidance staff in secondary schools) but not for others (for example, practitioners in community agencies). It may be necessary for the model to evolve over time in order to encompass each of these sectors.

A fourth challenge is presented by the varying amount of career-specific curriculum within each of the existing programs. Dagley and Salter found in the United States that;

special nondegree training programs for career development facilitators add a much needed emphasis in career development theory and research, but little in supervised counseling, whereas typical counselor preparation degree programs provide excellent supervised counseling training but little-to-no career development instruction or career counseling supervision (2004, p. 102).

This is not universally the case in Canada, but it is true that the certificate and diploma programs in most cases have more career-specific content than the graduate level programs in counselling psychology (except in Québec, where undergraduate and graduate programs are career-specific). Once again, then, this poses a challenge in developing a model. How do we devise a model that incorporates, on the one hand, programs that are entirely geared to career development with those that are geared more specifically towards counselling on the other?

A final challenge will be to form a collaborative, rather than a competitive, approach to future discussions amongst educators. A culture of competition has historically existed amongst universities and colleges in Canada, as all vie for top students, faculty, and staff as well as for rankings and research dollars. Fortunately, more recent initiatives have demonstrated a new trend towards col-

laboration, such as the Campus Alberta Applied Psychology: Counselling Initiative, a partnership between the University of Lethbridge, the University of Calgary, and Athabasca University. This type of initiative demonstrates a will and an ability to work together, which bodes well for increased sharing and connections among career development programs and for the development of an educational model, even in this culture of institutional competition.

Presenting a Model for Career Development Education in Canada

In spite of the inherent challenges involved in the development of an educational model, members of the think tank were able to formulate a draft model for career development education. While the model requires further elaboration (a working group has been struck to continue its development), it does begin to classify the different types/levels of services provided by career practitioners. It also suggests educational requirements for each type of service.

Although differentiated roles within the field of career development have never been clearly defined, the notion that there are multiple roles within the field, rather than one singular role, is not new. Herr has argued that "career counseling can be seen as a continuum of interventions rather than a singular process" (2003, p. 11). Furbish also suggests that career services encompass a range of activities and differentiates between services that are job, occupation, or career related. He defines job issues as those that provide "assistance with the development of employment seeking skills such as CV writing, finding job openings and interviewing skills," occupational issues as those that call for "assisting clients to examine their preferences and investigate occupations that will satisfy those preferences," and career issues as those that "are concerned with the holistic integration of work within one's other life roles and adjusting to transitions within work-life patterns" (2003, pp. 3-4).

The draft educational model devised at the think tank sessions (see Figure 1) also recognizes the notion that there are multiple and distinct roles within the field. Based on previous

work done by Borgen and Hiebert (2006, 2002), the model suggests that services carried out by career practitioners can be broken into three types: advising, guidance, and counselling. Each has a different objective and serves a different function. Advising is focused primarily on the problem at hand, and involves the provision of general, "non-personalized" information regarding a particular topic or focus. For example, describing different styles of résumés to a client would be considered advising, as would helping clients access career information or making them aware of other career services that are available. Guidance is broader in scope and involves the provision of information or psychoeducational services more directly tailored to the client's needs than the advisory function. Guidance requires the practitioner to first gather information about the client, often through an interview or other kind of assessment, thereby increasing the likelihood that services obtained are congruent with the client's unique needs. A practitioner who explains to a client how the results of an interest assessment might influence her occupational choice would be providing guidance. Counselling moves beyond information provision to broader issues and could include the;

application of career counseling to stress reduction; anger management; integrating and resolving conflict between career and other life roles; helping persons reconstruct and reframe past experiences; learning ways to reduce their indecisiveness; assisting in modifying irrational career beliefs; addressing underlying issues that lead to work dysfunctions, including unresolved issues in the family drama being played out in the workplace; providing opportunities for displaced persons to vent their anger and their feelings about personal concerns; job loss; and the loss or diffusion of personal identity (Herr, 2003, p. 11).

Refer to Borgen & Hiebert (2006, 2002) and Hiebert & Borgen (2002) for more information regarding the distinction between advising, guidance, and counselling.

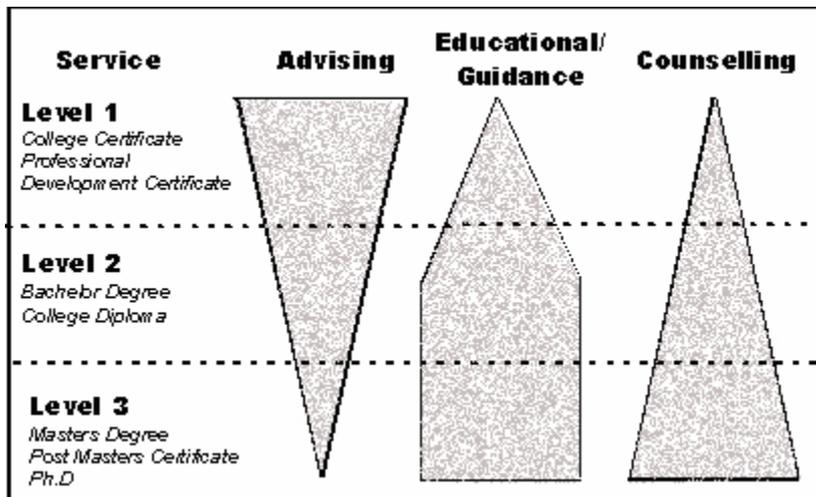


Figure 1: Draft model for career development education. The shaded areas represent the proportional amount of time service providers with differing types of education would spend providing the three principal types of service.

This model demonstrates the proportional amount of time that practitioners with different credentials would spend offering the three different types of services: advising, offering guidance, or counselling. The use of such graphics to demonstrate the intensity of various roles is based on previous work done by think tank participant Kris Magnusson (Magnusson, Day, & Redekopp, 1993; Magnusson, 1992). The model suggests that a Level 1 practitioner, who would fulfill primarily an advisory function (and minor roles in guidance and counselling), would require a career-specific college or university certificate. A Level 2 practitioner, whose function would be primarily the provision of guidance (but who would also fill some advising and counselling functions), would require either a career-specific diploma or undergraduate degree (though the latter exists only in Québec at the present time) or a non career-specific diploma or undergraduate degree plus a career-specific certificate or diploma. A Level 3 practitioner might perform a minor advising role, but his or her main functions would be either guidance and counselling, or designing and coordinating career services. Typically, these types of roles would require a master's degree, post-master's certificate, or doctoral degree in counselling psychology or a related field.

Worthy of discussion is the larger counselling role at Level 3. It is becoming increasingly commonplace to expect that those performing a counselling role have at least a master's degree in the counselling field. For example, in most

American states, counselling is a regulated occupation requiring one to hold a minimum of a master's degree in counselling or a related field, plus a defined amount of supervised practice in the field. In Canada, there is no governmentally regulated credentialing of the profession, but the Canadian Counselling Association awards their 'Canadian Certified Counsellor' designation only to those holding an appropriate master's degree in counselling that includes a compulsory practicum. The draft model presented here reflects the notion that a higher level of education is indeed required to perform counselling functions.

Members of the think tank agreed that job titles should be created and used consistently to represent the three different levels presented in the model. While there is not yet consensus on what these titles should be, it was suggested that a Level 1 practitioner could be termed a *Career Advisor*, a Level 2 practitioner a *Career Practitioner*, and a Level 3 practitioner a *Career Counsellor*. An umbrella term to describe each of these types of roles within the field of career development must also be determined. This paper, and many others in the field, consistently uses the term *Career Practitioner* to refer to those performing any type of role within the field of career development. Naturally, if the Career Practitioner title becomes the standard term used to denote Level 2 practitioners, we will need to devise a new umbrella title term.

One of the benefits of this draft

model is that it incorporates all programs at all levels as they currently exist. It recognizes that each fills a specific need and does not put any program in jeopardy of being lost or deemed irrelevant. Another benefit is that it acknowledges that some roles within the field do not require in-depth counsellor training – a benefit given that the existing non-degree programs tend to have less counselling-specific curriculum and fewer supervised practicum hours.

A potential drawback of the model is that it could ultimately lead to more expensive service delivery, a risk inherent in any initiative that moves towards professionalization (OECD, 2004). Several think tank participants voiced concern that this model could indeed be ignored or rejected by primary funders concerned about service delivery costs. Communicating the benefits of this educational model to all stakeholders in the field will thus become an important task for the educators group.

Next Steps for the Model

While the draft model presented in this paper has made great strides in defining occupational roles and corresponding educational requirements, we must remember that this is only its preliminary form; elaboration in several areas will further clarify and enhance the model. For example, the specific curriculum to be covered at each level needs to be determined, as does the number of hours of required, supervised practicum for each level.

As mentioned earlier, communication of the model to members of the field is also important and needs to be considered along with further refinements. How to communicate the model and with whom will both be important questions to consider. One approach would be to let the logic and value of the model speak for itself, rather than trying to fervently impose it on the field. The model's inherent logic and simplicity bodes well for its potential to have an important future impact on the field of career development in Canada.

As the field continues to grow and mature, it is possible that we will begin to see the development of educational specializations within the field. The possibilities for such specializations are numerous, but one might specialize in working with new Canadians, for example, or in working with individuals diagnosed with a mental illness. Similarly, the need for career development training for linked professions, for example, social workers or human resources professionals, is also beginning to be recognized and may start to be developed some time in the future. How or if such specialization and training for linked professions becomes incorporated into this model will need to be determined. One approach would be to link specializations and training for linked professions to the model, rather than actually embedding them within it.

Canadian Career Development Curriculum

Reflections on the Current Situation

The first phase of this research project involved the development of the *Directory of Career Counselling/Career Development Education Programs in Canada*. While gathering data about their programs from directors and coordinators in order to compile the directory, additional inquiries were made about the type of curriculum each covered. Most programs contain at least some common content, including but not limited to career development theories, interviewing skills, group facilitation skills, career assessment, ethics, and working with diverse populations.

Beyond this, there are some significant differences depending on whether the program is non-degree or degree

granting. For example, career information, work trends, and work search techniques tend to be covered more often in the non-degree programs, whereas degree programs tend to expand their coverage of general counselling theories. When the career development education model (described in the section above) is more fully developed, it will be important to link different types of curriculum with the different program types/levels.

Another area of divergence was in the number of practicum hours required by programs; they ranged from no practicum requirement to as many as 770 hours. Shorter practicum requirements were connected for the most part with the certificate programs, while greater practicum requirements tended to be associated with diploma, undergraduate, and master's programs. If students enrolled in the certificate programs are already working in the field of career development, they have a natural venue where theory and practice can come together. However, for those not working in the field and/or who have no career development experience, providing an appropriate mechanism for them to connect theory and practice presents a serious challenge. Since the practicum is an ideal way to help students link theory and practice, further discussion by educators of what constitutes a practicum and how many practicum hours should be required is important.

An equally important aspect of helping students relate theory to practice is effective, career-specific supervision. McMahon identified the lack of importance paid to supervision and the relatively few professional articles written about supervision in the career counselling literature as long ago as 2003. Without supervision, especially for a student or a beginning practitioner, it is challenging to put theoretical knowledge into practice. This lack of supervision may also suggest to the trainee that career work is neither complex nor difficult enough to require supervision, a fundamentally incorrect assumption/perspective. It should also be noted that inadequate supervision becomes even more serious as the scope of career development practice expands.

The Importance of Expanding the Curriculum

In addition to working on a draft educational model, the think tank included discussions on what curriculum should be taught at the various levels of practice and how to effectively incorporate new concepts and ideas. Curriculum issues included the following questions: How should personal counselling and career counselling be reconciled in career education programs? How, and to what extent should cybercounselling content be incorporated into the curriculum? Finally, how should career counselling knowledge and skills best be provided to allied professional programs? These issues are discussed later in this paper.

The area given the most attention and that would require the greatest curriculum changes concerned the development of competencies that would expand the focus of career development education beyond providing services to the individual; these changes would help career practitioners address broader issues related to organizational and societal influences. Many of the career challenges individuals face are not the result of individual shortcomings, but rather arise from known deficiencies in systems and/or policies. To effectively address big picture problems, a practitioner needs such knowledge and skills as advocacy, social planning and social policy, social action, and community development. Through inaction or a lack of attention to macro issues, career practitioners can in fact become a part of the problem. Arthur summarizes these points succinctly: "Career practitioners need to consider how their work inadvertently supports the status quo and be prepared to address social forces that pose as systemic barriers to people's growth and development" (2005, p. 41).

An example from public policy helps to illustrate how this expansion of the work of the career practitioner can better serve clients. In most countries, career development has been the object of public policy. Nonetheless, career practitioners have not usually been involved in the creation of public policy. Thus, the profession is delegated to carrying out the notions and policies of the government in power without hav-

ing much affect on them. This lack of direct involvement leads to policies that can adversely impact the delivery of who gets service, how they access that service, and what services are provided (Herr, 2003). When working with immigrants, the counsellor is often obliged to help individuals deal with the constraints imposed by immigration policy or professional certification bodies. These constraints at minimum appear to be fundamentally unfair, and they are, in fact, often inequitable. This is clearly an area where the direct experience of career practitioners could very positively affect public policy; it could potentially have an important, long-term impact on the conditions of employment for many immigrants and refugees while also making more effective use of the national talent pool.

Interestingly, the founder of the field of vocational psychology, Frank Parsons, was committed to social change, social justice, and social action. Dr. King Davis defines social justice as follows:

Social justice is a basic value and desired goal in democratic societies and includes equitable and fair access to the societal institutions, laws, resources, opportunities, without arbitrary limitations based on observed, or interpretations of, difference in age, color, culture, physical or mental disability, education, gender, income, language, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation (2004, p. 236).

Parsons demonstrated in his writings a concern for the marginalized and less fortunate in society (O'Brien, 2001). Until recently, however, both the theory and practice of career counselling have been developed primarily to assist those who live in relative affluence. Those who are less fortunate and who need to work simply to meet their basic needs of shelter and housing have been largely neglected (Whiston, 2003).

There has recently been renewed interest in returning to the roots of career counselling as they were established by Parsons. This calls for a more expansive conceptualization of career theory and practice in order to help clients deal with issues like poverty, discrimination, and oppression. For example, Guichard (2003) discussed career counselling's evolving goals and called for career practitioners to create a new context for research and practice,

one that would attend to the broader context of human development in order to meet the needs of the human community without neglecting the individual in the process.

In related work, Hansen argues that it is no longer enough to match people to jobs. She calls for a more holistic approach to career counselling that requires various life roles and other life dimensions to be taken into account. "A weakness of career counselor education programs is the reluctance or inability to see career counselors as change agents who can help not only *individuals* to change, but *systems* to change as well" (2003, p. 45). She recommends that training programs expand the curriculum to include related life roles as well as work roles, and that organizational career development be built into training programs. She recognizes that working to meet the needs of a diverse population is an important first step but goes on to say that "the work has just begun" (Hansen, 2003, p. 45). She evidently believes that expanding the curriculum to include the counsellor's role as an advocate and an agent of change presents a challenge.

In keeping with career practitioners working with a broader conceptualization, there has been a developing commitment to working with multicultural populations in a way that recognizes and is sensitive to cultural differences. The number of journal articles addressing culturally competent career counselling continues to increase. This interest and concern with cultural differences has been extended to an even broader perspective to encompass diversity that includes gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, social class, ability, and religion. In fact, our curriculum research indicates that diversity is covered in all of the programs surveyed in some way, and that a full 43 percent devote an entire course to diversity issues.

Arthur, however, goes well beyond calling for cultural sensitivity and competence in career counselling, advocating that perspectives on social justice be incorporated into the roles and intervention methods of career practitioners. She also calls for career practitioners to develop the competencies needed to bring about institutional change and to

carry out social action roles and systemic interventions. In fact, she has developed 17 competencies that would afford career practitioners the skills to support social justice interventions. She states that "ultimately, the linkage between social justice and career development needs to inform curriculum design for career practitioners" (Arthur, 2005, p. 143).

A review of social work education may provide insights into how such social justice competencies could be built into the education of career practitioners. Social work is a values-based profession. All education for the profession promotes the development and advancement of knowledge and skills that further clients' well-being and promotes social and economic justice. Within this overarching framework, the curriculum is divided into "micro" and "macro" practice. Micro practice involves interventions aimed at problems confronting individuals, families, and small groups; macro practice, on the other hand, concerns social work interventions designed to bring about change in organizations and communities. In most social work programs, a student chooses to concentrate on either micro or macro practice, but must also take some courses from the other area.

The social work education approach may not be a complete model for the field of career development. It does, however, provide some guidance as to how we might strive to meet two general objectives. The first is to build in the values associated with social justice as a part of the foundation of the career development profession and its educational aims. The second is to build into the curriculum the development of some general skills and awareness regarding macro issues for all members of the profession and perhaps allow some to develop specialized skills in this area.

Roadblocks to Incorporating Macro Issues into the Curriculum

As with any proposed change, there will be uncertainty and some reluctance. What is proposed will require significant adjustments to a program's curriculum, and this will only happen if educators are convinced of the value and importance of the changes and thus

motivated to incorporate them into the program of study. The motivation and education of educators are particularly important since each program's curriculum is typically very full, and there are many competing interests regarding what might be included. Further, phase one of this research project revealed that little attention is currently paid to macro issues in the programs, possibly because many of the educators themselves are graduates of individually focussed educational programs that do not naturally lend themselves to a macro viewpoint. Hiebert, McCarthy, and Repetto make a related point: "Career counsellor education primarily stems from a psychological background (versus a career development, adult transition, or labour market background), and does not address the diverse career paths and complex labour market that clients encounter" (2001, p. 1). It will be essential to find mechanisms that will keep educators at all levels informed about, and involved in, the evolution of the curriculum.

Practitioners and educators will also need to be convinced of the worth of expanding the curriculum and profession into new and less familiar areas of practice. In part because of their educational backgrounds, and especially in the early years of work, most practitioners are focussed on helping the individual and are not invested in learning how to change large systems and how those systems impinge on their client's lives. In later years, practitioners often develop a frustration with "the system," but they have not, for the most part, developed nor practiced the skills to effect change within it. In a survey of practitioners conducted in the second phase of this research project, macro skills like lobbying government, addressing social justice issues, advocating for clients, program promotion, management, and administration were all consistently rated less important than skills related to direct client work. If practitioners were to realize that career practitioners could and should influence social and political systems and could see a way to help their profession do that, the value they see in their work could change substantially (especially in later years) and provide strong support for the curriculum changes we pro-

pose. Effectively instituting these proposed changes will require a program of continuing education for practitioners.

One further roadblock is the lack of quality resource materials on macro issues, including social and economic justice, which can be readily utilized in a classroom or practice setting. This dearth makes it much more difficult for educators to experiment with incorporating these ideas or to adopt recommended curriculum changes. The development of effective educational resources must be a key aspect of an implementation strategy. As is outlined below, a newly formed educational group is beginning to develop educational resources, some of which emphasize social justice and macro-level issues.

Next Steps for the Curriculum

There was considerable support and enthusiasm at the think tank for the evolution of program curriculum towards providing theoretical and practical content on the ideas and values of social and economic justice and on the development of the skills required to promote social change. It is important to note that we are at the very beginning of this endeavour; it is no small task to evolve a curriculum (or curriculum guidelines) on a national level, given the requisite acceptance of the stakeholders of the development of a new lens and an expanded set of competencies. However, if we as educators were able to incorporate social justice competencies into the curriculum on a nationwide level, Canada would clearly become a leader on the international stage.

The extent to which the various aspects of macro practice should be included at each level of training in the model discussed above will need careful consideration and discussion. For example, it would seem plausible that practitioners involved primarily in advising would need only a general awareness of macro practice issues and their importance as part of the career development environment. This awareness could perhaps be acquired from a well-designed course or module. On the other hand, practitioners primarily involved in counselling would be expected, from a macro perspective, to

be able to engage in social planning initiatives, demonstrate advocacy skills with individuals or systems, and contribute to the designing of social policy as it relates to the world of work. A person would need to have at least one course, and perhaps more, that deals with macro theory and practice in order to work in the macro arena.

As noted earlier, a number of other curriculum questions and challenges arose that were not discussed in the depth they deserve owing to time constraints. One issue concerned the interface between career counselling and personal counselling. Career counselling cannot be neatly separated from the counselling that affects the other aspects of the client's life. Because of their particular education, some counsellors are able to deal with many of the major issues in clients' lives, including career issues, personal issues, and even some associated with mental health. Others will not be able to work with these broader issues and problems because they lack the required education, but at a minimum, career practitioners should have the knowledge to recognize personal problems and, when necessary, effectively refer clients to appropriate professionals. This interface will become clearer as the model develops and as the roles of various career professionals are more completely defined.

Cybercounselling, another curriculum issue addressed by the members of the think tank, currently receives little coverage in the training programs we reviewed. Although there has been skepticism of cybercounselling, especially as it relates to ethics, many career practitioners are clearly innovating and engaging in the practice of distance advising/counselling. Cybercounselling presents numerous complexities for career education, for example: What new or different competencies are needed to act effectively from a distance? Can these competencies fit within existing programs? To what extent should students generally be trained in these areas? Do we need a distance career development specialization? These complicated questions require much more discussion.

Yet another issue was how career education can best interface with the

curriculum of related professions like social work, human resources, and vocational rehabilitation. These practitioners work with clients whose presenting problems are, for the most part, not directly work related. However, since work is so central to most people's well-being and can cause so much distress, work and career issues are often major contributing aspects of a client's problems. Thus, some knowledge of career development theory and career counselling techniques, as well as awareness of the possibility and importance of referral when career issues are paramount, would benefit related professionals and help them help their clients. We need to consider how important this is to the field, and whether it is possible to raise awareness within our educational institutions so that there is a role for career education programs to provide service courses in allied programs.

A preliminary step has been taken since the think tank, namely the establishment of a group of educators interested in developing written materials on current issues and advances in the field of career development in Canada. The exact form this publication will take is still under discussion, but social justice and social justice competencies as they pertain to career development will be a major focus. It is our hope that this work will lead to the development of an introductory text providing students and faculty with details and overviews of macro issues and a few more badly needed resource materials treating advancements and best practices in Canada. The development of these and other resource materials would help immensely to address pedagogical issues while easing the process of curriculum adjustment.

Professional Identity and the Role of Education

Career development educators, like others involved in the field of career development, are concerned with the field's professional identity. That the services provided by career practitioners receive little visibility and are not generally well understood or sought out by the general public is a commonly felt frustration for those working in this field. A 2006 CERIC survey conducted

by Ipsos Reid found that when seeking career planning assistance, a majority of Canadians seek the help of relatives/friends/neighbours (68%), co-workers/associates (67%), or newspapers (67%) rather than the services of a career specialist (47%). That more Canadians would seek career assistance from a friend or relative over a career practitioner offers some proof that "career counseling's identity status resembles that of a client who lacks vocational identity and clearly articulated goals" (Niles, 2003, p. 73).

Of particular concern to educators with respect to professional identity is the number of titles being used within the field to describe this work. In the survey carried out as phase two of this research project, respondents were asked to indicate their job title. Significantly, a full 37% of respondents did not fit into one of 13 common job titles used in the field. (This issue does not carry over to Québec, where 69% of respondents fit into just one job title: *conseiller d'orientation*). This diversity of titles is also seen in the names of career development education programs across the country. While some program titles use the term "career practitioner," others use "career counsellor," "career management professional," "career facilitator," or "career development coach." Clearly this unrestrained use of titles in the workplace and in our program descriptions needs to be addressed, and educators can play a positive role through further development and communication of the education model outlined in the first section of this paper. This model has the potential to begin a process of making titles more descriptive, consistent, and meaningful, both to those in the field and to the general public.

While raising the professional identity of the field is no small task, and further, is one that will most certainly require a multi-faceted effort on the part of practitioners, employers, associations, and government alike, it is the educators' hope and belief that both increasing the profile of career development specific education (through the draft model presented earlier in this paper) and enhancing its curriculum will serve an important function in this regard. Indeed, McCarthy (2001) does

suggest that training has a dominant effect in establishing a professional identity.

Conclusion

As was outlined earlier, this research project was conceived in order to begin a process designed to articulate the educational background that the profession believes is necessary for entry into, or advancement within, the field of career development. This paper developed out of the third phase of the project; bringing together educators from across Canada to a think tank in order to discuss these educational and professional issues. Although subsets of this group meet with some regularity for other purposes, this was the first meeting of career educators that included representatives from French- and English-speaking Canada, from universities and colleges, and from the private sector. Informal reports from participants suggest that these discussions set the stage for some significant progress towards developing an innovative and comprehensive framework for the education of career practitioners in Canada.

The development of an educational model has the potential to be a major step forward for the field. It has the potential to define exactly what education is required to enter the field of career development, how one could advance within the field, and how the occupational roles of the entry-level person differ from those of an advanced practitioner. This clarity of definition alone would help draw attention to the importance of career-specific education and the services that career practitioners have to offer. A well-developed model would also offer consumers more clarity to help them access the type and scope of service they require. This work is far from complete, but we hope that the energy and enthusiasm this project has generated will provide impetus to move the model forward.

The think tank brought to light many important discussions on curriculum that were as valuable as the discussion of the model. With representatives from all educational sectors, the deliberations afforded a rich dialogue on how the curriculum could evolve and expand. One area requiring significant effort is the inclusion into the curricu-

lum of a social justice lens and macro practice competencies. The development of an appropriate curriculum and its adaptation into current Canadian career education programs would advance the field and make international leaders of Canadian career education programs. This challenge is indeed daunting, but it is also tenable. There was a spirit of co-operation among the participants at the think tank that we believe will support the initiative's forward momentum.

We would like to thank the educators who attended the think tank for their enthusiastic support of this research project and for the tremendous contributions that set the stage for more discussion and forward movement. We would also like to express our thanks to CERIC for their professional and financial support of this endeavour.

Appendix A Think Tank Participants

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Robert Baudouin	Université de Moncton
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Kon Li	Kwantlen University College
Kris Magnusson	University of Lethbridge
Greg Morrow	George Brown College
Nathalie Perreault	OrientAction
Geoff Peruniak	Athabasca University
Deirdre Pickerell	Life Strategies Inc.
Natalee Popadiuk	Simon Fraser University
Blythe Shepard	University of Victoria
Rob Straby	Conestoga College
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Best Practices: The Dalhousie University Career Counselling Internship Programmet

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Abstract

The Dalhousie University Career Counselling Internship Programme was established in 1987 to provide specialist training in Career Counselling. The Internship is a full-time, 10 month, post- master's programme of supervised work and study. Of the 24 participants who have completed the Internship, 13 were School Counsellors on leave from their School Boards and 11 were Professional Counsellors, Social Workers, and Psychologists who came without institutional sponsorship. This article describes the major components of the Internship the: history; purpose; admission process; programme goals; objectives; and program content. This article also critically reviews evaluations of the Internship, the impact the training has had on the Interns' personal development and professional practice, and the reciprocal benefits.

History

The 1980s brought a time of economic recession and rapid advances in information technology. Problems people had looking for work, and the burgeoning of career options related to computer science, were concerns which were frequently addressed in the media. There was also a strong media emphasis which questioned the value of post-secondary education and its application to work. Perhaps because of the pressures these changes created, and the attention given to them by the media, there was a significant increase in the demand for career counselling services at Dalhousie University (Dal News, 1987, p.1-2). Despite this demand, there was a scarcity of counsellors with career counselling expertise and a growing awareness that there were no opportunities for this specialty training available in Nova Scotia. Indeed, in spite of the need for career counselling training, the few universities in Canada which provided

graduate course work in counselling limited their offerings to introductory theoretical courses and did not offer applied career counselling courses.

In 1987, with the endorsement of the provincial Education and Social Services Ministers, the Counselling Foundation of Canada supported the creation of the Dalhousie University Career Counselling Internship Programme. This full-time, ten-month programme of work and study is the only continuing education career counselling opportunity available to counsellors in Nova Scotia, and it is the only program of its kind in Canada.

Purpose

Building on the basic training provided by graduate programs with courses in counselling and career development, the Dalhousie University Career Counselling Internship Programme provides advanced training and supervision designed to support the development of a career counselling specialty. As the Interns learn how to enhance their knowledge and skills, they work with the career counselling staff and clients of Dalhousie University.

Participants

Over the last 19 years, a total of 24 Interns completed the Internship Programme. Thirteen of the Interns were School Counsellors (MED. Counselling) who had been awarded educational leaves from their School Boards. The remaining interns, who came without institutional support, included: 3 (MSc.) Clinical and Educational Psychologists; 4 (MSW) Social Workers; and 4 (MED. Counselling) Professional Counsellors. In addition, the programme has accommodated graduate level career counselling practicum students and undergraduate level volunteer Career Information Assistants who, on occa-

sion, learn under the supervision of the Interns.

Admission and Selection of Interns

Requirements

Applicants who are selected for the Internship are experienced professionals with a minimum of a Master's degree in Counselling, Psychology or Social Work. Applicants must also demonstrate an interest in and capacity for independent study, and typically have a history of professional leadership. Priority is given to applicants who have a combination of experience, motivation and expertise in counselling.

Application Procedure

The Internship application procedure is a competitive process for the candidates. The candidates must submit a letter of intent and a resume, and be prepared to discuss their applied research interests during a selection interview. The applicant must also identify referees who can discuss the quality of their work, ethical behavior, counselling skills, interest in the area of career development and their suitability for the Internship. Applicants who are School Counsellors must also apply for a ten-month educational leave from their School Board.

Selection Process

During the interview, applicants are questioned about their counselling styles, theoretical orientation, comfort level with training and supervision, knowledge of both the theory and practice of career counselling, (especially the issues that impact on career choice and development), and their personal and professional goals and expectations of the programme. The selection criteria are designed to assess the candidates' counselling expertise, motivation, enthusiasm, professional presentation,

and suitability. Also closely examined is their preparedness to put themselves in the role of a student: to have their skills closely examined; to have their individual caseloads closely monitored; to be willing to risk being vulnerable under observation while demonstrating new skills and advanced techniques; to be motivated to conduct research; as well as to examine, at length, the complexity of counselling as it relates to career development.

Goals and Objectives

The Internship is designed to guide the Intern's examination of the field of career choice and development, as well as to provide opportunities for in-depth study in areas of personal interest. Clearly defined goals and objectives are presented as modules which include: the theoretical context for counselling; individual career counselling; psychological testing; the role of career information with special emphasis on the on-site Frank G. Lawson Career Information Center; portfolio development; and employment counselling. The applied research project and the academic advising module objectives and timelines are created based on the needs of each Intern and the communities they serve. Special modules are also available (as time, interest, and resources permit), for learning how to deliver peer counselling and mentoring programming. These modules are often worked on simultaneously, but the criteria for measuring the mastery of these goals are stated sequentially as learning objectives. This allows the Interns to have a concrete sense of the Internship Programme's timing and pacing, as well as an awareness of their individual progress.

Firmly grounded in classic and current career development theory, models and practices, these modules outline the systematic examination of career development theories and career counselling practices. As the goals of the Internship and those of each Intern are integrated with priorities, objectives and timelines the emphasis of the programme content is negotiated and tailored to the Intern's personal and professional needs.

Programme Content

Theoretical Context

The areas of study imbedded in the Internship include the examination of career development theories and their impact on career counselling research and practice. Having already been introduced to these theories in their graduate programs, Interns are expected to apply these theories to their caseloads and research projects. They are expected to initiate daily discussions and weekly seminars designed to reveal and extend their ability to apply theoretical knowledge to their counselling practice and research projects.

The strong academic focus of the Internship was recognized by Dalhousie University's former School of Education. Before Dalhousie's School of Education was closed, Interns could also simultaneously enroll in the Educational Psychology program and receive graduate level course credit for the readings, project, and practicum components of the Internship.

Career Counselling

The intensive supervised counselling experience is an integral daily component of the Internship. In spite of the language typically used to describe career issues, research and practical experience reveals the very personal concerns that people bring to career counselling. Interns quickly learn that career counselling interventions must also address a number of common client concerns including: self-confidence, self-esteem, anxiety, depression, learning disabilities, mental health, as well as issues related to sexual orientation, family and multicultural issues. Interns must also be prepared to work effectively with a variety of populations and special issues. Frequent topics of study and discussion include those that are unique to women, men and dual careers as well as those concerns that parents and children bring to careers issues. Through readings, discussions and consultations with local experts, Interns deepen their understanding of complex nature of career issues as well as their ability to design interventions which address these concerns.

The training model of supervision typically flows on a cycle of: assigned

readings and discussions; observation of supervisor with clients and debriefing; supervisor observation of Intern and debriefing; independent work supported with supervisor on-call; and, finally, on-going case and practice issues consultation.

Psychological testing

Psychological testing and assessment is an important component of a career counselling practice. It is understood that Interns have already studied the fundamentals of test construction and surveyed a variety of assessments in their graduate programs. In the course of the Internship they are expected to be able to independently administer, interpret, analyze and critique a variety of instruments and interventions. The assessments most commonly used during their Internship include the Strong Interest Inventory (SII) and the Myers Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI). Other forms of assessment are also studied, critiqued and utilized with clients such as Card Sorts and Self-Report checklists.

Career Information

With the unique availability of an on-site Career Information Specialist and the substantive Frank G. Lawson Career Information Centre, Interns can develop expertise in print and web based career information management. As clients, faculty and staff demand a high level of career counselling proficiency, the Interns conduct intense research, consultation and study of the Lawson Career Information Centre model of service delivery. They may then return to their own institutions and develop or enhance their own career information centers, and become better prepared to act as consultants for their colleagues.

Career Portfolio

The career portfolio design and development module is addressed through readings, consultation, workshops and the construction of a personal career portfolio. Interns are expected to reflect upon their own career development issues and the portfolio is used as the vehicle to examine and extend their own professional development goals.

Employment counselling

Special issues and strategies in employment counselling are also examined. This field is studied in response to client needs in caseloads that can range from a young person having just graduated from high school, to a mature student returning to higher learning, to a graduate student completing a Ph.D. program. Interns examine the most current employment practices as well as the psychological barriers that clients experience as they progress in their search for meaningful employment. Each Intern is expected to systematically design interventions to help clients cope with the pressures of presenting oneself as a professional, as well as how to deal with the special issues that come with success, rejection or loss.

Applied research

The applied research project is primarily designed to meet the needs of the Interns' clients and colleagues at their sponsoring institutions. When Interns enter the programme without institutional sponsorship, their projects are most often designed to help them to foster expertise in the particular areas they would like to serve. Simultaneously, Interns initiate a complementary independent study, consisting of a literature review and consultation with experts in the field. The projects the Interns have conducted are as varied as their interests and have ranged from piloting career infusion in junior and senior high schools, examining narrative therapy and how it is applied to career counselling, surveying educational opportunities in Nova Scotia, surveying Nova Scotia Guidance Counsellors about their practices, and designing and piloting interventions for special populations.

Professional Development

In addition to the professional development that is an on-going component of the Internship, learning opportunities also occur in meetings which are designed to share information and to promote the skill development of all Counselling Centre staff. Expertise is acquired as Interns learn how to serve identified career development needs within a variety of professions through

consultations with university faculty, departments and professional programmes as well as responding, on occasion, to requests from local schools. Interns are also encouraged to attend local career development workshops, as these become available, and to participate at national conferences.

Evaluation

A key component of the Internship is the intense individual supervision provided for each candidate. To qualify for a Certificate of Completion, Interns enroll from September until the end of June and are assessed as having successfully passed only when they have met the goals and objectives of each module of the Internship. The criteria upon which the Intern is evaluated encompasses professional competence (including therapeutic knowledge, skills, ethical and professional behavior, case conceptualization and intervention skills, professional knowledge and judgment, and standards of practice) and personal growth and development (including critical self-analysis, self-directedness, independence, motivation and enthusiasm).

Daily on-going verbal feedback constitutes a substantial portion of the Intern's evaluation. This assessment, which occurs immediately after direct supervision and consultation, allows for repertoire development, direct teaching and targeted skill enhancement. To ensure that the Intern's progress remains within the negotiated timelines, written evaluations of the Intern and their progress within each module are conducted mid-term by the supervisor.

In addition, whenever Interns conduct career development workshops for students, written evaluative feedback is immediately requested from workshop participants. These surveys reveal client ratings, on a Likert Scale, of the Intern's ability to present new ideas, approaches and useful strategies, the skillfulness of the presentation, whether the workshop was worth the client's time and whether the workshop goals were met. Workshop participants are also asked to comment on what they liked most, and least, as well as to list any recommendations they might have to improve the workshop.

The Interns also receive feedback

from their individual clients through anonymous client satisfaction surveys. These surveys are conducted twice a year, once mid-fall and once mid-winter. Every Counselling Centre client scheduled with an appointment over an approximate three week period, is asked to comment on a number of dimensions including: helpfulness of the counselling, any positive, negative or problematic aspects of the experience with the counsellor, whether the client would refer a friend who had a problem to this counsellor, and the impact the counselling has had on academic productivity or performance, as well as any suggestions for improvement.

To ensure that the needs of the Interns are being met by the programme, mid-term written evaluations are conducted by each Intern. The Intern's written evaluations of the Internship Programme assesses, on a Likert Scale and with an open ended questions, the goals and objectives, volume and variety of practice issues, skill building opportunities, opportunities for consultation and feedback, application of theory to practice, innovative approaches as well as the contribution made to the Intern's personal and professional growth and development.

The quality of the supervision during the Internship is also evaluated by the Intern's written mid-term assessment. Interns address, through open-ended questions, the supervisor's ability to convey counselling strategies, give constructive feedback, the quality of and time made available for consultation, how well personal reflection is facilitated and how well the Intern is aided in remaining goal directed. In addition, at year's end, Interns also write a reflective paper that details the impact the training and supervision has had on their personal and professional development. Interns have, on occasion, published newsletter articles describing their experiences. (Cochrane (2005), Reid (2002), Gates (1991), Wentworth & Burley (1988), MacRae (1987).)

Impact

It is difficult to fully quantify the impact that the career counselling training has had on the Interns and on those they serve and influence. As there is a vast array of clients, schools, agencies,

and institutions represented by our Interns, no tools exist which could effectively measure, in numbers alone, the impact of the training on professional practice. To be as fully descriptive as possible, impressive qualitative data has been gathered from committee reviews, Intern evaluations and programme surveys.

Four sources of evaluation were examined and used to review the impact of the Internship Programme: University Committee Review (McKee, 1990); feedback from two professional association award review committees (CCACC, 2001), (AACUSS, 2001); an analysis of evaluations submitted by Interns during their training (1987-2004), and most importantly, data from a recent survey of all former Interns (Hung, 2006). All sources of the data point to the reciprocal benefits for Dalhousie University, the Interns themselves and the communities they serve, and to the profession of career counselling.

Benefits to Dalhousie University

In 1990 a Review Committee reported "that Dalhousie University's career counselling and career information activities benefited very substantially from the presence of the career interns" (McKee, 1990, p.3). Having served thousands of students through their individual counselling, group work, innovative programming, and outreach activities, the Interns have made an important contribution to the career development of Dalhousie University students.

An unanticipated impact was that many of the Interns who were School Counsellors on educational leaves would be sought out by their former students. The Interns were then in the unique situation of helping their former high school students with the transition to Dalhousie University. Every September the enthusiasm and energy of the Interns' former students, often with their parents in tow, has had an immediate and noticeable impact on the Counselling Center. In describing the benefits of the Internship, Hung (1999) stated in an article "The Interns contribute positively to the career development of our students, the comprehensiveness of our service, and to the

atmosphere of our University" (p.3).

Similarly, in describing the Internship, Hayashi (2001) wrote "the university receives as much benefit as it provides through the internship programme. Dalhousie University benefits directly and significantly by the hours and hours of direct Career Counselling the interns provide to our students as they train. In a time of staff shortages, this is an important benefit which impacts the quality of student life by significantly increasing access to Career Counselling" (personal communication to Atlantic Association of College and University Student Services, May, 2001).

Benefits to Interns and Communities Served

The 1990 University Review Committee who reviewed the programme content also interviewed all Interns trained to that date and their employers, as well as small sample of student volunteers. The committee noted that the "Interns were unanimous in their endorsement of the programme and the benefits for them in terms of their own professional development" (McKee, 1990, p.2-4). The committee also noted that there was evidence of improved services to the communities the Interns subsequently served (several specific applications ranging from innovative programs for women in corrections, to establishing career counselling programming in a high school, to the creation of Career Information Centres). Recognition has also been given to the Interns and the Internship Programme through awards which have, in part, acknowledged the internship as "world-class...with ...the ripple effect of training high quality career development professionals who offer their services in many counselling sectors" (Canadian Counselling Association, 2001). The training was also acknowledged as "compelling and unique...resulting in improved career counselling and development service delivery in this province" (Atlantic Association of College and University Student Services, 2001).

Equally important is the profound impact the training program has had on the skills and knowledge of the Career Counselling Interns. After their year of

intense study of career development research, models, issues and practices and the supervised counselling of students from Dalhousie University, the University of King's College and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Interns have reported that they are able to integrate what they have learned into their own practice and have developed new strategies and interventions for their own populations.

Former Interns presently serve the career needs of a wide range of clientele, from the most advantaged to the most disadvantaged. The Interns reported that since completing the Internship they have implemented many new programs and have become more career counselling focused. This has had an impact not only on schools and community agencies in large cities, but also on those located in small towns and villages throughout Nova Scotia. Many Interns provide direct service to their clients in school and community agencies. Others have gone on to work in highly placed administrative positions, positively influencing career development programming as well as providing supervision and support to other counsellors. The influence of our Interns can be seen throughout local universities and community services, as well as in some unanticipated areas across Canada and around the world.

Interns reported that the Internship enhanced their skills and better prepared them to create career development materials and programmes tailored to the needs of their clients. They have worked with the most experienced job seekers and with those new to Canada. In addition to providing quality career and employment counselling and career information resources for their most gifted clients, their work has been as varied as providing programming which has transformed the lives of youth-at-risk, unemployed single moms, and homeless adults. Their innovations have ranged from creating the first virtual Career Information Center in a high school to training street youth workers in six Latin American countries, to creating the first career development programming for women at a university in Abu Dhabi.

The combination of the academic and practical education the Interns

experienced as well as their exposure to such a vast array of clients with diverse backgrounds, ages, cultures and goals, prepared them to work with many different client issues and populations. As the impact of the Internship began to have an effect nationally and internationally, we learned that our Interns have supported the marginalized victims of crime, abuse, neglect and poverty and, through their career conversations, have brought hope to those who were in despair.

Interns have described how the full year of study and practice has changed them professionally and personally. A recurring theme in their feedback is the profound impact the Internship has had on their counselling skills and on their preparedness to develop strategies and interventions to assist clients with the psychological, emotional, physical, spiritual, cultural, and familial realms of their clients' lives. In addition, themes and patterns also emerged in their feedback about how the internship affected them personally. Clearly, all of the Interns have found that the Internship was an important part of their professional growth and development. Collectively their feedback has revealed that:

- They rated the Internship as being the best professional development opportunity available in Nova Scotia.
- They tremendously appreciated the professionalism, dedication, knowledge and commitment to the highest standards of practice in professional supervision.
- They valued the emphasis and time which was made for their learning, research and client consultations, and appreciate that these were clearly a priority for the supervisor.
- They valued the atmosphere which fostered professional growth and development, in a supportive and collaborative learning environment, tailored to the Intern's individual needs.
- They felt inspired and motivated while they studied, observed, discussed and practiced career counselling.
- Their self-confidence increased while observing an improvement of their counselling skills and in their

practical as well as theoretical knowledge as they received supportive, respectful, frank and open feedback.

- They successfully developed their own approach to career counselling, well grounded in research.
- They valued the practical experiences, exposure to high standards of practice and the opportunities to work with diverse populations.
- They appreciated the opportunity to examine the psychological model of Career Counselling Services, and the opportunity to use and adapt it to their own client populations.
- They appreciated the unanticipated spin-offs and impact on their jobs, careers and professional writings and responsibilities.

Limitations and benefits

An important element of any counsellor education training is the ability to evaluate its

impact. Future research is needed to address limitations in evaluation and create guidelines that would assist supervisors of internships to build data collection into their programs. In a time of cutbacks in education, lack of funding for an Internship is also a severe limitation. There is a daunting list of possible challenges including the strong one-on-one teaching emphasis of the Internship combined with the administrative issues of space, resources for marketing, selection, supervision, training, evaluation, consultation, on-going supportive contact, and issues related to the training sites' own need to stay current and as a model for the Interns.

With the support of the Counselling Foundation of Canada, however, the limitations are greatly outweighed by the benefits of increased service to the students served by Dalhousie University Counselling Centre. In addition, anecdotal evidence has clearly revealed that the specialty training in career counselling has allowed former Interns to develop and enhance career services practices and make extraordinary contributions to a number of public schools, universities and community agencies locally, nationally and internationally. The impact the Interns have on the profession of career counseling can

be seen as they create innovative programming, publish papers and articles, present at conferences and work on numerous provincial and national committees and professional associations. Their tireless passion for educating, leading and promoting excellence in practice will continue through their modeling of the best practices in the field of career choice and development.

Summary

The Dalhousie University Career Counselling Internship Programme is a full-time program of work and study designed to foster the development of a career counselling specialty. The Internship Programme is grounded in career development theory, models, research, and practices and has been evaluated as having a profound impact on the Interns' personal and professional growth and development. As the Interns learn how to improve their practices, reciprocal benefits occur: to the Dalhousie University Counselling Center with thousands of hours of increased service to clients; personal and professional benefits for staff who work in an environment which places significant emphasis on professional learning, growth and development; to the atmosphere of the university which responds to the enthusiasm of the Interns; to the Interns' own client populations with improved and expanded service delivery; and to the profession which is permeated with their multiple contributions.

After nearly two decades of experience with this well established model, it is time for other universities, and counselling centers, as well as Provincial Departments of Education, to follow the pioneering lead of the Counselling Foundation of Canada and provide support to allow this programme to be available in every province and territory in Canada.

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