

CAREER EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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Career Education in the Elementary School

By

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ABSTRACT

The philosophy of elementary schools and the goals of career education go hand-in-hand. Self-knowledge, awareness of future educational and occupational alternatives, and development of decision-making skills have been considered important in both elementary school philosophy and practice as they are in career education (Herr and Cramer, 1996). Thus, career education programming at the elementary level must focus on broadening students' views of themselves and their perceptions of careers as well as, enhancing their self-esteem.

The focus of this research is the concept of Career Education at the elementary school level. A series of three papers comprise this piece of work. Paper 1 serves as a theoretical framework of career education at the elementary level. Literature in the following areas is reviewed: rationale for career counselling at the elementary level, characteristics of the elementary student, career competencies for the elementary student, advantages of a career program in elementary schools, implications of earlier career education for the high school student, and finally parents' role in a child's career development.

Building on the theory presented in the first paper, Paper 2 briefly reviews the literature on three specific career competencies for the elementary grades. As an extension of this information, several career activities related to these goals are described. The three competencies addressed are self-awareness, interpersonal and communication skills and awareness of gender typing and changing male and female roles.

The third and final paper discusses in greater depth the importance of self-awareness in career development. Such topics as the developmental nature of self-concept and its role in creating an occupational identity will be provided.

It is hoped the information presented in this folio will be useful to parents, teachers, counsellors, and students in their understanding, development, implementation, and evaluation of career education programs.

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Preface

School counsellors are faced with numerous challenges as they attempt to prepare young students to enter and thrive in a workforce characterized by uncertainty. Shifts in occupational structures, high unemployment rates among our youth and adults, requirements for higher levels of literacy, numeracy, and adaptability in the labour force, have led to the need for a systematic provision of career development skills, knowledge and process in our schools.

The prevalent model for a career development program reinforces the need for systematic activities and information to occur beginning with the elementary school curriculum and for parents, teachers, and counsellors to be equally involved (Herr and Cramer, 1996).

In their observations, Staley and Mangiesi in 1984, discovered that children begin to formulate career decisions at a relatively young age (Herr and Cramer, 1996). They argued that children acquire impressions of the type of work and people employed. It is from these impressions that children then embrace or remove certain occupations for themselves.

Similarly, Gottfredsons' (1981) research regarding occupation circumscription reported childrens' reduction of acceptable careers as early as age six. From her perspective, children first eliminate occupations that they perceive to be inappropriate for their sex. Then, in the second phase, children between the ages of nine and thirteen begin to remove occupations lacking sufficient prestige for their social class. By adolescence, an area of acceptable occupational alternatives has been established and the next step is to

develop a personal identity. According to Gottfredson, vocational aspirations may lend a hand in creating this sense of identity. Students may make choices that appear most compatible with the kind of personality one wants.

According to Herr and Cramer (1996), career education in the elementary school can work to avoid this premature foreclosure of occupational choices. An elementary career education program helps students know that they have opportunities to choose and the competence to do so.

Research by Hansen, Johnson and Finn in 1989 illustrates that early developmental experiences of children in the elementary school can lead to persistence at later educational levels and eventually behaviours that form a sound bases for work habits in adulthood (Herr and Cramer, 1996). More specifically, Hansen and Johnson described how learning strategies in an elementary classroom coupled with continuous reinforcement can result in productive or nonproductive work strategies in adulthood. Finn in 1989 addresses the importance of early behaviours and attitudes from another perspective - dropouts. His research suggests that the antecedents to dropping out of school occur over a long period of time, possibly with its beginnings in elementary school. Finn argues that often, poor school performance leads to low self-esteem and, in turn, to the student blaming the school and eventually removing him or herself from the environment.

Herr and Cramer (1996) claim that the identified research gives career education credibility in the elementary school. They believe career development, beginning in the elementary school, encourages feelings of personal competence early on to cope with the future, provides ways to modify weaknesses, teaching skills in planning and using

available exploratory resources, and develops an understanding of relationships between schooling and work.

This portfolio is divided into three papers. The first paper is a persuasive piece that argues for a comprehensive career education program at the elementary level. Literature in such areas as characteristics of the elementary students, advantages of a career program in elementary schools and parents role in a childs' career development are reviewed.

The theme of the second paper is more specific. Three important career competencies for the elementary grades are reviewed. The three competencies addressed are self- awareness, interpersonal and communication skills and awareness of gender typing and changing male and female roles. Several career activities related to these competencies will be outlined.

According to Herr and Cramer (1996) without self-awareness other aspects of career development become meaningless. Thus, the third and final paper discusses in greater detail the construct of self-concept and its role in creating a career identity.

This portfolio is intended to help those individuals who are involved or hop to be involved with the career development process. School counsellors, psychologists, career counsellors, teachers, parents and others can benefit from the contents of this portfolio.

Paper #1

A Theoretical Framework of Career Development at the Elementary Level

Introduction

The focus of this research folio is career education at the elementary school level. A series of three papers will comprise this piece of work. In Paper 1, there will be presented a theoretical framework for career development at the elementary level. Building on the theory presented in the first paper, Paper 2 will review the literature on three specific career competencies for the elementary grades. Subsequently, several career activities relating to these goals will be described. The three competencies addressed are: self-awareness, interpersonal and communication skills and, awareness of gender typing and changing male and female roles. Paper 3 will discuss the competency of self-awareness in more depth. Selected literature on the developmental nature of self-concept and its role in creating an occupational identity will be provided in this final paper.

The following theoretical framework of Paper 1 is divided into the following areas: rationale for career counselling at the elementary level; characteristics of the elementary student; career competencies for the elementary student; advantages of a career program in elementary schools; implications for the high school student and later years; and finally parents' role in a child's career development.

Career Development Theories

If career education is to be introduced and maintained in our elementary schools, we first need to understand the connection between children's views of occupations and how, as adults, they will make choices. The various career development theories can provide us with some theoretical basis for such predictions.

The approaches describing career development have been classified in several ways (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Osipow, 1983; Pitz & Harren, 1980). Although these classifications highlight specific themes about career behaviour, similarities do exist, creating a more unified theory of career development (Osipow, 1990). According to Herr and Cramer (1996), career development theories fit into five types:

1. Trait-and-factor, actuarial or matching approaches conceive of the person as an organization of capacities that can be measured and related to the requirements of training programs or occupations (p. 157).
2. Decision theory models emphasize the process of decision making. Within this process, the individual has to choose amongst several alternatives or courses of action that may result in a gain or loss. The best choice would be the alternative in which the gain is the greatest (p. 165).
3. Situational, sociological or contextual approaches state that the context in which career behaviour unfolds is different across nations, communities, and families. A person's career choice can be influenced by higher interaction with the environment (p. 179).

4. Psychological approaches emphasize intrinsic individual motivation. Because of personality differences, individuals develop certain needs or drives and seek their satisfaction through occupational choices (p. 190).
5. Developmental approaches tend to concentrate more on how career behaviour develops and changes over time. They are more inclusive and more inclined to highlight the importance of the self-concept (p. 207).

These five career development approaches are not mutually exclusive or independent of one another. Instead, each one attempts to explain career behaviour and choice from varied vantage points. However, the focus of this portfolio will be the Developmental approach because it is more concerned with longitudinal studies of career behaviour, and more inclined to highlight the importance of the self-concept. These career development theories and their descriptions of an individual's career behaviour provide the foundation for, and describe the where, when, and why of career counselling, career education and career guidance. Implementation strategies are implied in each concept.

Rationale

Focusing on the developmental perspective, research has long defined career development as a lifelong process that begins in childhood and continues throughout adulthood (Gibson, Mitchell & Basile, 1993; Gysbers & Moore, 1975; Hoffman & McDaniels, 1991; and Super, 1953). In response to this literature, numerous educational programs were promoted, the most prominent of these has been the career education movement.

Career education is a "process of infusing into instructional content and method career development concepts by which the application of academic subject matter of any kind can be related to work or to self-exploration" (Herr & Cramer, 1996, p. 29). The presence of career education in the elementary school is not new, or a reversal of the elementary school philosophy and practices. In fact, current models of career education reinforce the concepts of self-knowledge, decision-making, and knowledge of educational occupational alternatives (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

Most would agree that the elementary years are an important period for the career development and occupational choice processes. As elementary school children move through the elements of "Fantasy", work is an important concern to them. During the elementary school years, most individuals significantly develop their values about work, learning, and other lasting adult values. It is these values that can then translate into self-perspectives and preferences or exclusions for some work and educational activities.

Research cited in Herr and Cramer (1996) show that by the time children have completed the first six grades of school, many of them have made tentative commitments to fields of work and self-perceptions. According to Gottfredson (1981), for example, as early as age six children begin to reduce the number of acceptable occupations. The two phases of reduction pertain to the occupations children perceive to be inappropriate for their sex and; secondly, occupations lacking the prestige for their social class on self-concept.

One can assume that not all the information and influences from which these preferences and perceptions are derived are appropriate, or accurate. Children often receive career information that restricts their desired occupational possibilities. From an early age boys are

frequently encouraged to enter the fields of science, engineering, or construction. Girls, on the other hand, are believed to be best suited for careers in the service industry. These may include teacher, nurse, receptionist, or daycare worker. As well, a number of studies have shown that many materials and texts used in elementary schools portray the world of work and future education inaccurately with sex-typing restrictive views (i.e., male doctor, female nurse). Frequently, unrealistic career plans are made due to the presence of sex typing in our literature (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

Parents, as well, are a valuable source of learning about the world of work. However, as indicated in Miller (1989), some parents hold restrictive ideas about their children's future occupations and provide no environmental support towards their children's personal and occupational explorations. Furthermore, an increasing number of youths are growing up in families and in communities in which individuals are seldom employed. Youth from such environments do not readily understand the work ethic, or life with regular employment.

Young people, in deciding about their futures, need exposure to positive career role models, decision-making strategies, and broad-based career options. Thus, the inclusion of nontraditional role models, guest speakers, films, books, and field trips in career education of the elementary grades can help prevent premature foreclosure of choices or unrealistic career choices.

Elementary career education programs can also help students understand the complex and ever-changing world of work. Thirty years ago, students were entering a labor market predominately comprised of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Today, however, youth face life in a society in which such job opportunities are rapidly disappearing. Academic achievement,

intellectual development, etc. are now critical qualifications (Toepfer. 1994). Furthermore, with the ever-widening scope for both men and women, early exposure of children to the world of work and occupations is encouraged.

For the above reasons, career education programming must encourage elementary students to develop an awareness not only of the world of work, but of their individuality. As Isaacson and Brown (1996) stated, by seeing themselves as individuals with differing interests, abilities and motivations, the students will understand how decisions can affect their lives.

Characteristics of the Elementary Student

Theorists like Donald Super (1990) view career development as a lifelong process characterized by a number of stages. Each stage is important and includes specific developmental tasks that individuals must achieve if they are to make career choices that lead to satisfactory and productive lives. According to Hughes (1993), in order for career-education programs to be effective at the elementary level, the programs must be based on these developmental needs and characteristics of this particular age group, and promote achievement of elementary-level education goals.

From a career development perspective, by ten years of age, most children prefer to participate in activities that provide the bases for career aspirations. They are beginning to comprehend the connection between school and career achievements. Occupational goals tend to be more realistic, and begin to reflect values as well as interests. In turn, these contribute to a broadening of occupational options, and a receptivity to new ideas. By the age of nine or ten years, children typically have a relatively clear and distinct concept of themselves that ordinarily

results in few self-doubts and anxieties, as evident in later adolescents (Seligman, Weinstock & Heflin, 1991).

Schwartz (1996) describes the development of early adolescents (10-14 years), as moving from concrete to abstract thinking. They are acquiring self-concept and social skills. They are developing lasting attitudes about learning, work, and other adult values. Finally, they are learning to take responsibility for their education.

As stated by Herr & Cramer (1996), “children of elementary school age are typically open to and they interact with a broad range of stimuli and modes of behaviour” (p. 340). Thus, they tend to be less rigid and stereotyped in their thinking, yet vulnerable in the sense that their attitudes and perceptions about life are formative.

In other related research, it was found that towards the upper elementary years (11-12 years), most students are trying to separate themselves from their families by becoming more independent. They are intrigued with the events around them, and welcome the opportunity to interact freely (Muro & Kottman, 1995; Sears, 1995).

The foundation for future achievement seems to be established during these years. Self-confidence and the learning of new skills and tools have developmental importance during these years, with significant implications for the child’s maturation into a productive and self-assured adult worker (Seligman, Weinstock & Heflin, 1991).

Competencies of the Elementary Student

Once the characteristics of elementary students have been established, the process of identifying related competencies begins. However, in order for this process to be successful,

careful consideration must be given to the child's specific stage of career development.

In his work on career development, Super (1988) created a series of life stages characterized as a sequence of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. In turn, these stages can be subdivided into the 'Exploratory' and the 'Establishment' stages. During the exploratory stage children are becoming aware of the fact that an occupation will be an important aspect in their life. More specifically, he proposed that from ages 4 to 10 years, children are in a substage of the 'exploratory' stage called the 'Fantasy stage.' During this substage, children use role-play and fantasy, as they explore their occupational choices. Cowboy, movie star, and princess are some examples that children, at this stage, express as their occupational choices. Super noted the importance of increased self-awareness, awareness of a variety of occupations, and feelings of competency in a child's career development. He has emphasized the development and implementation self-concept, as the primary construct within the career development process. Essentially, Super has stressed the inherent relationship of career development and personal development.

Others have also characterized the childhood years as a stage of self-awareness. Miller (1989) stated the initial stage of career development of an elementary school child is self-awareness. Thus, essentials to an elementary school career program are activities that acknowledge a young child's self-awareness, feelings of autonomy, need for playful behaviour, and wish for exploration.

Herr & Cramer (1996) described elementary school children as being "typically open to and interacting with, a broad range of stimuli or behaviour" (p. 340). On the basis of this description, they argue these students need to become aware of themselves, possible careers, and

how they can employ school experiences to explore and prepare for the future. Therefore, to meet children's career development needs, an elementary career development program should consist of extensive career awareness activities centered around concepts such as: exploring careers, self-knowledge, decision-making, understanding and getting along with others, learning about family responsibilities, learning about school, and good work habits. These career development programs should infuse self, career, and technology awareness into the curriculum.

The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs 2000 has identified eleven competencies they view as representative of "the basic skills and attitudes that children should acquire to deal effectively with daily life, to make the transition into middle/junior high school, and to start developing an educational plan to insure their academic growth and continuing career development. The Blueprint for Life Work Designs is a conceptual framework that can guide Canadians in their acquisition of career-related information, skills and knowledge. The Blueprint provides specific guidelines that can help enhance career development programs in a variety of settings including elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools and the work force. The Blueprint 2000 has been adapted from the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (1989) (NOICC) and is organized around three major areas of competence: (a) personal management, (b) learning and work exploration, and (c) life/work development.

The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs 2000 competencies for the elementary school include the following: (a) knowledge for building a positive self-concept while discovering its importance, (b) developing abilities for building positive relationships in one's life, (c) discover that change and growth are part of life, (d) discovering "lifelong learning" and its contributions to one's life and work, (e) discovering and understanding life/work information, (f) discovering

how work contributes to individuals, society and economy, (g) exploring effective work habits, (h) exploring decision making, (i) exploring and understanding the interrelationship of life roles, (j) discovering the nature of life/work roles, and (k) exploring and understanding life/work planning.

It is expected that the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs 2000 will be used to establish career development programs in all provinces/territories. This model should contain competencies that relate to three areas of career development, namely personal management, learning and work exploration, and life/work development. Following are the outcomes from Blueprint 2000 that may be included in any elementary career development model:

I. Personal Management

1. I know how to be a good friend.
2. I understand my friends and classmates.
3. I know how to get along with boys and girls.
4. I understand people who are different from me.
5. I know how to ask parents, teachers and other adults for help.

II. Learning and Work Exploration

1. I know what is expected of me in the next grade.
2. I know how to make choices at school that relate to interests and abilities.
3. I know that all my classes (math, science, reading, etc.) are important in jobs and daily living.

III. Life/Work Development

1. I know how to find out more about jobs and careers.
2. I know the importance of good work habits for school and future jobs.
3. I know some reasons why people work.
4. I know that people need to work together.

Depending on the setting and the characteristics of the children being served, additional outcomes might be created for a local program of career guidance. These outcomes do not occur spontaneously, but must be nurtured in order to mature. Students will continue to expand their knowledge of self-interests, values, abilities, and of careers throughout their junior high and high school years. Regardless of which outcomes are finally chosen, an elementary career program, working within the educational framework, should concern itself with enabling each child to make choices, and to arrive at identities and decisions that can lead to a productive future.

The Advantages of Career Education in Elementary Schools

Time and time again the literature (Goldberger and Katz, 1996; Herr and Cramer, 1996; Hughes, 1993; and Starr, 1996) has recognized and reported the importance of providing career development programs in the elementary schools. The proponents of an elementary career program have argued numerous advantages of such programs. Herr and Cramer (1996) have affirmed that attitudes likely to undermine adult role behaviour have beginnings in the early life of children.

Hageman & Gladding (1983) studied the attitudes of third-and sixth-grade students and they found increasing stereotypes at both levels, and that most girls did not feel free to pursue a

nontraditional career.

Gottfredson (1981) concluded that as children grow older, they deliberately reduce occupations acceptable to them. She identifies stages that occur in this process. Stage one involves the orientation by children to size and power (3-5 years). Here children begin to associate adulthood with occupational roles and project themselves into future adult roles. Stage two involves orientation to sex-roles (6-8 years). In this phase, the beginnings of a gender self-concept are consolidated and sex role stereotypes appear to develop. Children's occupational preferences at this stage reflect a concern with performing those jobs that are appropriate for one's gender. The first occupations, thus, to be removed are those which children sense to be unsuitable for their gender. Stage three occurs around the ages of 9-13 years old. This stage is characterized by an orientation to social valuation. Here, children become very sensitive to peer group evaluations and to general expectations, values, and evaluations. Their expressed occupational preferences are judged according to their prestige level, with the elimination of low-level jobs. They also rule out occupations requiring effort beyond their ability level, as they perceive it. The final stage is an orientation to the internal unique self. In this stage of development, they seek to create personal identities, and to arrive at more specific occupational choices. Choices made in adolescence are limited to a collection of occupations considered acceptable at an earlier age to one's gender, social class, and intelligence.

Career education in the elementary grades has the potential to counteract the effects of occupational reduction based on social class, inappropriateness, or sex stereotyping. Herr & Cramer (1996) purport that career education at the elementary level is intended to avoid this premature foreclosure of choices. Bailey & Nichlen (1989) reported that many children are quite

willing to ask questions about careers after being exposed to nontraditional occupational role models.

According to Hughes (1993), career education at the elementary level can help children sense the relationship between what they study in school and future occupations. An elementary career education program allows children years to employ their abilities in various opportunities and to witness the outcomes, whether they are good or bad. This practice can enable students to develop a stronger understanding and to take control over their futures.

An initial component of an elementary career program is self-awareness. Isaacson & Browne (1996) stated that if self-understanding is fostered at an early age, then students are more likely to understand others better, and establish more productive relationships now and in the future.

As demonstrated above, an elementary career program has great potential to empower elementary school children to grow in career consciousness, self-awareness, and optimism about future opportunities. However, if such a program is to make a difference, simply providing separate career units telling students about work is not sufficient. Career development must be integrated with other instructional goals appropriate for elementary education. Furthermore, more efforts must be made to help students learn to use information in their career decision making. Effective programs involve careful planning. Younger children function more successfully in the concrete realm. Thus, career education programs must be concrete, not abstract in their design. For example, an elementary career program dominated by college preparation will serve no purpose to young children and eventually their interest will diminish.

To be useful in the elementary school, career information must be available in a wide range of reading levels and other sensory modes (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Activities and/or learning experiences should provide ways for all students to experience success. Furthermore, opportunities should be provided for children to share their knowledge and experience of work.

Implications for the High School and Later Years.

It is obvious that schools can play a central and crucial role in increasing the significance given to career in life planning. However, this role will not be successful with isolated courses in junior and senior high school. Instead, what is needed is an integration of career concepts in all subjects across all grade levels. For example, in elementary schools, many classes go on field trips to places like the fire station or the zoo. It would be very easy to include a discussion of workers' roles and how they contribute to the total zoo experience. Information about the animals and about the workers could vary from grade to grade and from class to class, and could easily be integrated across the curriculum.

Hiebert (1993) believes that people do not choose a career at a single point in time. Instead, careers develop over time as a result of the experiences people have, and the types of activities in which they find meaning. Thus, career-related activities, such as field trips, could assist young people to become more active in their career paths. He points out that educators, employers, parents, youth and adults are demanding comprehensive programs that will lead students of all ages through a sequential process of career development that will enable them to succeed.

For young people, choice of career path is an extremely important venture. Leaders in education, government and business are realizing that what is needed is an all-inclusive movement to heighten the image of career in people's minds, and the provision of a type of program that young people need in order to make realistic and informed career decisions. (Hiebert, 1993).

The claims that schooling ought to better prepare youth for the 21st century have become increasingly prominent. Despite this recognized need, career education programs are not keeping pace with technological advancements. Thus, there is a shortfall in terms of what students are learning and what they need to know.

Balcombe (1995), in a review of the importance of career education in the 1990s, purports that too often too much of the counsellor's time gets consumed with "social counselling." Thus, leaving little time for the group of students who require academic and career guidance. In the article, Balcombe cites quantitative evidence indicating the shortcomings of present-day career education. One of the sections in a Canadian Press release in 1993 described "attitudes towards the future" in grades 11 and 12. Included in this release, were the following points: (a) when discussing career counseling most students said their schools have been only "somewhat helpful" (55.8%), 20.4% described their schools as "not helpful at all," while only 22.7% felt their schools were "very helpful"; (b) students felt better prepared to enter a community college than to enter the workforce, or a university; (c) students felt that they would be in the same financial position as their parents when they reach their parents' age; and (d) Canadian students' educational goals are high, and most students aspire to a graduate or professional degree. Such information leads us to question how well students are being prepared

for the world of work by the existing methods.

In an interview with Willard Daggett, the director of the International Center for Leadership in Education, John O'Neil (1995) brings similar information to light. Willard Daggett argues that high school graduates get stuck in dead-end jobs, or college graduates are unable to find work in their field because the curriculum does not prepare the students for the world in which they are going to live.

He believes this is because the economy has moved from an industrial-based economy to a technological information-based one. Furthermore, unskilled and low-skill jobs are rapidly disappearing and being replaced by high-level skills that require the use of a wide array of knowledge to access information and to manipulate data. His solution is the development of a school that has a single curriculum for all students, that is both "rigorous" and "relevant."

These rapid advances in technology are producing major changes in the present workforce and are affecting the way we must prepare youth to function in the world. Starr (1996) states that to meet the needs of our youth today and into the future, they must be provided with a systematic process that will enable them to acquire reasonable educational and career plans. This process, according to Starr, must include: (a) extensive career awareness activities beginning at the elementary level, centered around concepts such as: exploring careers, self knowledge, decision making, understanding and getting along with others, learning about family responsibilities, learning about school, and developing good work habits; (b) further career exploration that will provide the basis for making practical career choices, such as learning more about career paths, job clusters, and individual interests and aptitudes, and planning for further education and training; (c) increased knowledge of self and others that will help students know

what is important to them, how to respect other's opinions, and how to effectively communicate their feelings; and (d) broaden knowledge of our changing world and its impact on them.

One of the new trends in career education is the movement to implement what is called "school-to-work transition programs". Paulter (1991) defines the school-to-work transition as "the process that each individuals pass through on their way to more schooling, more education or employment. Relevant research, (Cheek, 1991; Goldberger & Kazis, 1996; and Grubb, 1996) supports the belief that this movement was created out of high youth employment, national studies that question the effectiveness of career education, fear of a shortage of skilled workers, and unrelated employment of occupational program graduates.

An effective transition from school to work does not suddenly begin when students have completed their training programs. According to Cheek (1991), it should start very early and continue throughout childhood and adolescence. He also states that the school must shed the views that firstly, education is separate from life experiences; and secondly, work should only occur when education is complete. A successful school to work transition should be based on the right of every student to obtain an education for the purpose of experiencing life and preparing for what comes next.

A comprehensive transition program involves students in career awareness, exploration, decision making and planning, and preparation. Each of these four phases builds on the others starting in the primary and elementary years.

In the view of career-related researchers, work-based learning is central to an effective school-to-career system. According to Goldberger & Kazis (1996), in the earlier grades, students should be exposed to workplaces through job shadowing, in-school jobs, and employer

involvement in classroom and community service projects. In the high school years, the learning environment should expand to work sites as students become more mature and ready to leave the classroom for workplace experiences.

Cottrell Middle School in Oregon offers a formal program that includes offering in-school jobs to all students. The program enables middle students to experience many of the conditions of work in the outside world, and gives them opportunities to apply abstract knowledge to practical problems (Yatvin, 1995).

As the program now exists, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders are hired to perform jobs identified by school staff members. Students fill out applications, provide references, and go through interviews. During their term of employment, students must fill out daily time sheets and undergo periodic evaluations by their adult supervisors. Students earn wages in the form of tokens that can be spent for parties, field trips, items in the school store, and gifts at the end of the year auction. Some of the job choices offered by this program include: physical education assistant, playground assistant, groundskeeper, lunchroom orderly, and clerical aide. By allowing students to work as science aides, groundskeeper or gym managers, Cottrell Middle School is recreating the world of work in its own way.

Cheek (1991) in his article of school-to-work transition described four possible formats that schools can incorporate to provide effective work experience. They include apprenticeships, cooperative education, internships and shadowing. Business and industry can provide a realistic environment for children to learn occupational skills.

In the future, helping students make the transition from school to work will present both challenges and opportunities. However, success can be ensured through the experiences of, and

experimentation by, partnerships of employers, schools, and post secondary institutions. Taking this approach, the transition to work will become a more natural one.

Parental Role

Parental influence in career development is an important dimension of the study of family, school and community partnerships (Young, 1993). According to Super (1988), the children's opportunities to develop high self-esteem exist first in the home, then the neighbourhood, church, and school, as the children learn to identify with models and explore roles. Most people would agree that parental involvement in children's education is an essential way to encourage children's achievements. This involvement according to De Ridder (1990) starts at birth and continues as the children progress through the fantasy, exploration, and trial stages of career development.

As adolescents enter the critical ego development stage (Erikson, 1963), they seek answers to questions regarding their identity and career aspirations. Parents can have a great influence on their children's career direction as they attempt to discover the work they will do in their life (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993).

Children also form many of their attitudes about work and occupations from such family environment factors as parents' socioeconomic status, their educational level, and their aspirations (Penick & Jepson, 1992). In his study of the influences on adolescents' career development, Mortimer et al. in 1992, (Lankard, 1995) found parental education to have the most effect.

It would seem that parents with a higher level of education tend to pass along its importance to their children. De Ridder (1990) reports that lower levels of parent education may limit children's career development. "Being born to parents with limited education and income reduces the likelihood of going to college or achieving a professional occupational goal and essentially predetermines the child's likely vocational choice" (p.4).

In addition to family background, family processes influence career development. Children learn about work and work experiences from such family processes as interaction, communication, and modeling (Lankard, 1995). Similarly, Way and Rossman (1996) suggest that the day-to-day family patterns of decision-making, good or poor work habits, conflict resolution and communication skills are instilled with children forever. By discussing their feelings regarding the work experience, families provide an environment in which children can understand the realities of work. Middleton and Loughhead (1993) suggest that children's aspirations should be viewed from a "interactional rather than singular process of influence; focusing on the contexts and situations in which career development occurs" (p. 163). That is, the interaction of such variables as ability and attitude toward school, family environment, parental aspirations and childrens' perception of parental encouragement influence childrens' career goals.

Way and Rossman (1996) outlined two models of family involvement. The "social mold" model occurs when parents try to shape their children in a particular image. This is done by modeling and supporting desirable career-related behaviours and attitudes. In the other approach, parents encourage children to be autonomous and successful in shaping their own lives. Middleton and Loughhead (1993) describe similar types of parental involvement, namely, positive

involvement, noninvolvement and negative involvement. It is parents' negative involvement that may cause adolescents to feel anxious about their career decisions or exploration. Parents in the "negative involvement" category are often controlling in their interactions with their children. These children often follow the career direction desired by their parents so as not to disappoint them. After doing so, they are left with feelings of guilt and frustration when they do not achieve their parents' goals (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993).

Teaching children to be independent and autonomous will result in better preparation for the new world of work that involves transition, adaptation and change. Although families can provide the ideal social context in which their children can develop interests and acquire skills necessary in career development, this is often not the case (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993).

Many parents face increased pressure in their own work life. Their work environments are often not supportive of family needs, demanding longer hours of their employees. These parents may also have to face decreases in job security and/or workers' benefits. In addition, parents may experience a great deal of social and personal pressure to prepare their children to be successful and knowledgeable in whatever career they choose. This pressure can be heightened when it is suggested that poor parenting is the cause of low achievement among youth (Way & Rossman, 1996).

According to Herr and Cramer (1996), the changing family structure also makes it increasingly more difficult for children to experience "stable and informed parental support." More infants are being born into single-parent households. Furthermore, many of the children living in female-headed families grow up in or near poverty (p. 351). Because of their fear of falling below the poverty line and personal stresses, many parents feel that their career advice or

other support would be inadequate. Other parents do not understand how to purposefully contribute to their children's development. Thus, to maximize their children's opportunities, creative, cooperative working relationships must exist between school personnel and families.

Way and Rossman (1996) contend that families that interact at school and provide support, increase work readiness. In fact, students who demonstrated this work readiness were found to come from families that had: (a) asked regularly about or helped with homework, (b) attended school functions and inquired about their child's progress, and (c) helped develop potential job skills by encouraging hobbies. Families who encourage education and positive attitudes towards schoolwork assist in the development of learning strategies such as seeking challenging courses, developing ideas beyond the project and continuing to work in the face of any uninteresting topic (Way & Rossman, 1996).

Implications for School Personnel

Structuring or guiding parental involvement in adolescent career development is increasingly seen as an important element of a school's career counselling. De Ridder (1990) suggests that counsellors collaborate and help parents to improve their effectiveness in guiding their children. The classroom teacher or school counsellor can discuss with parents and students the goals of the career awareness program, and by offering simple activities or guidelines parents can use with their children.

Schwartz (1996) outlines several ways parents can encourage career exploration in their children: She suggests that parents (a) talk to their children about their own work, or jobs of friends and relatives, so they will learn about several options; (b) encourage discussions on

conflicts often faced between career/school and leisure time; and (c) ask their children what they like to do and encourage them to explore careers based on their interests.

The Maryland State Department of Education designed a brochure that contained more practical approaches to assist parents in becoming active and effective partners in their children's career development. The following tasks can help children become aware of various occupations and their value, the importance of doing a job well, and how to make wise decisions: (a) taking them to work and pointing out the different jobs and skills needed; (b) making them aware of workers in non-traditional career roles (for example, a woman in construction or a man in nursing); (c) using television, books, and magazines as tools to explain reality versus fantasy in the world of work; (d) having them assist with chores at home; (e) demonstrating the need to gather all the facts, anticipate consequences and outcomes, and accept compromises based on information gathered; and (f) encouraging them to make choices.

In many ways, children's career choices may depend upon the parents' personal support, advice and finances. Because of the unsettling and ever-changing economic, occupational and familial situations, the continued parental support may not always be present. Thus, an active partnership between the parents and the school is encouraged to help improve students' self-confidence and performance. As a result, more students will be better prepared to match occupations with their potential.

Conclusion

The philosophy of elementary schools and the goals of career education go hand-in-hand. Self-knowledge, awareness of future educational and occupational alternatives, and development

of decision-making skills are considered important in both elementary school philosophy and practice (Herr and Cramer, 1996).

The lifelong nature of career development, described by Super and others, appears to be widely accepted. As with personal and social development, career development is divided into a series of stages. An individual's movement through each stage is gradual and, almost always to a higher level.

Career development in early childhood is characterized by needs for self-awareness and a variety of exceptions and feelings of competency. Thus, to meet these specific needs, an elementary career development program should consist of an array of career awareness activities centered around concepts such as feelings of autonomy and control, the need for planful behavior and the desires for exploration.

Gottfredson (1981) found that elementary school students have already begun to internalize perceptions and preferences toward the available fields of work. It has been suggested that "occupational reduction" begins as early as age six and that by grade four, children have built a job-prestige hierarchy similar to that of adults. Reports also indicate that many students who dropped out of school "physically" at age sixteen have already dropped out of school "psychologically" as early as grade three (Herr and Cramer, 1996). This often occurs because they fail to see the connection between the school curriculum and their experiences outside of school. Without opportunities to develop an awareness of themselves and of available careers, many elementary school children may learn inadequate behaviours or incorrect information about themselves and/or their opportunities.

Thus, career education programming must focus on broadening students' views of themselves and their perceptions of careers, as well as, enhancing their self-esteem. These goals can also be attained through family processes such as: interaction, communication, and modeling. Parents can have a great influence on their children's career direction as the children attempt to discover their chosen occupations. Therefore, a comprehensive, planned program involving school and home can produce skills to empower elementary school children to foster career consciousness, self-awareness, and optimism about future opportunities.

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Paper #2

Describing Elementary Career Competencies through Appropriate Activities

Introduction

In Paper 1 of this portfolio, I examined the current literature of career education for primary and elementary students. Numerous career development theories were identified with the Developmental approach discussed in greater detail to provide a theoretical foundation of career counselling at the elementary level. Furthermore, selected career development competencies, specific to the elementary grades were delineated. In this second paper I examine these competencies as they relate to the curriculum. The information may also serve as a guide for elementary teachers and counsellors in their programming on career development.

The objective of this second paper is to discuss three career developmental competencies which are deemed to be essential in one's career development and to examine the literature that describes these competencies for the elementary student. The three specific competencies that will be examined include: (a) awareness of self and a positive self-concept, (b) interpersonal and communication skills necessary for interacting with others, and (c) awareness of changing male/female roles. Several career-related activities for achieving these goals will also be described. As with the other competencies a brief overview will be provided for self-concept. However, this particular competency will be discussed in greater depth in the third paper.

To begin to formulate an answer to the question, "What am I going to do when I grow up?" children require, among other things, wide-ranging exposure to a variety of workers and work settings. As outlined in the previous research paper, students, parents and the business

community have been claiming that students are not adequately trained for the high-technology jobs of today and tomorrow, or for the possibility of numerous occupational changes.

Over the years career education's position in the educational agenda has not been clear. The views as to how schools ought to prepare students for adult life are as diversified as the programs. While the array of programs such as transition-to-work, technological education, and co-operative education, are important, it is not clear that they adequately address the career development needs of students.

In response to this concern, a new vision of career education must be implemented in the schools. According to Gitterman, Levi and Wayne (1995), schools must act deliberately to ensure that all students have access to current and accurate career information. It must be understood by administrators and teachers that decision-making strategies are significant in assisting students to make successful transitions to work, further education, and training. Finally, providing students with learning experiences should extend to individuals and businesses in their community.

Career education can be viewed as a distinct, yet closely linked, aspect of personal growth and development. Theorists like Ginzberg (1972) and Gottfredson (1981) and Super (1980) view career development as a lifelong process characterized by a number of developmental stages. In accepting a developmental approach to career development, individuals must focus on and achieve specific tasks commonly met at each developmental level or those about to be encountered at the next level. Increasingly, career education is focussing on three aspects of the individual: self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration and career planning. These components are deemed by the author to form the core of an effective

career education model.

In order to execute this vision of career education, schools need to have clear and specific outcomes for each component. It is necessary then to examine the competencies and indicators formulated by Blueprint for Life/Work Designs 2000 that helps to provide a framework for schools when designing their own career education programs. Following is a summary of selected competencies and indicators extracted from The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs:

[Elementary School Student Competencies and Indicators]

Personal Management

Competency I: Knowledge of the importance of self-concept

1. Describe positive characteristics about self as seen by self and others.
2. Identify how behaviours affect school and family situations.
3. Demonstrate a positive attitude about self.
4. Identify personal interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses.

Competency II: Skills to interact with others.

1. Identify how people are unique.
2. Demonstrate effective skills for interacting with others.
3. Demonstrate skills in resolving conflicts with peers and adults.
4. Demonstrate group membership skills.

Competency III: Awareness of the importance of emotional and physical development on career decision-making.

1. Identify personal feelings.
2. Identify ways to express feelings.
3. Demonstrate healthy ways of dealing with conflicts, stress and emotion in self and others.

Learning and Work Exploration

Competency IV: Awareness of the benefits of educational achievement.

1. Describe how academic skills can be used in the home and community.
2. Identify personal strengths and weaknesses in subject areas.
3. Describe school tasks that are similar to skills essential for job success.

Competency V: Awareness of the interrelationship of work and learning.

1. Identify different types of work, both paid and unpaid.
2. Describe the importance of preparing for an occupation.
3. Describe how one's role as a student is like that of an adult worker.
4. Describe the importance of cooperation among workers to accomplish a task.

Competency VI: Skills for understanding and using career information.

1. Describe work of family members, school personnel and community workers.
2. Identify work activities of interest to the student.
3. Describe jobs that are present in the student's community.

Competency VII: Awareness of the importance of personal responsibility and good work habits.

1. Describe the importance of personal qualities (e.g., dependability, promptness).
2. Demonstrate positive ways of performing working activities.
3. Demonstrate the ability to work with people who are different from oneself (e.g. race, age, gender).

Competency VIII: Awareness of how work relates to the needs and functions in society.

1. Describe how work can satisfy personal needs.
2. Describe ways in which work can help overcome social and economic problems.

Life/Work Development

Competency IX: Understanding how to make decisions.

1. Describe how choices are made.
2. Identify strategies used in solving problems.
3. Describe how decisions affect self and others.

Competency X: Awareness of the interrelationship of life roles.

1. Describe the various roles an individual may have (e.g., family member, friend, student, and worker).
2. Describe how family members depend on one another and share responsibilities.
3. Describe how work roles complement family roles.

Competency XI: Awareness of different occupations and changing male/female roles.

1. Describe how work is important to all people.
2. Describe the changing life roles of men and women in work and family.
3. Describe how contributions of individuals both inside and outside the home are important.

Competency XII: Awareness of the career planning process.

1. Describe the importance of planning.
2. Describe skills needed in a variety of occupational groups.
3. Develop an individual career plan for the elementary school level.

The career activities, extracted from the activity manual titled *Careers Now! Making the Future Work*, discussed in this section can be used as single exercises or used in conjunction with others to reinforce career awareness concepts while simultaneously building on significant competencies. These indicators can be modified to provide more relevance for any population.

In the previous paper, five major approaches to career development were noted. They included trait-and-factor, actuarial, or matching approaches; decision theory; situational, sociological, or contextual approaches; psychological approaches; and developmental approaches. Although at first glance these theories would appear separate and different from one another, this is not the case. According to Herr & Cramer (1996), the collective finding of these descriptions of career development is that, like all human behaviour, career development is complex and is part of the total fabric of personality development. (p. 234).

Whatever the process of occupational or career decision making, it would appear that the development of career-related behaviour is characterized by progressive growth and learning from infancy through adulthood which occurs within a network of external and internal forces on the individual. Thus, the act of choosing a career path is not a single behaviour at that point in time. Instead, it involves a series of interdependent decisions that are closely linked to the individual's personal history, past experiences to both future perceptions and alternatives.

If such a comprehensive career program exists in the K-12 school system, the students are likely to be better prepared to select and obtain appropriate information regarding their occupations. Therefore, there will be an increasing likelihood that the decisions will be appropriate for the individual.

Personal, educational, occupational or career development incorporates complex learning processes that begin in early childhood and continue throughout life. As a result of their background or environment and their experiences, elementary-aged children bring to school varying ideas and attitudes. In most cases, these attitudes and ideas reflect their adult caregivers, which in some instances may be outdated and inadequate. Through a comprehensive career program, these children can be made aware of the ever-changing world of work.

According to Isaccson & Brown (1996), early in elementary school, children need to understand the interplay of their present and future choices and decisions and should be helped to grasp the idea that much of what happens in their future will be of their own doing. Thus, the goal of career development programming must be to broaden students' views of themselves as they relate to careers and others as well as to improve their self-esteem.

In this next section, I will define and briefly review the literature on three specific career developmental competencies as they relate to the elementary school-age population. Selected activities from the source *Careers Now! Making the Future Work*, will be described to help school counsellors and teachers achieve these goals.

Self-Concept

The first competency that will be discussed is the development of awareness of self and of a positive self-concept as it relates to career opportunities. The self has only recently emerged as a worthy construct for theorists and practitioners of behavioural psychology. The very origins of the behaviourist movement depended upon the identification of what is observable. Thus, hypothetical constructs were both conceptually and methodologically uninteresting. This

argument deemed self-representations unmeasurable since they could not be clearly operationalized as observable behaviour (Harter, 1990).

Due to several trends over the past fifteen years, the study of self-constructs has become more palatable. With the birth of cognitive psychology, self-theorists revived the self as a cognitive construction. Theorists have also become more precise in their definitions of self-constructs. This has resulted in creating a more observable measure of the self. (Harter, 1990).

Self-concept is a complex combination of thoughts and feelings about the self that reflects ongoing behaviour and that also mediates and negotiates this behaviour (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Researchers have described the self as cognitive representations; associative memory networks; hierarchical category structures and a system of self-schemas or generalizations from past social experiences. Despite the various models used to define self-concept, self-theorists generally agree that the self-structure is multidimensional and multifaceted (Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Markus & Wurf (1987) provide a comprehensive social psychological perspective of self-concept and elaborate on several types and sources of self-representations. Firstly, there are core conceptions that are most important to the individual and believed to have the most powerful effect on behaviour and information processing. Another set of self-conceptions is 'possible selves' - the selves one would like to be or is afraid of becoming. Finally, there is the working self-concept that consists of an array of self-knowledge continually accessible to the individual at any point in time.

Sources of individuals' self-representations may vary. People use social comparison and interaction to receive information about themselves. (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Representations

of the self are also created from emotions, motivations, cognitions and internal physiological reactions (Harter, 1986). Trope, in 1983, suggested that some self-representations result from individuals' direct attempts at self-assessment. According to Markus & Wurf (1987), the information the individual receives about the self and how he or she processes self-conceptions determines the growth of self-structures.

There is an increasing body of research identifying self-perceptions as developmental (Damon & Hart, 1986; Gottfredson, 1981; Harter, 1990). Harter (1990) described the nature of self-representation within the framework of Piaget's stages. This position proposes that self-descriptions shift from a concrete behavioural and social exterior to a more abstract psychological interior. During the preoperational period, the young child can only give specific examples that describe observable behaviours or characteristics about the self. For example, *I have blue eyes* or *I love ice cream*. With middle childhood comes the emergence of concrete operations that allow a shift from a consideration of observable attributes to self-constructs that are more conceptual or trait-like. Such trait labels represent the ability to organize observable, behavioural characteristics into higher order generalizations about the self. Finally, adolescents reaching the formal operational stage can now integrate trait labels into higher-order abstractions about the self. One's psychological interior is now described in the form of beliefs, wishes, emotions and motives. Harter (1990) argues that although these abstract self-representations indicate a more advanced cognitive structure, they simultaneously become separated from concrete behaviours, increasing the possibility of distortion.

Damon and Hart (1986), in their longitudinal study of age-related changes in children's self-understanding, concluded that self-concept develops in an orderly, predictable pattern

during the ages of four through eighteen. However, they caution against confusing this stability with “absolute behavioural constancy,” which they believe is non-existent over the course of development.

In Super’s developmental approach, a basic theme is that the individual is a socialized organizer of his/her experiences who chooses occupations consistent with his/her self-concept (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Although all aspects of self-concept are needed to create an occupational identity, Oyserman and Markus (1990) suggest that the construct of possible selves may serve as an incentive for future behaviour. These authors state that:

Possible selves are conceptualized as the elements of the self-concept that represent the individual’s goals, motives, fears and anxieties. They give precise self-relevant form, meaning, and direction to these dynamics. They are specific and vivid senses, images or conceptions of one’s self in future states and circumstances and are viewed as essential elements in the motivational and goal-setting process (p. 113).

Possible selves represent the aspect of self-concept that individuals strive to become, could become or fear to become (Oyersman & Markus, 1990). According to Day, Borkowski, Dietmeyer, Howsepian and Saeng (1992), a well-developed possible self serves as a greater motivation than a vague one.

Day et al. (1992) highlight important assumptions regarding the development of possible selves in children. They point out that: (a) children are motivated by visions of themselves in future states but the more remote the end state, the less vivid the image of the possible self; (b) children may be aware of the concrete means to their goals; (c) the availability and salience of role models, as well as the expectations of significant others and the children’s own past

performances are important determinants of possible selves; and (d) development involves coming to terms with unreasonable possible selves, as well as extending one's knowledge of more plausible possible selves. (p.187-188).

Miller (1989) argued that self-awareness must be foremost in the area of career development during elementary school. Furthermore, such elements as decision-making or career awareness are meaningless without self-awareness. Thus, children must be exposed to career activities involving concepts of directions/guidelines, desire for explanation, feelings of autonomy and self-awareness.

Self-Concept Activities

In keeping with the goals of fostering career education and in attempting to foster the growth of a positive self-concept in our students, a variety of career awareness programs were developed. The following activities have been adapted from such programs (Careers Now! Making the Future Work, 1994). The activities highlight objectives such as the identification of personal interests, strengths, abilities and weaknesses and description of characteristics about the self as seen by others.

Self-Knowledge

Competency I: Knowledge of the importance of self-concept.

Activity #1

Describe positive characteristics about self as seen by self and others.

Title: Wow! Is that really me?

Purpose: Students help each other create a list of positive characteristics.

Grade: 3-6

Procedures:

1. As a group, brainstorm a list of positive characteristics and write them on the board. Some examples of positive characteristics may include helpful, funny, kind, happy, friendly, likes to share, honest, smart, good at sports, math.
2. Divide students into groups of two, give them each a large sheet of newsprint and have them find a space for themselves. Taking turns, have each students draw their partners' outline as he/she lies on the sheet of newsprint.
3. Once the tracing is completed, ask the students to fill in the outline with positive characteristics of each another. Students should write on their own as well as their partners' body outline. These could be phrases or one-word descriptors. Concentrate on attributes other than physical ones.
4. Students may also decorate their outlines before they are displayed on the wall. Discuss how these characteristics could help at home, school or work.
5. Display outlines on the classroom wall or outside in the hall.

Activity #2

Identify personal interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses.

Title: Picture Me

Purpose: Identifying students' interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses using a collage.

Grade: 3-8

Materials Needed: Old magazines, catalogues, newspaper, a sheet of bristle board, scissors, glue and photograph of each student.

Procedure:

1. At the beginning, allow students 5-10 minutes to think about their interests, abilities, strengths and weaknesses.
2. Distribute a half sheet of bristle board and place the collection of magazines in the center of the classroom.
3. Have students tape their photograph in the center of their bristle board. Next using the magazines and other material, have students find and cut out pictures or words describing their strengths, interests, weaknesses, etc., and glue them around the photograph. (Remind students that in a collage every part of the sheet must be covered with pictures).
4. Have each student present and explain his or her collage to the group.
5. Display them on a wall or bulletin board.

Although the acceptance of the self as a measurable construct has been a while in coming, it is now considered to be a critical component in mediating and negotiating an individual's behaviour. Markus & Wurf (1987) defined the self-structure as multidimensional and multifaceted in their descriptions of the types and sources of self. In particular, the literature of possible selves highlighted important information that can be employed by educators to assist children in their creation of an occupational identity. Having well-developed possible selves serve as strong motivation in a child pursuing a career based on that individual's skills, interests

and abilities.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Most areas of development influence, or are influenced by, human interaction. It is for this reason that many theorists deserve recognition when describing social development. While there has been much controversy surrounding Sigmund Freud's work, other theories were built on his studies. Erik Erikson, following the work of Freud, identifies eight stages in the human life cycle. Each stage involves a central developmental crisis that may impair or facilitate development depending on how the individual copes with the crisis (Good and Brophy, 1986).

Jean Piaget described how humans interact with and adapt to their environment using a process referred to as schema development. According to Piaget, all humans approach a situation with a set of schemes. He explained that depending on the situation, individuals might assimilate aspects into existing schemes or accommodate existing schemes to understand new or unique concepts. Piaget believed that the sequence of acquiring schemes is universal but that their rate and the forms they take depend on an individual's environment, maturity and social transmission (Good and Brophy, 1986).

Lawrence Kohlberg (1984) elaborated on Piaget's ideas and developed a stage theory of the development of moral judgment. He discussed three general levels of moral thinking with two stages at each level. According to Kohlberg, individuals begin with obedience to rules for fear of punishment and progress to abstract consideration of universal principles such as fairness, human dignity and justice.

Because of the obvious similarities among these theories, Ollhoff (1996) has extracted from these theories their shared focus of stages. He identifies The Four Stages of Childhood are: Stage 1 (ages 0-1); Stage 2 (ages 2-5); Stage 3 (ages 6-12); and Stage 4 (ages 13 and up).

Stage 1: Ages 0-1

Little attention is given to these years mainly because many theorists believe social development is almost non-existent. Piaget refers to this stage as the sensorimotor period, a time when the child is developing and co-ordinating behavioural skills rather than verbal or cognitive ones. Erikson identifies the issue of trust versus mistrust as the major crisis of infancy. Erikson believes that experiences during this dependent stage help to form basic dispositions toward others.

Stage 2: Ages 2-5

Stage 2 is the onset of the preoperational period. For Piaget, this stage is characterized by the development and retention of representations that allow learning to become more cumulative. This skill encourages more systematic reasoning and problem solving by reducing dependency on concrete experiences. Kohlberg suggests that individuals at this, what he labels, preconventional level, are highly egocentric and obedience is based on fear of punishment. For Erikson, this stage centers on the crisis of autonomy versus shame and doubt. There is a transition from being treated as a helpless infant to being treated as a child capable of exercising some self-control.

Stage 3: Ages 6-12

Piaget refers to this stage as the concrete operations period. Here, children can think logically but still depends on direct, concrete experiences to provide cues for thinking and

reasoning. During this period, Kohlberg believes children identify strongly with parents and authority figures and want to please them. Progressively their moral ideals become more generalized and they are motivated to maintain the social system as a whole. Erikson calls this stage industry versus inferiority. During this period, children are exposed to new roles and related role expectations outside of the family and home. For Erikson, mastery of such developmental tasks can lead to sense of industry and self-control.

Stage 4: Ages 13 and up

According to Piaget this stage is characterized by the development of the ability to think abstractly and comprehend material meaningfully with concrete experiences. Some theorists prefer to subdivide the formal operations period into two stages: preadolescents just entering the stage (transitional students) and older students who are already capable of abstract logical reasoning. Kohlberg argues that people who attain this what he terms as the final level of postconventional morality, develop an awareness that laws should be written to obtain the greatest good for the greatest number. Also, individuals have a belief in and sense of personal commitment to universal principles of justice, fairness and human dignity. Kohlberg feels that few persons ever reach this final stage. In adolescence and young adulthood, Erikson speaks of achieving a stable and satisfying sense of identity and direction. According to Erikson, adolescents who attain this goal tend to move more smoothly into adult occupational, spousal and parental roles.

While the ages of these fundamental changes may differ, there are certainly major themes found in all theories. These theorists provide an essential foundation for future research into different aspects of developmental growth and in particular an individual's social development.

Research has argued that such interpersonal relationships exert a strong influence on individual development throughout the life span. For example, children will view others as trustworthy and themselves as effective and worthy of love when they have experienced secure and responsive relationships. However, children who have insecure attachment relationships often have been exposed earlier to insensitive caregiving. As a result, they develop according to Bowlby a more negative view of themselves, others and the world in general (Lynch and Cicchetti, 1997).

In research with eight to ten year old children, Boivin and Hymel (1997) evaluated a social process model describing how social behaviours (aggression and withdrawal) and negative peer status and peer experiences lead to negative social self-perceptions. From their study it was found that "the impact of peer rejection and withdrawal on social self-perception appears to be mediated in part by actual negative experiences with peers" (p. 143). Although other intraindividual and interpersonal process might be involved, Boivin and Hymel (1997) argue that peer rejection is an indicator of maladjustment and a central factor in the child's concurrent social adjustment.

These internal perceptions and expectations (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993) influence the way in which children approach and handle social interactions. For those involved in the area of education, studies have found a link between these expectations and children's readiness for learning.

Aber and Allen (1987) characterize "secure readiness to learn" (p. 411) as the combined wish and ability to deal effectively with one's surroundings and establish positive relationships with adults. Successful secure experiences, while striving to attain this goal, will provide an

environment which will encourage cognitive competence, a positive attitude toward school, and thus more readiness to learn.

In comparing non-maltreated children versus children of insecure relationships, it was found that children of latter experience appeared less ready to learn (Aber & Allen, 1987). An overdependence on adults, lower motivation, and lower cognitive growth define this lack of readiness. Similarly, Harter (1990) has indicated that when compared to non-maltreated children, maltreated children exhibit increased academic, motivational, interpersonal and disciplinary problems in school.

In addition, children from socially disadvantaged families often exhibit irrational and stereotypical thinking, making it difficult to comprehend rules and regulations. Eventually this impedes them from relating to and being respected by peers and adults in schools (Kazdin & Johnson, 1994). Low self-esteem, social isolation or rejection, and poor self-control are examples of affective processes that reflect negatively on school performance (Grolnik & Ryan, 1990).

It can be logically argued that early affective and social processes are important in preparing children for school competence. Studies have demonstrated that there is a relationship between school-aged children's feelings of connectedness in and out of school. Furthermore, Connell points out that attributes of a positive attitude, active participation and cognitive flexibility characterize children engaged in school, whereas the opposite is true of children who are alienated in school (Lynch and Cicchetti, 1997).

There is a continued importance placed on teacher-child relationships for children's school-related adjustment and self-perceptions. Ryan and Grolnick (1986) reported that the

more the teacher was perceived as supportive and autonomy-oriented, the greater the child's feelings of self-worth, competence and intrinsic motivation to learn.

Similarly, Ryan, Stiller and Lynch (1994) examined early adolescent's representations of relationships to teachers, parents, and friends in relation to various measures of school adjustment, motivation and self-esteem. The findings demonstrated that students who feel more secure with and supported by parents and teachers also indicate a more positive attitude, greater sense of control and autonomy. In essence, these findings support the growing concept that schooling is an interpersonal as well as an academic institution. Now that there is widespread evidence supporting the need for childhood friendships and interactions, researchers are concentrating on teaching the social skills with which to form these relationships (Freeman & Arth, 1996; Lawhon, 1997; Sugai & Lewis, 1996).

According to Ollhoff (1996), the art of making friends is not instinctual or genetic but can be taught. Teaching children and youth to be socially competent is becoming a central theme within schools. Social competency can include such individual attributes as empathy, cooperativeness and a fairness or focus on observable behaviours such as saying "thank you", waiting one's turn, or raising one's hand when in need of help. Gresham (1986) defines social competence as "an evaluative term based on judgements and criteria that a person has performed a task adequately. These judgements may be based on opinions of significant others (parents, teachers), comparisons to explicit criteria (number of social tasks correctly performed in relation to some criterion), or comparisons to some normative sample" (P. 146).

Although it has been accepted that social competence came as a natural part of socialization process, research has been encouraging social skills teaching/training (Elias &

Weissberg, 1990; Lawhon, 1997; Oden & Asher, 1977; Shure & Spivak, 1980; Sugai & Lewis, 1996). Sugai and Lewis (1996) believe that social competence can be taught directly using social skill instructions. Students can perform actions (e.g., verbalizations, behavioural rehearsal) while teachers led the students through a process similar to teaching academic concepts. Using this method, students are led systematically toward specific, organized goals and objectives. This concept assumes that social and academic skills are acquired in much the same way.

Another social skills program (Oden & Asher, 1977) provided verbal instruction to elementary students on such topics as: participating in group activities, co-operating in play, communicating with and supporting peers. When measured a year later, the children on this program were found to exhibit the same positive behaviours.

Whether social skills are developed directly or indirectly, parents, teachers and significant others should provide an environment that promotes the development of social problem-solving skills, anger management sharing, appropriate expression of feelings, acceptance of others and friendly sociable behaviour. Such an environment will encourage children to develop and exhibit healthy, positive characteristics that will eventually lead to very satisfying relationships.

The following activities illustrate examples of the previous theory and research which argues that social competence can be taught using social skill instructions and related activities. These activities are designed for students, grades 4-6, but can be adapted to most grades.

Interpersonal Communication Activities

Competency II: Skills to interact with others

Activity #1

Demonstrate skills in resolving conflicts with peers and adults.

Title: Friends Again?

Purpose: Students will learn about assertive behaviour and identity behaviours as assertive, non-assertive, or aggressive.

Grade: 4-6

Materials: Drawing materials.

Procedure:

1. Introduce the concept of aggressive behaviour by asking for examples of when he/she or someone else pushed, screamed, slapped, or criticized to get what he/she wanted.
2. Introduce the concept of non-assertive behaviour by asking for examples of when he/she or someone else gave up, ran away, refused to give his/her opinion, went along with the group even though they felt it was not a good idea.
3. Introduce the concept of assertive behaviour by asking for examples of when he/she or someone else gave his/her opinion without hurting others, told the most popular group in school that you did not agree with his/her ideas.
4. Divide students into groups of two and have them role-play situations with either an aggressive, assertive or non-assertive behaviour. After each role-play the rest of the class can guess which of the three types is being acted out.

Possible role-play situations:

- ❖ Your friend borrowed your soccer ball and lost it.
- ❖ You are a new student at school and would like to join a group of kids playing tag.
- ❖ Your group has an assignment to complete and you seem to be doing all the work.
- ❖ The waiter has just brought you your meal and it tastes cold.

Activity #2

Demonstrate group membership skills.

Title: People Bingo

Purpose: Students collect information from others in a group and find out more about one another.

Grade: Can be adapted for any age.

Materials Needed: Pencils and bingo sheet

Procedure:

1. Distribute a People Bingo sheet and allow students a few minutes to complete it by writing their name in the boxes that apply to them.
2. Explain that they are playing a form of bingo, attempting to find classmates who match each of the boxes. Encourage the students to move around the classroom getting other individuals to sign the matching bingo box. Students can only use each other's name once.
3. The student calls out "bingo" when he or she has a classmate's name in every box.

4. Have the first bingo winner discuss their sheet. Discuss what boxes the other students needed signed.

It would seem that social development follows the same patterns as the other aspects of development. According to such theorists as Piaget, Kohlberg and Erikson, there are numerous stages in which critical attributes must be acquired in order to move on to the next developmental phase. The rate at which these stages are successfully attained depends upon the child and his or her environment. Research has shown that a child who is exposed to supportive, healthy relationships will exhibit increased academic, motivational and interpersonal success in and out of school.

Children learn by watching and imitating, and the development of social skills is no different. Therefore, teachers, parents and other adults should take every opportunity to model appropriate social behaviours of acceptance, co-operation and understanding. As children develop these skills, they need to be directed, sometimes redirected and guided towards healthy behaviour. It is from these skills that children will form and maintain healthy relationships through childhood and into adulthood.

Changing Gender Roles: Implications for Gender Stereotyping

Psychologists' interest in gender issues has varied over time. In the beginning there was some interest in gender as an aspect of career development, cited in the works of Hollingworth, but it did not become a widely used variable in psychological research until the mid-1960's. In particular, developmental psychologists have had an ongoing interest in such gender issues.

The idea that male and female children become “masculine” and “feminine” at an early age has been widely accepted. This process, referred to as sex typing, involves the acquisition of sex appropriate preferences, skills, personality attributes, behaviours and self-concepts (Bem, 1987).

Due to the continuous interest in the development of sex role behaviour, several theories have been advanced to explain this occurrence. The three most important theories have emerged from psychoanalytic, social learning and cognitive developmental approaches.

Psychoanalytic Theory

The oldest and probably most recognised of these sex-typing theories is psychoanalytic, which originates from Sigmund Freud. Freud believed that human behaviour could be explained through sexuality. His theory described five stages of development. These are oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital.

Freud proposed that males and females develop similarly through the first two stages but differ from each other during the phallic stage. During this stage children focus on their genitals. Boys suffer from a castration complex while girls feel inferior upon seeing the male penis, that is, penis envy. The problems created by this anxiety are somewhat resolved when the child identifies with the same-sex parent. It is the child's identification with the same-sex parent that serves as the primary avenue through which the child becomes sex-typed. According to Freud, this act of resolution is more complete for men than for women.

Although the psychoanalytic theory is probably the most recognized, there is very little empirical work to support it. Despite Freud's work regarding penis envy and castration anxiety, sex typing is not found to be determined by a child's discovery of genital sex differences or

identification of same-sex parents (Jacklin, 1989),

Social Learning Theory

According to the social learning theory, the development of gender roles follows the very same general principles of learning that guide the development of other socialized behaviours. This theory emphasizes the rewards and punishments that children receive for sex-appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. However, Mischel proposed that these sets of behaviours are not the same for girls and boys (Jacklin, 1989). Children are also believed to imitate models of the same sex. Gottfredson (1981) contends that because a child's thought processes are predominately concrete, he/she focuses on the most visible cues of sex role, such as observable behaviour and clothing. His/her models may include parents, other children, other adults or even characters from print or visual media. Social learning theory views the child as a passive recipient of cultural factors rather than as an active participant in organizing and understanding his or her social world. This belief is inconsistent with numerous observations that children often create and strengthen their own account of society's gender rules.

Cognitive-Developmental Theory

In contrast to social learning theory, cognitive-developmental theory focuses on the child as the primary agent of his or her own sex-role socialization and assumes that sex typing naturally emerges from principles of cognitive development (Bem, 1987).

Cognitive developmental descriptions of gender-related behaviour was outlined by Kohlberg (1966). The basic assumption is that children cannot understand generalized concepts such as their own sex and gender-role expectations until their cognitive abilities develop to a level at which they can understand the constancy of gender. Proponents of cognitive-

developmental theory readily agree that young children will naturally develop a gender-based self-concept and value system even without external pressure to behave in a sex stereotyped manner (Bem, 1982)

There also exists research that disconfirms cognitive-developmental theory. It has been demonstrated for example, that children have knowledge regarding their own sex-appropriate behaviours and attitudes well before the age Kohlberg states they acquire gender constancy (Jacklin, 1989).

Gender Schema Theory

More recently, a fourth theory of sex typing combining features of social learning theory and cognitive developmental theory was introduced- namely gender schema theory (Bem, 1981). Similar to cognitive-developmental theory, gender schema theory suggests that sex typing is mediated by the child's own cognitive processing. Like social learning theory, gender schema theory maintains that sex typing is learned and, thus inevitable and unmodifiable. More specifically, gender schema theory suggests that sex typing, in part, results from a child's readiness to process information in terms of a growing gender schema. This program is entitled, gender schematic processing.

A schema is defined as a set of ideas that helps an individual organize information. Thus, gender schemas are said to develop from all the diverse information an individual receives that relates to issues of gender. This information may consist of modes of behaviour, properties of objects, attitudes and feeling, for example, placing traits such as "affectionate" and "meek" into a feminine category and traits like "rugged" and "strong" into a masculine category.

Another aspect of the gender schema theory is the belief that children's self-concepts become sex-typed. According to Bem (1981), as children learn about their culture's gender schema, they also learn what attributes are to be linked to their own sex and that these qualities themselves are differentially applicable to the two sexes. Adults rarely describe a little girl as "handsome" or a little boy as "sensitive". Children, in turn, apply the same schematic selectivity to themselves resulting in self-concepts that are sex-typed and behaviours that adhere to society's definitions of femininity and masculinity.

Markus, Crane, Bernstein and Siladi (1982) examined information-processing consequences of self-schemas about gender. Their studies revealed that individuals identified as 'feminine schematics' remembered more feminine than masculine attributes, endorsed more feminine qualities, and were able to provide more examples of past feminine behaviour than masculine behaviour.

A similar pattern of results was found for masculine stimuli for those individuals identified as 'masculine schematics.' However, in contrast to masculine and feminine schematics, androgynous individuals did not differentiate in their processing of masculine and feminine attributes. Furthermore, androgynous subjects were viewed as aschematic, that is, having little or no self-knowledge structures regarding masculine or feminine concepts, qualities and features. Overall, these findings suggest that important differences do exist in how individuals organize gender-relevant knowledge and in how it is integrated into the self-concept.

In other research, the relationship between sex role identity and psychological well being was examined. Allgood-Merten and Stockard (1991) investigated the relationship between traditional masculine traits (self-efficacy) and feminine traits (relationality) and self-esteem in

fourth graders and high school students. Based on previous evidence, self-esteem was used as an indicator of psychological well-being. While both self-efficacy and relationality were associated with self-esteem for both sexes in the fourth graders, results from the sample of adolescents indicate that only self-efficacy (masculinity) is generally associated with self-esteem.

Only one group of androgynous males reported an association between relationality (femininity) and self-esteem in adolescence. In contrast among the brighter high school girls, there was no association of feminine attributes with self-esteem. These findings suggest that as children, feminine traits have importance but that they lose value, as they become adolescents. This obvious depreciation of those attributes that are feminine makes it very difficult for bright ambitious women to feel good about themselves.

The literature presented suggests that gender stereotypes still exist in society, usually portraying the male as the dominant person and females as subordinate and confined to the home. To avoid limiting many boys and girls to less than full lives because of their gender roles, change must occur. Changes are needed in the way the media, teachers, parents and society view gender issues.

In order to promote change we must first address the question, "Is children's gender-typed behaviour modifiable and flexible?" The literature yields differing conclusions regarding this issue. Some studies have reported increased flexibility in adolescence relative to childhood (Carter & Patterson, 1982; Katz & Ksiansnak, 1994). On the other hand researchers have argued that gender stereotyping flexibility decreases as a child becomes an adolescent. (Galambos, Almeida & Petersen, 1990; Stoddart & Turiel, 1985).

Although several explanations can be suggested for these inconsistent findings, Alfieri, Ruble and Higgins (1996) identify two possible reasons. First, the age, which represents the stage of adolescence, varies widely. Some studies refer to high school ages (9th - 12th grades) while others investigate late elementary or junior high school ages (7th - 8th grades). Another possible reason may be the exclusion of the examination of other changes during adolescence that may lead to an increase or decrease in flexibility.

In their study, Alfieri et al., (1996) helped resolve previous inconsistencies found in the literature by proposing when and why changes in gender flexibility versus rigidity occur during adolescence. These authors measured the flexibility of gender stereotypes in adolescents in Grades 4 to Grade 11. The results revealed increases in flexibility were present after a change in an individual's social environment, that is, the transition to junior high school. However, stereotype flexibility then decreased during middle and late adolescence. Thus, this time of transition associated with relatively high gender stereotype flexibility provides an opportunity to foster the notion of equality between the sexes. Parents, teachers, school counsellors, and other adults can provide information during this social life transition to reduce sexism and gender stereotyping.

As the importance of gender-role flexibility becomes more apparent we must now consider the conditions that can facilitate the change of gender-typed behaviour. Despite limited research regarding this question, different factors have been found to contribute to the success of counterstereotyping measures.

Katz and Walsh (1991) conducted two studies of 8 - 11 year old children that explored factors related to willingness to demonstrate gender-atraditional tasks. The first factor is the

developmental level of the child. Katz and Walsh (1991) found older elementary children to have greater cognitive flexibility with regard to gender, and older elementary boys, in particular, had more stereotyped preferences. Neither pre-existing preferences nor level of cognitive flexibility were highly predictive of the performance of gender-atraditional behaviour.

A second factor involves the effectiveness of a variety of modification techniques. First, children who observed atraditional models receiving positive reinforcement were more willing to perform similar tasks. Thus, attempts to modify targeted behaviour without positive consequences may be unsuccessful. Second, peer reinforcers were more effective with younger children and on child-oriented tasks, whereas adult reinforcers were more effective with older children on adult-oriented tasks. The most consistent result to unfold was that male examiners evoked the most atraditional behaviour from children. Katz and Walsh (1991) explain that these findings may reflect higher demand characteristics displayed by male examiners and parental sex-typing patterns in which the father plays a more significant role than the mother. Therefore, if males are seen as more influential in gender socialization, a male adult who encourages gender-atraditional behaviour may validate it.

Home and School as Gender-Role Influences

Gender role socialization and development are moulded by numerous individuals in assorted environments that include parents, teachers and peers at home, in school and at play.

Research (Langlois & Downs, 1980; Rheinhold & Cook, 1975), has shown that parents not only provide different toys and furnishings for their sons and daughters, but tend to reward gender-typical play and punish gender-atypical play. Rheinhold and Cook (1975), for example,

found more vehicles, sports equipment, toy animals, machines in rooms belonging to preschool boys and more dolls and doll houses in the rooms of preschool girls.

Gender role socialization of children occurs in school also. According to Flynn and Chambers (1994), teachers contribute to gender inequality in four critical ways. First, teachers reinforce traditional male and female roles and prevent development of a mutual understanding through gender segregation. They separate boys and girls when sitting, forming lines and performing classroom tasks. As well, teachers continue to have different academic expectations for boys and girls. Teachers often encourage and expect boys to excel in math and science, leading the girls to doubt their abilities in these areas. Finally, teachers, unknowingly, tend to interact with boys and girls differently. Boys receive more direct instructional time, praise, criticism and counselling. Girls, on the other hand, experience less contact, less praise and less constructive feedback.

Peers exert a powerful influence on gender-role development also. Maccoby (1988) has suggested children's growing preference to play with same-sex children may be due to different play styles in each gender group. Boys' interactions appear to be more dominant whereas girls' interactions are more gracious and polite. It appears girls behaving in this manner have little influence over boys and thus, children quickly learn that the masculine style is what is needed.

In another study regarding children's judgements of peers, McAninch, Milich, Crumbo and Funtowicz (1996) found that girls who behaved in a masculine stereotypical manner were judged to be competent by both sexes. In addition to receiving the highest rating, female peers also rated the "masculine" girl as bossiest.

Despite universal and important changes in our society, these findings suggest children of the present generation are still responding to peers in some gender-stereotyped ways and girls may continue to be viewed negatively when they behave in a masculine manner. Since schools are a part of society at large, interventions that attempt to change attitudes toward gender stereotypes and behaviour must emerge through school personnel and programs.

Teachers' Role in Gender Socialization

Career planning is one of the most critical components in forming the future work force and can no longer be put into the lap of the school counsellor. (Hosler, 1994). Every classroom teacher must be willing to begin this process starting at the elementary level. This wholistic approach to career education will eventually lead students to an informed selection of potential occupational alternatives. In particular, females will experience a school system from kindergarten through Level III knowledgeable in ways to gain equitable, successful employment.

In her article, Hosler (1994) describes various activities a teacher can do to provide an environment that fosters equal opportunity despite gender. Beginning at the elementary level, students should be made to learn about their personal likes and dislikes and the various occupations. For example, a "career day" can be organized in which different occupations, particularly non-traditional roles, are represented by men and women working in these careers. The adults can discuss their occupations with the children. Content in their school texts that stereotype gender can be discussed with the children. Where at all possible, toys, stories, and games should be free of stereotypes of what is expected of boys or girls.

At the middle school level, students are beginning to comprehend how their occupational alternatives are affected by their personal and social choices. Students can actively look for examples of stereotyping on television, in magazines or newspapers and discuss how such stereotyping affects their career goals. At this level students may also benefit from mentors, particularly those who represent non-traditional careers.

Within the classroom, at all levels, teachers need to discuss the fact that boys and girls are equal partners in all environments. Cooperation rather than competition must be encouraged with males and females working together. Hosler (1994) invites teachers to serve as role models for non-sexist behaviour and language, in or out of the classroom. The goal of such a career program is to encourage all students to seek careers that are not based on gender, but on personal skills, interests, and abilities.

As pointed out in the literature, gender stereotyping still exists in society and in the education system in particular. General suggestions for teachers have been highlighted to address these gender issues and how educators can increase educational and eventually occupational choices for both sexes. The success of such an initiative will be more likely if it has its beginning at the elementary level. The following activities have been adapted for the elementary grades. These activities encourage students' awareness of different occupations and changing male/female roles.

Career Exploration Activities

Competency XI: Awareness of different occupations and changing male/female roles.

Activity #1

Describe the changing life roles of men and women in work and family.

Title: The Jobs of Mom and Dad

Purpose: Students role-play traditional and non-traditional scenes and discuss how they have changed.

Grade: 4 – 7.

Material: None

In order to give the students ideas from which to use in their role-play, allow 10-15 minutes at the beginning for a brainstorming session of jobs their parents perform at work and home.

Procedure:

1. Using the list from the brainstorming session, ask the class to label each job as traditionally done by women, traditionally done by men or done equally by both.
2. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4, with boys and girls in each group, and have them role play a traditional scene. For example, mother as a homemaker while the father works outside the home maybe in an office.
3. After the role playing, discuss how these traditions are changing and how males and females are choosing non-traditional careers.
4. Have the students go back into their groups and repeat their role-plays but this time boys and girls will reverse their previous roles. That is the students will act out non-traditional roles.

5. Discuss class reactions.
6. Ask the students if there are there any jobs, which can be done by only one gender?

Activity #2

Describe how contributions of individuals both inside and outside the home are important.

Title: Help Wanted

Purpose: Students gain an appreciation for the contributions of family members who care for them.

Grade: 4 – 6

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. Write the word "homemaker" on the chalkboard or flip chart. Using a web, outline the students' ideas of what they believe a homemaker does.
2. Ask the students to identify what family members do what chores.
3. Have the students interview members of their family to find out what they do in and out of the home.
4. Have the students share their interviews with the rest of the class.
5. Discuss class reactions.

With parents' help, have the students choose a chore at home to complete for the whole week. At the end of the week, have students write about their feelings regarding their contribution as a family member.

There is considerable evidence that suggests that gender-role stereotyping begins quite early and is shaped by numerous sources including families, friends, teachers, books and movies. The process of gender-role acquisition has been explained through four dominant theories within psychology with gender schema theory being the most recent. Despite assumptions by such theories that sex typing is inevitable and unmodifiable, the literature has proven otherwise. Educators of children and adolescents need to be aware of the negative impact of gender stereotyping on both sexes. The students' gender stereotypes are shown to limit their future decisions regarding various aspects of their lives, including choice of profession and career development. Eliminating gender inequalities in school will require a sincere effort by teachers. Teachers need to be alert to the research that states male students receive more attention in the form of instruction, praise and support for their academic potential. Females must be given an equal amount of support. As the work force becomes more competitive across nations, the best person, not gender, for the job is a necessity. Thus, school systems need to be committed to an educational environment that fosters equality between sexes in preparation for these opportunities. However, when the messages transmitted to students are not consistent with messages relayed in society, their influence is limited. Furthermore, intervention programs at schools are only successful if they are a part of a more comprehensive program, i.e., society.

Conclusion

Although numerous career competencies for the elementary student were delineated, the significant influence of self-concept, peer and adult relationships, and gender typing on the development of an individual's occupational identity cannot be denied. Well-developed possible

selves serve as strong motivators for children to pursue occupations based on their skills, interests and abilities. Most areas of development influence or are influenced by human interaction. For example, people use social comparison and interaction to receive information about themselves (Markus & Wurf, 1987). The literature indicates that too often parents, teachers, school counsellors, and other adults unwittingly provide information to sustain sexism and gender stereotyping, resulting in the development of stereotypical attitudes in our youth. Fortunately, the evidence has proven that children's attitudes are flexible and modifiable up to a point.

Educators of children and adolescents need to be aware of the negative impact of gender stereotyping on both sexes. Eliminating gender inequalities in school will require a sincere effort by teachers, school counsellors, and school principals. Teachers, in particular, need to be alert to the research that states male students receive more attention in the form of instruction, praise and support for their academic potential. Females must be given an equal amount of support for their aspirations and feedback regarding their abilities. However, when the messages transmitted to students are not consistent with messages relayed in society, their influence is limited. Therefore, intervention programs at schools are only successful if they are a part of a more comprehensive program, i.e., society.

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Paper #3

Self-Concept: An Important Construct in an Occupational Identity

Rationale

Self – concept is viewed as the totality of thoughts and feelings individuals have with reference to themselves as objects (Markus, Cross, and Wurf, 1987). These authors propose that the self – concept contains representations of different aspects of the self, such as appearance, temperament, special abilities, achievements, and preferences. Markus (1997) states that attempts to organize, summarize, and explain ones' own behaviour, for example industriousness or friendliness, results in the formation of cognitive structures about the self or self-schemata. These self-schemata are derived from past experiences and work to process any self-related information contained in the individuals' social experiences. These established schemata are then used to determine what information is attended to, how important it is, and eventually what happens to this information.

The Blueprint for Life/Work Design 2000 highlighted building and maintaining a positive self-concept as the first level to be addressed in the career competency hierarchy for elementary career education. Similarly, Miller (1989) stressed self-awareness as the initial stage of career development in elementary schools. He argued that without self-awareness other levels of career development, such as occupational awareness and decision-making, become meaningless. Thus, the construct of self-concept should be examined closely in order to understand its role in the development of an individual's occupational identity.

The third and final paper of this series examines selected literature, past and present, on

self-concept. The introduction of the self-concept as a measurable construct, the aspects of self-concept, and how to encourage a positive self-concept are some of the topics that will be discussed in detail in the following paper.

Introduction

At the turn of the century the notion of self was first introduced by such theorists as William James, James Mark Baldwin and George Mead (cited in Oosterwegel & Oppheimer, 1993). Oosterwegel and Oppheimer provide a summary of these theorists' work, emphasizing their interconnections.

For James, the self had a dual nature: the "I" or self as the knower or subject and the "Me" or self as the object of thought. James concentrated on the "Me" believing the empirical study of "I" was not possible. James also believed that the "Me" self contained an actual and a potential version.

Mead took James' idea about the "Me" self as object, a step further. He stated that in order to view the self as object, individuals need to build a model of self from others' perspectives. Thus, according to Mead, the self is basically a social structure and it is shaped by social experiences. An individual cannot experience his or herself directly but forms a model of him or herself indirectly from the opinions of his/her social group.

Bretherton (1991) believes that Baldwin went beyond James and Mead by emphasizing the individual's own active role in acquiring a sense of self. Baldwin regarded the self (person) as a product of an influential relationship between the individual and the environment that allows the individual to assimilate new experiences into already available "me" copies or self-

schemata. What these theories demonstrate is a common vision of the self as a multidimensional, dynamic construct and, consequently, the self can be studied and explained from a wide and diverse range of perspectives.

A broad range of theoretical perspectives have shaped the psychological study of self. Learning theorists such as Albert Bandura (1977) emphasized the concept of self-efficacy and how this component determines an individual's initiation and persistence of behavioural performance. Psychodynamic and psychosocial theories such as those of Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson have studied the development of the self within a hierarchical series of stages involving central crises. Even sociologists have demonstrated an interest in the self as it is shaped in its social environment.

In an attempt to organize such diverse theoretical approaches to the study of self, Connell and Wellborn (1991) briefly discuss the understanding of self within three areas: social, motivational and cognitive psychology.

Social Approaches to the Study of Self

The approaches of social psychology and sociology both emphasize the role of the social environment within which the self develops. Although early behaviourists such as B. F. Skinner explained self-development with the context of such social factors as reinforcement and praise, this view soon gave way to the inclusion of an important concept known as self-perception. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy and Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control were significant contributions. Essentially, these social theorists identified the source of these self-perceptions as the pattern of socially administered rewards and punishments. Theorists such as Bowlby (1982) and Boivin and Hymel (1997) argued that an individual's "caretaking" environment is primarily

responsible for the person's developing sense of self.

Motivational Approaches

Proponents of these approaches identify emotional processes, biological drives and psychological needs as central in the shaping of the self. Freud proposed that one's sense of self, that he referred to as "ego", emerges out of the relationship between the urge of biological needs and the limitations of the external world. Erikson blended many of Freud's basic ideas with social expectations. In Erikson, an individual's development is facilitated or impaired, depending on the person's success in solving specific crises. Finally, Maslow (1970) links the development of self to psychological needs. According to Maslow, self-actualization is attained through the satisfaction of a hierarchical organization of biological drives and psychological needs.

Cognitive Approaches

Cognitive approaches view the developing person as a knower of self, as a constructor and processor of information. The focus of information processing and action theory approaches is goals and how these goals translate into cognitive strategies and are regulated by behavioural and cognitive outcomes. Structural approaches study developmental change in the way self-knowledge is organized. For example, Damon and Hart (1986), describe the developmental progression of children's self-understanding. As well, Markus and her colleagues (Markus, 1977; Markus and Wurf, 1987), drawing on research in social psychology, examine how the self develops. They discuss the content and structure of and processes mediated by the self-concept. Because of Markus and her colleagues' significant contribution to the study of self, their research will be discussed in greater detail throughout this paper.

The unifying assumption of recent literature on the self is that the self-concept is an active, dynamic construct which not only reflects ongoing behaviour but also “mediates and regulates” this behaviour (Markus and Wurf, 1987; Rosenberg, 1979). Within this current view, many psychologists and sociologists agree that the self-concept is best defined as a multifaceted structure despite descriptions of hierarchies, networks, schemas, goals or tasks.

The self-representations that comprise the self are diverse. Some are positive, some negative; some refer to the individual’s present experience while others involve past or future experiences. Some are more critical and more supported by behavioural evidence. Some representations describe the actual self, or what the self could be, should be, would be, or is fearful of becoming (Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Markus & Wurf (1987), in their social psychology review of self-concept, examine the following aspects of self-representations: They suggest that (a) Core conceptions are most important to the individual and are believed to have the most powerful effect on behaviour and information processing; (b) Possible selves represent the selves one would like to be or is fearful of becoming. These selves act as incentives for behaviour and provide a context for evaluating and understanding the actual self. The authors further explain that a discrepancy between any two of these self-concepts can result in a state of discomfort; and (c) that the working self-concept is that subset of representations which is comprised of an array of self-knowledge continuously accessible to the individuals at any given time.

Sources of Self-Representations

Sources of an individual’s self-representations are varied. Some self-representation are

shaped by inferences that individuals make about their attitudes, emotions, motivations and character (Harter, 1986). As well, Trope pointed out that representations of the self can result from direct attempts at self-assessment (Markus and Wurf, 1987). Individuals also use social comparisons and direct interactions to receive information about themselves. As children grow older they become more apt at using social comparison to evaluate themselves. According to Markus and Wurf (1987), both the information individuals receive about the self through such sources and how they process self-conceptions influences the growth of self-structures.

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Processes

The importance of the self-system has been demonstrated with the identification of critical intrapersonal and interpersonal, processes mediated by the self-concept. These are reviewed by Markus and Wurf (1987). The intrapersonal functions include: (a) providing the person with a sense of continuity in space and time, (b) integrating and organizing self-relevant experiences, (c) regulating affective states, and (d) representing a source of incentive or motivation. The first resembles one having a 'story' or 'narrative' that integrates a person's diverse experiences. An individual then attaches his/her present group of life experiences to this narrative, revising it when necessary.

The research on information-processing provides important literature regarding the function of integrating and organizing self-relevant experiences. Markus and Wurf (1987), in their brief summary of the extensive reviews, conclude that individuals are more sensitive to and demonstrate greater recall and recognition for self-relevant stimuli. Moreover, self-congruent stimuli are efficiently processed whereas information incongruent with the self is rejected.

The regulation of affect is viewed as one of the most crucial interpersonal functions of the self-concept. This concept involves defending the self against negative emotional states by enhancing and promoting the self whenever possible. When an individual's self-concept is challenged his/her affective state is disturbed. To regulate his/her affect the individual may transfer into the working self-concept positive conceptions that are consistent with previous views of self (Markus & Kunda, 1986), or interact with others who are supportive of one's prevailing view of self (Swan & Hill, 1982).

Another important function of the self is providing a source of incentive and motivation. Theorists have attempted to view motivation directly in terms of self-conceptions. Markus' and Nurius' (1986) conception of possible selves is one such approach. Possible selves are cognitive representations of a person's goals, aspirations, and fears and serve a motivational function, because an individual strives to achieve his/her positive or desirable selves. The perceived potentials presented by possible selves are critical in regulating behaviour.

Although these conceptualizations of possible selves help us to understand that behaviours consistent with their desirable selves will be chosen, they provide little information on *how* these future images of the self will facilitate in producing such action.

Cross and Markus (1990) extend William James' notion regarding the operation of will with recent research relevant to this question. They suggest two methods in which possible selves motivate action: (a) possible selves work to enable the individual to attend or focus on the intended action; and (b) possible selves allow the person to simulate or imagine the necessary behaviours or actions needed to accomplish that desired state. Once the individual holds fast the desired end state in memory, the necessary action needed to achieve this desired state, unless

blocked in some way would naturally begin. This focussing may also suppress or ignore conflicting or distracting ideas. Such attempts to control one's own thinking is most effective when the goal is self-relevant or involves the possible self. In support of James, Cross and Markus (1990) propose that the representations of the desired actions and the plans that form a bridge between the representations actual and possible selves are not separate from overt behaviour.

Several authors cited in the review by Markus and Cross (1990) reveal a connection between envisioning an intended action and performance of that action. Thus, it follows that the people who imagined themselves driving a new car would be more likely to purchase a vehicle than those who simply watched promotional ads on television. These underlying connections between mental and physical events imply that the more precisely an individual can mentally simulate a desired behaviour, the more likely that action will be achieved.

As the individual attempts to realize personally-motivated behaviour, he or she is influenced by social interactions. Other people often serve as the means for attaining one's goals and therefore people both shape and are shaped by their social interactions. An individual can interpret and regulate his/her social experiences through the self-concept. Markus and Wurf (1987) highlight four interpersonal processes that are influenced by the self-concept. They include: (a) social perception, (b) selection of situations and interaction peers, (c) interaction strategies, and (d) reactions to feedback.

The first function, social perception, indicates that an individual is more likely to use the self as a basis for judging others when he/she is more focussed on the self and have more information about the self, than the other. Another function, interaction strategies, focuses on

the strategies a person employs to shape a specific identity in the mind of his or her audience during an interaction aimed at fulfilling possible motives. An identity is an image of the self that an individual tries to reveal to others. Different goals or motives for social interactions are inspired depending on the type of audience. An external audience may lead the person to desire approval, social power, influence and attention. Attributes of predictability and consistency may be the focus with an internal audience.

The last function, reaction to feedback, involves an individual's response to reactions of others and to his or her own behaviour. This feedback may be congruent or incongruent with actual or possible self-images. An individual prefers congruent, positive feedback and, therefore when feedback is incongruent with self-conceptions, he or she may cognitively reconcile the discrepancy, act against it, or act in accordance with it (Swan & Hill, 1982).

Developmental Perspective of Self-Representations

Considering a developmental approach that describes the changing nature of self-representations at different ages across the life span can further enhance our understanding of the functions of self-representations and their links to career development. There are increasing examples of research identifying self-representations as developmental in nature (Damon & Hart, 1986; Harter, 1990; Rosenberg, 1979). The evidence indicates a movement from concrete descriptions of one's behavioural and social exterior to a more abstract explanation of one's psychological interior. Harter (1990) analyzes the changing nature of self-representations within the framework of Piaget's stages.

During the preoperational period, the young child can only give specific examples that

describe observable behaviours or characteristics about the self. For example, *I have blue eyes* or *I love ice cream* or *I am a girl*. Middle childhood introduces concrete operations that entail a shift from observable characteristics to those that are more conceptual or trait-like. Such trait labels as *pretty* and *popular* represent the ability to organize particular qualities into higher order generalizations about the self. Finally, adolescents upon reaching the formal operational stage can now integrate labels into higher order abstractions about the self. One's psychological interior is now represented in the form of beliefs, wishes, emotions and motives. Harter (1990) cautions that although this ability to think abstractly represents cognitive advancement, it may also introduce distortion of one's self-representations that is typical for the period of adolescence.

The bases on which self-judgements are founded also depend upon one's developmental level. Damon and Hart (1986) identify four developmental levels or dimensions on which self-representations are formed. Level 1 occurs with young children who view the self in terms of physical activities and features such as group membership and basic thoughts and feelings. In middle to late childhood (Level 2), the self is considered in comparison to others or to social standards. In early adolescence (Level 3), there is a shift of focus to interpersonal characteristics such as social skills and personality. Level 4 (late adolescence) is defined by the ability to define the self according to belief systems, personal philosophy and moral standards.

Damon and Hart (1986) in their longitudinal study of age-related changes in children's self-understanding concluded that self-concept develops in an orderly, predictable pattern during the ages of four to eighteen. These changes in the levels of self-understanding are gradual and almost always result in children attaining the highest level. However, they caution confusing this

stability with “absolute behavioural constancy” that they believe is non-existent over the course of development. That is, there is always a gradual increase in individuals’ reasoning capabilities as they enter into the next stage.

Implications for the Understanding and Treatment of Maladaptive Behaviour

With the emergence of formal operations in adolescence comes the ability to think about the potential self. Thus, during adolescence self-representations encompass references to possible selves, including both positive and negative depictions of what they may become (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

In their research Markus and Nurius (1986) suggested that a balance between both positive, desired selves and negative, feared selves within a particular realm is most beneficial. As a result, the positive selves can give direction toward desired future states and negative potential selves can outline what is to be avoided. Oyserman and Markus (1990) applied this argument to a study of 238 youths between the ages of 13-16 who varied in the degree of their delinquency. They found that the nondelinquent youths were more likely to demonstrate a balance between their expectations and fears than the delinquent youth. When given the opportunity to describe their own expected and feared possible selves, the more delinquent youth claimed “depressed,” “alone,” or “a junkie” as expected selves and “being involved with crime or drugs” as feared selves.

Oyserman and Markus (1990) propose two important consequences when a balance between expected and feared selves is non-existent. First, the positive influence of feared selves on an individual’s behaviour is reduced. Unable to counter that negative image, the individual

may be less motivated to avoid delinquent behaviour. Drugs or further delinquent activity, as temporary relief from feared selves, may more readily influence these youths. Secondly, without this balance, individuals may drift from the pursuit of one desired possible self to another making it difficult to choose among them at any point in time. These findings provide further evidence that self-representations play a crucial role in motivating delinquent behavioural outcomes.

Because the evidence shows the important role of possible selves as incentives for future behaviour and that an imbalance between expected and feared selves can result in delinquent behaviour it seems appropriate to address the issue of intervention with these youths. Harter (1990) takes a developmental approach in addressing the issue of intervention as well. Harter proposes that because a young child is not capable of understanding the components of self-representations and their causal links, attempts to instill a realistic concept of self will be ineffective. However, parents, teachers and other adults can encourage a young child's positive self-perceptions and provide support to change the negative ones.

During middle childhood we see the emergence of the ability to evaluate the self more realistically within a social context. However, children at this age appear unaware of the connections between the self-components and are unable to engage in introspection. As a result, conflicts are externalized and they look to the environment for a solution. Thus, therapeutic efforts should be aimed toward the determinants of the child's self-representations, many of which are external. Harter (1990) identifies competence in domains viewed as important and social support or positive regard from significant others as two critical determinants at this age. Therefore, two possible interventions are fostering remedial strategies to enhance the child's

competence level or assisting the child in those areas in which he/she is inadequate. Since self worth is also dependent upon social support from significant others, altering a parent's unrealistically negative attitude of the child will be beneficial as well. An alternative strategy may involve helping the child move to a different source of support where he/she may receive more regard.

Because the period of adolescence often brings a shift toward self-reflection, interventions created to directly address self-representations and links between constructs are more likely to be effective. Because, these self-reflections are likely to be somewhat unrealistic or inaccurate, in therapeutic interventions with adolescents it is important to realize that while they may talk openly about themselves, these self-representations may not be realistic. Helping the adolescents to ground in self-perceptions will be a specific focus of insight, as well as more behaviourally oriented treatment. Harter (1990) concludes that these lower levels of self-development may assist in identifying those issues that are most problematic or conflictual. Once these conflicts have been resolved an individual can then begin balancing his/her positive and feared, negative self. As a result of this balance, the positive self can serve as a guide toward an individual's desired future occupational self or identity.

Importance of Self-Concept to Career Development

Significant to the field of career development is the work of Donald Super (1980, 1988, and 1990). Super, in his research, identified what he deemed to be an innate or natural relationship between career development and personal development. Super (1990) refers to his work as a loosely unified set of theories dealing with particular aspects of career development

taken from developmental, differential, social and phenomenological psychology held together by self-concept or personal-construct theory.

According to Super's life span approach, an individual's occupational preferences, competencies, and hence, self-concept change with time and experience. He summarizes this process of change over a series of life stages referred to as growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. As the individual develops and matures, he or she acquires a mental picture of self, that is, self-concept. During the educational period, before entering into the work force, one's anticipated occupational role plays a part in the development of self-concept. During early childhood an individual's expressed occupational choices are often unrealistic and closely linked to their play life. For example, a young child may choose careers such as cowboy, movie star, and pro-athlete. Eventually, the list of occupational choices is narrowed to those careers the individual feels are within reach. Furthermore, in his/her attempt to maintain or improve a favourable self-concept, the individual chooses activities that will assist the attainment of this goal. As the individual gains experience and hones his or her skills, aspects of this occupation are integrated into the self-concept, stabilizing the individual. In some cases the individual may attempt to improve the occupational situation. However, restricting factors from personal limitations or external environment may be encountered. Fortunately, because the occupation and the individual's self-concept have some fluidity, change or adjustment can occur.

Super (1988) states that the development of self-concept through these life stages can be guided and facilitated by the home, neighbourhood, church and school. Because of their frequent interactions with the child, parents, teachers, counsellors and significant others have the best opportunity to observe static or underdeveloped abilities. They can then use these chances

to challenge the individual to push toward higher but reachable goals.

According to Super, the degree of satisfaction people attain from work is proportional to the degree to which they have been able to implement self-concepts. That is, the amount of satisfaction is directly related to the extent that the job fits the self-concept. Essentially, Super demonstrates that the individual is a reflection of his job or major role.

Although all components of the self-concept are important to forming an occupational identity, the concept of possible selves, according to Markus and Nurius (1986), may be crucial to the development of a career identity. They suggest, "... all of these ideas about what is possible for us to be, to think, to feel or to experience provide a direction and impetus for action, change, and development. Possible selves give specific cognitive form to our desires for mastery, power or affiliation, and to our diffuse fears of failure and incompetence" (p. 960).

Day, Borkowski, Dietmeyer, Howsepian and Saeng (1992) highlight several ideas regarding the development of possible selves in children: They state that "(a) children are motivated by visions of themselves in future states but the more remote the end state, the less vivid the image of the possible self; (b) children may be aware of an expected end state with its resulting consequences and affective responses but may not be aware of the concrete means to their goals; (c) the availability and salience of role models, as well as the expectations of significant others and the children's own past performance, are important determinants of possible selves; and (d) development involves coming to terms with unreasonable possible selves, as well as extending one's knowledge of more plausible possible selves.

It is from such assumptions that we begin to understand the critical role of the home and school in the development of a child's self-concept. The reactions and interactions of significant

others indicate to the child whether he or she is liked/disliked, accepted/rejected, successful/unsuccessful. If people who are important to the child consider him or her to be competent in a particular skill then the child will develop a positive possible self in that domain. Parents and teachers, in particular, need to encourage and guide well-developed possible selves so that a child can feel comfortable in pursuing a career based on their diverse skills, interests and abilities.

The Influence of Parents on Self-Concept

Literature (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Saracho, 1980; Super, 1990) has shown that self-concept begins to develop from early experiences within the family, especially with the prime caregiver. From an early age, the child senses his or her competence in activities that are valued by the people important to him/her, and through this the child senses his or her value as an individual. Because parents are the prime significant others in a child's life, they play a critical role in shaping their child's self-concept.

McDonald (1980), in her discussion of enhancing a child's positive self-concept, highlighted several guidelines to achieve this goal. The first guideline for parents is to recognize, respect, and encourage individual differences. Parents need to be aware of and accept their child's inherent qualities rather than expecting the child to change. The second guideline is to teach children to be pleased about the good fortune of others. Thirdly, parents must capitalize on their children's strengths. If parents are more aware of a child's strengths, they could use them to compensate for weaknesses and to find methods to alter inappropriate behaviours and teach new ones. The fourth guideline is to provide a comprehensive range of activities for

children. A child who has been exposed to a wide variety of people and environments will feel less threatened and overwhelmed and be better able to meet any future challenges. The fifth, and one of the most important for parents, is to remember to praise or punish the behaviour not the child. Also, parents need to respond to their child's desirable behaviours instead of just undesirable ones. Another necessary guideline is to provide the child with appropriate models. Parents who display a positive self-concept and high self-esteem treat their children with respect and acceptance and provide them with encouragement and support. The next guideline for enhancing positive self-concept is to gradually allow the child more autonomy. Considering the child's age and situation, parents need to allow him or her to do things independently and to make decisions on his/her own. The eighth and final guideline is to be consistent. When reasonable limits are set and enforced consistently, a child feels more secure and his/her self-concept is enhanced significantly. It would also be beneficial to the child if parents were to make regular contact with teachers to discuss mutual expectations for the child and make these expectations compatible and consistent as possible.

Educational Implications on the Self-Concept

In the role of significant others, teachers, school counsellors and school principals play an increasingly important part in extending the development of a child's self-concept. They continually provide feedback to the child, thus modifying his or her view of self. Thus, according to Saracho (1980), educators have two major concerns in relation to the self-concept. First, they need to consider the development of a child's positive self-concept as an educational goal equal to achieving social or reading skills. They must also be aware of the child's self-

conception, perceived level of competence, life style, and unique purposes for engaging in activities. Once this awareness has been achieved an educational match can be developed.

Early adolescents ask many questions as they struggle to form their personal identities. Educators who promote an encouraging and comfortable environment can help these youth develop a positive self-concept and achieve more academically. Stone and Rottier (1996) cited and described six factors that affect classroom climate and as a result, affect student self-concept. They include: (a) challenge-- a challenging classroom must have high but attainable expectations. Students may give up and feel worse if expectations are too high. Therefore, teachers should differentiate the goals for students, specify the requirements and a reasonable time frame for their completion, and vary teaching methods; (b) freedom-- offer students an opportunity to make some decisions and to learn from mistakes. This can be accomplished by teaching decision-making skills, providing an environment for students to express their ideas and opinions, and allowing for movement in the classroom; (c) respect-- students cannot improve their self-concept if the teacher does not show respect for them. Teachers can demonstrate this respect by learning students' names quickly, finding out about students' interests, listening, and respecting students' privacy; (d) warmth-- warmth implies providing students with a psychologically safe and supportive environment. Teachers must provide a "safe ground" where there is always someone to talk to and where making mistakes is a part of learning. Such an environment can be achieved through communication with students, establishment of physical contact (pat on the shoulder), and willingness to show the teacher's human side; (e) Control-- classrooms with reasonable rules and where enforcement of those rules is consistent can be stabilizing for many students. Thus, teachers should spell out the rules and expectations, involve

the students in establishing rules, and enforce consistency; and (f) Success— many classrooms have a specific orientation toward success or failure. Educators should be most interested in forming a positive, successful attitude. The development of a positive attitude can set the stage to conquer many domains. Students can benefit from such ideas as teaching new concepts in small steps, providing positive reinforcement for trying, and acknowledging success by honouring all students.

These six factors are only a few of the many factors that can influence students' self-concept. However, Stone and Rottier (1996) emphasize climate as established by the administration, school counsellor and teachers as the most important. A supportive climate sets the stage for positive things to occur.

A Special Needs Perspective

Students with physical, emotional and behavioural disorders, developmental delays, or learning disabilities need to develop and learn positive self-concepts just as their "average" peers. Developing coping skills, knowing that they are wanted and loved by their teachers and parents, and developing emotional stability are important ingredients of a healthy positive self-concept.

Mangold (1980) emphasizes two important factors when considering the development of self-concept in exceptional children. First, special needs children may be restricted in their interactions with the physical and social environment. Therefore, they may have fewer opportunities to learn to differentiate their abilities or aspects of self. Fewer experiences with success can also impede the development of a positive self-concept. Secondly, all children

invoke actions and reactions from individuals in their environment. Unusual physical features or behaviour or unique learning styles may trigger negative reaction such as disapproval, avoidance or lowered expectations. Such reactions may affect the children's self-image causing them to withdraw further, resulting in fewer learning opportunities. Therefore, adults need to make special efforts to provide opportunities for successful learning experiences and provide positive and social feedback for exceptional children.

In her article, Glazer (1997) outlined several "acceptable" and "unacceptable" approaches for teachers and parents of a child experiencing learning difficulties. In addition to eliminating critical remarks and altering evaluative terms, Glazer states the *key* to building a positive self-concept with "diverse learners" is direct praise. Direct praise is feedback that is unambiguous, immediate and also corrective. It's specific, reinforces desired behaviours and provides children with the opportunity to take risks. According to Glazer (1997), changing your words and gestures and using direct praise will enhance a child's self-confidence, leading to an improvement in his or her performance.

Educators readily agree that it is important to help students develop strong self-concepts. However, educators also agree that putting a plan in place to develop these strong self-concepts can be quite difficult. To assist educators with this difficult responsibility, Radd and Harsh (1996) developed a Self-Concept series and Weave process that increases self-concept and improves behaviour of special needs students. This self – concept approach can be used by professional educators to intentionally and consistently help students develop a strong self – concept. Although this study was conducted with students having special needs, the ideas derived can be applied to any classroom or even adapted for parents to use at home.

The authors' self-concept series consists of the three following premises: (a) each individual is valuable because he or she is unique; (b) because each individual is special and unique, with a responsibility to help himself or herself, or others. Individuals demonstrate their self-importance by the way they choose to act; and (c) individuals have a responsibility to analyze their actions to determine if they are remembering that they are special.

The self-concept series helps students, teachers and parents see themselves as capable people from whom appropriate behaviours can be expected. Using this approach with students in a special needs classroom reduces the need for external reinforcers. As students see themselves controlling their behaviour rather than an adult, their confidence is likely to be increased. This enhanced self-concept leads to positive feelings about self and others. By using the self-concept series as a way of thinking throughout all aspects of the day, this change will be more internalized

Radd and Harsh (1996) suggest using the self-concept series for such ideas as establishing rules, promoting an internal locus of control, reducing talking out and conflicts with peers and improving time-outs. They suggest first, the adult can post and teach the three steps of the series. Encourage the students to give examples of how the existing rules fit into the series. Next have students discuss or write about their most valuable possession and what they would do to protect it. It is helpful, then, for students to review their list of valuable possessions and ways to protect them. The goal is for students to connect this list to the ways that they would take care of themselves.

One of the most common attributes of behaviourally-challenged students is an external locus of control. Adults need to remind students that, as valuable people, they are capable of

being responsible for their own choices and feelings.

When students put others down they are forgetting that their friends are valuable people. Thus, remind students that there is enough room in the classroom or home for all these valuable people and that putting others down does not make them valuable. Finally, when talking out of order, encourage the students to examine how their choices affect themselves and others. If time-outs are necessary, ask the students to write about or discuss the problem, how their behaviour was hurtful to others and self, and to offer the helpful alternatives to their behaviour. Educators not only apply these concepts to students but also to themselves. This interaction slowly creates change, resulting in a more supportive and positive environment.

Conclusion

The wide and diverse literature involving the study of self has converged to support the common perspective of self-concept as a dynamic, multifaceted construct, mediating the actions of individuals throughout the lifespan. Although the self-concept is represented by several components, the possible self is deemed the most critical for motivating behaviour and providing a context within which to evaluate and understand the actual self. Subsequently, studies by Harter (1990) and Oyserman and Markus (1990) revealed that the concept of possible selves, positive possible selves specifically, could be employed by therapists in changing youth's delinquent behaviour.

Research (Day, Borkowski, Dietmeyer, Howsepian and Saeng, 1992; Markus and Nurius, 1986; and Super, 1990) has also highlighted the important role of possible selves in forming an occupational identity. A well-developed possible self is more motivational than a vague one.

An individual with a positive, vivid possible self has the confidence to set goals and strive to achieve them.

It is from this premise that we begin to understand the important role of home and school in the development of a child's self-concept. Young children sense their competence in all domains in the actions and reactions of significant others in their life. It is through this interaction that children also sense their value as an individual. Therefore, parents and teachers need to be aware of this effect and show respect, warmth and encouragement when dealing with children. These qualities will create a safe and compassionate environment where all children will feel comfortable exploring any or all potential selves. It is this array of well-developed potential selves that guides children toward choosing an occupation.

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CAREER EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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TRACEY M. SHEA



Career Education in the Elementary School

By

Tracey M. Shea, B.Ed. (Elem.)

A paper portfolio submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Education

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ABSTRACT

The philosophy of elementary schools and the goals of career education go hand-in-hand. Self-knowledge, awareness of future educational and occupational alternatives, and development of decision-making skills have been considered important in both elementary school philosophy and practice as they are in career education (Herr and Cramer, 1996). Thus, career education programming at the elementary level must focus on broadening students' views of themselves and their perceptions of careers as well as, enhancing their self-esteem.

The focus of this research is the concept of Career Education at the elementary school level. A series of three papers comprise this piece of work. Paper 1 serves as a theoretical framework of career education at the elementary level. Literature in the following areas is reviewed: rationale for career counselling at the elementary level, characteristics of the elementary student, career competencies for the elementary student, advantages of a career program in elementary schools, implications of earlier career education for the high school student, and finally parents' role in a child's career development.

Building on the theory presented in the first paper, Paper 2 briefly reviews the literature on three specific career competencies for the elementary grades. As an extension of this information, several career activities related to these goals are described. The three competencies addressed are self-awareness, interpersonal and communication skills and awareness of gender typing and changing male and female roles.

The third and final paper discusses in greater depth the importance of self-awareness in career development. Such topics as the developmental nature of self-concept and its role in creating an occupational identity will be provided.

It is hoped the information presented in this folio will be useful to parents, teachers, counsellors, and students in their understanding, development, implementation, and evaluation of career education programs.

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Preface

School counsellors are faced with numerous challenges as they attempt to prepare young students to enter and thrive in a workforce characterized by uncertainty. Shifts in occupational structures, high unemployment rates among our youth and adults, requirements for higher levels of literacy, numeracy, and adaptability in the labour force, have led to the need for a systematic provision of career development skills, knowledge and process in our schools.

The prevalent model for a career development program reinforces the need for systematic activities and information to occur beginning with the elementary school curriculum and for parents, teachers, and counsellors to be equally involved (Herr and Cramer, 1996).

In their observations, Staley and Mangiesi in 1984, discovered that children begin to formulate career decisions at a relatively young age (Herr and Cramer, 1996). They argued that children acquire impressions of the type of work and people employed. It is from these impressions that children then embrace or remove certain occupations for themselves.

Similarly, Gottfredsons' (1981) research regarding occupation circumscription reported childrens' reduction of acceptable careers as early as age six. From her perspective, children first eliminate occupations that they perceive to be inappropriate for their sex. Then, in the second phase, children between the ages of nine and thirteen begin to remove occupations lacking sufficient prestige for their social class. By adolescence, an area of acceptable occupational alternatives has been established and the next step is to

develop a personal identity. According to Gottfredson, vocational aspirations may lend a hand in creating this sense of identity. Students may make choices that appear most compatible with the kind of personality one wants.

According to Herr and Cramer (1996), career education in the elementary school can work to avoid this premature foreclosure of occupational choices. An elementary career education program helps students know that they have opportunities to choose and the competence to do so.

Research by Hansen, Johnson and Finn in 1989 illustrates that early developmental experiences of children in the elementary school can lead to persistence at later educational levels and eventually behaviours that form a sound bases for work habits in adulthood (Herr and Cramer, 1996). More specifically, Hansen and Johnson described how learning strategies in an elementary classroom coupled with continuous reinforcement can result in productive or nonproductive work strategies in adulthood. Finn in 1989 addresses the importance of early behaviours and attitudes from another perspective - dropouts. His research suggests that the antecedents to dropping out of school occur over a long period of time, possibly with its beginnings in elementary school. Finn argues that often, poor school performance leads to low self-esteem and, in turn, to the student blaming the school and eventually removing him or herself from the environment.

Herr and Cramer (1996) claim that the identified research gives career education credibility in the elementary school. They believe career development, beginning in the elementary school, encourages feelings of personal competence early on to cope with the future, provides ways to modify weaknesses, teaching skills in planning and using

available exploratory resources, and develops an understanding of relationships between schooling and work.

This portfolio is divided into three papers. The first paper is a persuasive piece that argues for a comprehensive career education program at the elementary level. Literature in such areas as characteristics of the elementary students, advantages of a career program in elementary schools and parents role in a childs' career development are reviewed.

The theme of the second paper is more specific. Three important career competencies for the elementary grades are reviewed. The three competencies addressed are self- awareness, interpersonal and communication skills and awareness of gender typing and changing male and female roles. Several career activities related to these competencies will be outlined.

According to Herr and Cramer (1996) without self-awareness other aspects of career development become meaningless. Thus, the third and final paper discusses in greater detail the construct of self-concept and its role in creating a career identity.

This portfolio is intended to help those individuals who are involved or hop to be involved with the career development process. School counsellors, psychologists, career counsellors, teachers, parents and others can benefit from the contents of this portfolio.

Paper #1

A Theoretical Framework of Career Development at the Elementary Level

Introduction

The focus of this research folio is career education at the elementary school level. A series of three papers will comprise this piece of work. In Paper 1, there will be presented a theoretical framework for career development at the elementary level. Building on the theory presented in the first paper, Paper 2 will review the literature on three specific career competencies for the elementary grades. Subsequently, several career activities relating to these goals will be described. The three competencies addressed are: self-awareness, interpersonal and communication skills and, awareness of gender typing and changing male and female roles. Paper 3 will discuss the competency of self-awareness in more depth. Selected literature on the developmental nature of self-concept and its role in creating an occupational identity will be provided in this final paper.

The following theoretical framework of Paper 1 is divided into the following areas: rationale for career counselling at the elementary level; characteristics of the elementary student; career competencies for the elementary student; advantages of a career program in elementary schools; implications for the high school student and later years; and finally parents' role in a child's career development.

Career Development Theories

If career education is to be introduced and maintained in our elementary schools, we first need to understand the connection between children's views of occupations and how, as adults, they will make choices. The various career development theories can provide us with some theoretical basis for such predictions.

The approaches describing career development have been classified in several ways (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Osipow, 1983; Pitz & Harren, 1980). Although these classifications highlight specific themes about career behaviour, similarities do exist, creating a more unified theory of career development (Osipow, 1990). According to Herr and Cramer (1996), career development theories fit into five types:

1. Trait-and-factor, actuarial or matching approaches conceive of the person as an organization of capacities that can be measured and related to the requirements of training programs or occupations (p. 157).
2. Decision theory models emphasize the process of decision making. Within this process, the individual has to choose amongst several alternatives or courses of action that may result in a gain or loss. The best choice would be the alternative in which the gain is the greatest (p. 165).
3. Situational, sociological or contextual approaches state that the context in which career behaviour unfolds is different across nations, communities, and families. A person's career choice can be influenced by higher interaction with the environment (p. 179).

4. Psychological approaches emphasize intrinsic individual motivation. Because of personality differences, individuals develop certain needs or drives and seek their satisfaction through occupational choices (p. 190).
5. Developmental approaches tend to concentrate more on how career behaviour develops and changes over time. They are more inclusive and more inclined to highlight the importance of the self-concept (p. 207).

These five career development approaches are not mutually exclusive or independent of one another. Instead, each one attempts to explain career behaviour and choice from varied vantage points. However, the focus of this portfolio will be the Developmental approach because it is more concerned with longitudinal studies of career behaviour, and more inclined to highlight the importance of the self-concept. These career development theories and their descriptions of an individual's career behaviour provide the foundation for, and describe the where, when, and why of career counselling, career education and career guidance. Implementation strategies are implied in each concept.

Rationale

Focusing on the developmental perspective, research has long defined career development as a lifelong process that begins in childhood and continues throughout adulthood (Gibson, Mitchell & Basile, 1993; Gysbers & Moore, 1975; Hoffman & McDaniels, 1991; and Super, 1953). In response to this literature, numerous educational programs were promoted, the most prominent of these has been the career education movement.

Career education is a "process of infusing into instructional content and method career development concepts by which the application of academic subject matter of any kind can be related to work or to self-exploration" (Herr & Cramer, 1996, p. 29). The presence of career education in the elementary school is not new, or a reversal of the elementary school philosophy and practices. In fact, current models of career education reinforce the concepts of self-knowledge, decision-making, and knowledge of educational occupational alternatives (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

Most would agree that the elementary years are an important period for the career development and occupational choice processes. As elementary school children move through the elements of "Fantasy", work is an important concern to them. During the elementary school years, most individuals significantly develop their values about work, learning, and other lasting adult values. It is these values that can then translate into self-perspectives and preferences or exclusions for some work and educational activities.

Research cited in Herr and Cramer (1996) show that by the time children have completed the first six grades of school, many of them have made tentative commitments to fields of work and self-perceptions. According to Gottfredson (1981), for example, as early as age six children begin to reduce the number of acceptable occupations. The two phases of reduction pertain to the occupations children perceive to be inappropriate for their sex and; secondly, occupations lacking the prestige for their social class on self-concept.

One can assume that not all the information and influences from which these preferences and perceptions are derived are appropriate, or accurate. Children often receive career information that restricts their desired occupational possibilities. From an early age boys are

frequently encouraged to enter the fields of science, engineering, or construction. Girls, on the other hand, are believed to be best suited for careers in the service industry. These may include teacher, nurse, receptionist, or daycare worker. As well, a number of studies have shown that many materials and texts used in elementary schools portray the world of work and future education inaccurately with sex-typing restrictive views (i.e., male doctor, female nurse). Frequently, unrealistic career plans are made due to the presence of sex typing in our literature (Herr & Cramer, 1996).

Parents, as well, are a valuable source of learning about the world of work. However, as indicated in Miller (1989), some parents hold restrictive ideas about their children's future occupations and provide no environmental support towards their children's personal and occupational explorations. Furthermore, an increasing number of youths are growing up in families and in communities in which individuals are seldom employed. Youth from such environments do not readily understand the work ethic, or life with regular employment.

Young people, in deciding about their futures, need exposure to positive career role models, decision-making strategies, and broad-based career options. Thus, the inclusion of nontraditional role models, guest speakers, films, books, and field trips in career education of the elementary grades can help prevent premature foreclosure of choices or unrealistic career choices.

Elementary career education programs can also help students understand the complex and ever-changing world of work. Thirty years ago, students were entering a labor market predominately comprised of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Today, however, youth face life in a society in which such job opportunities are rapidly disappearing. Academic achievement,

intellectual development, etc. are now critical qualifications (Toepfer. 1994). Furthermore, with the ever-widening scope for both men and women, early exposure of children to the world of work and occupations is encouraged.

For the above reasons, career education programming must encourage elementary students to develop an awareness not only of the world of work, but of their individuality. As Isaacson and Brown (1996) stated, by seeing themselves as individuals with differing interests, abilities and motivations, the students will understand how decisions can affect their lives.

Characteristics of the Elementary Student

Theorists like Donald Super (1990) view career development as a lifelong process characterized by a number of stages. Each stage is important and includes specific developmental tasks that individuals must achieve if they are to make career choices that lead to satisfactory and productive lives. According to Hughes (1993), in order for career-education programs to be effective at the elementary level, the programs must be based on these developmental needs and characteristics of this particular age group, and promote achievement of elementary-level education goals.

From a career development perspective, by ten years of age, most children prefer to participate in activities that provide the bases for career aspirations. They are beginning to comprehend the connection between school and career achievements. Occupational goals tend to be more realistic, and begin to reflect values as well as interests. In turn, these contribute to a broadening of occupational options, and a receptivity to new ideas. By the age of nine or ten years, children typically have a relatively clear and distinct concept of themselves that ordinarily

results in few self-doubts and anxieties, as evident in later adolescents (Seligman, Weinstock & Heflin, 1991).

Schwartz (1996) describes the development of early adolescents (10-14 years), as moving from concrete to abstract thinking. They are acquiring self-concept and social skills. They are developing lasting attitudes about learning, work, and other adult values. Finally, they are learning to take responsibility for their education.

As stated by Herr & Cramer (1996), “children of elementary school age are typically open to and they interact with a broad range of stimuli and modes of behaviour” (p. 340). Thus, they tend to be less rigid and stereotyped in their thinking, yet vulnerable in the sense that their attitudes and perceptions about life are formative.

In other related research, it was found that towards the upper elementary years (11-12 years), most students are trying to separate themselves from their families by becoming more independent. They are intrigued with the events around them, and welcome the opportunity to interact freely (Muro & Kottman, 1995; Sears, 1995).

The foundation for future achievement seems to be established during these years. Self-confidence and the learning of new skills and tools have developmental importance during these years, with significant implications for the child’s maturation into a productive and self-assured adult worker (Seligman, Weinstock & Heflin, 1991).

Competencies of the Elementary Student

Once the characteristics of elementary students have been established, the process of identifying related competencies begins. However, in order for this process to be successful,

careful consideration must be given to the child's specific stage of career development.

In his work on career development, Super (1988) created a series of life stages characterized as a sequence of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. In turn, these stages can be subdivided into the 'Exploratory' and the 'Establishment' stages. During the exploratory stage children are becoming aware of the fact that an occupation will be an important aspect in their life. More specifically, he proposed that from ages 4 to 10 years, children are in a substage of the 'exploratory' stage called the 'Fantasy stage.' During this substage, children use role-play and fantasy, as they explore their occupational choices. Cowboy, movie star, and princess are some examples that children, at this stage, express as their occupational choices. Super noted the importance of increased self-awareness, awareness of a variety of occupations, and feelings of competency in a child's career development. He has emphasized the development and implementation self-concept, as the primary construct within the career development process. Essentially, Super has stressed the inherent relationship of career development and personal development.

Others have also characterized the childhood years as a stage of self-awareness. Miller (1989) stated the initial stage of career development of an elementary school child is self-awareness. Thus, essentials to an elementary school career program are activities that acknowledge a young child's self-awareness, feelings of autonomy, need for playful behaviour, and wish for exploration.

Herr & Cramer (1996) described elementary school children as being "typically open to and interacting with, a broad range of stimuli or behaviour" (p. 340). On the basis of this description, they argue these students need to become aware of themselves, possible careers, and

how they can employ school experiences to explore and prepare for the future. Therefore, to meet children's career development needs, an elementary career development program should consist of extensive career awareness activities centered around concepts such as: exploring careers, self-knowledge, decision-making, understanding and getting along with others, learning about family responsibilities, learning about school, and good work habits. These career development programs should infuse self, career, and technology awareness into the curriculum.

The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs 2000 has identified eleven competencies they view as representative of "the basic skills and attitudes that children should acquire to deal effectively with daily life, to make the transition into middle/junior high school, and to start developing an educational plan to insure their academic growth and continuing career development. The Blueprint for Life Work Designs is a conceptual framework that can guide Canadians in their acquisition of career-related information, skills and knowledge. The Blueprint provides specific guidelines that can help enhance career development programs in a variety of settings including elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools and the work force. The Blueprint 2000 has been adapted from the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (1989) (NOICC) and is organized around three major areas of competence: (a) personal management, (b) learning and work exploration, and (c) life/work development.

The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs 2000 competencies for the elementary school include the following: (a) knowledge for building a positive self-concept while discovering its importance, (b) developing abilities for building positive relationships in one's life, (c) discover that change and growth are part of life, (d) discovering "lifelong learning" and its contributions to one's life and work, (e) discovering and understanding life/work information, (f) discovering

how work contributes to individuals, society and economy, (g) exploring effective work habits, (h) exploring decision making, (i) exploring and understanding the interrelationship of life roles, (j) discovering the nature of life/work roles, and (k) exploring and understanding life/work planning.

It is expected that the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs 2000 will be used to establish career development programs in all provinces/territories. This model should contain competencies that relate to three areas of career development, namely personal management, learning and work exploration, and life/work development. Following are the outcomes from Blueprint 2000 that may be included in any elementary career development model:

I. Personal Management

1. I know how to be a good friend.
2. I understand my friends and classmates.
3. I know how to get along with boys and girls.
4. I understand people who are different from me.
5. I know how to ask parents, teachers and other adults for help.

II. Learning and Work Exploration

1. I know what is expected of me in the next grade.
2. I know how to make choices at school that relate to interests and abilities.
3. I know that all my classes (math, science, reading, etc.) are important in jobs and daily living.

III. Life/Work Development

1. I know how to find out more about jobs and careers.
2. I know the importance of good work habits for school and future jobs.
3. I know some reasons why people work.
4. I know that people need to work together.

Depending on the setting and the characteristics of the children being served, additional outcomes might be created for a local program of career guidance. These outcomes do not occur spontaneously, but must be nurtured in order to mature. Students will continue to expand their knowledge of self-interests, values, abilities, and of careers throughout their junior high and high school years. Regardless of which outcomes are finally chosen, an elementary career program, working within the educational framework, should concern itself with enabling each child to make choices, and to arrive at identities and decisions that can lead to a productive future.

The Advantages of Career Education in Elementary Schools

Time and time again the literature (Goldberger and Katz, 1996; Herr and Cramer, 1996; Hughes, 1993; and Starr, 1996) has recognized and reported the importance of providing career development programs in the elementary schools. The proponents of an elementary career program have argued numerous advantages of such programs. Herr and Cramer (1996) have affirmed that attitudes likely to undermine adult role behaviour have beginnings in the early life of children.

Hageman & Gladding (1983) studied the attitudes of third-and sixth-grade students and they found increasing stereotypes at both levels, and that most girls did not feel free to pursue a

nontraditional career.

Gottfredson (1981) concluded that as children grow older, they deliberately reduce occupations acceptable to them. She identifies stages that occur in this process. Stage one involves the orientation by children to size and power (3-5 years). Here children begin to associate adulthood with occupational roles and project themselves into future adult roles. Stage two involves orientation to sex-roles (6-8 years). In this phase, the beginnings of a gender self-concept are consolidated and sex role stereotypes appear to develop. Children's occupational preferences at this stage reflect a concern with performing those jobs that are appropriate for one's gender. The first occupations, thus, to be removed are those which children sense to be unsuitable for their gender. Stage three occurs around the ages of 9-13 years old. This stage is characterized by an orientation to social valuation. Here, children become very sensitive to peer group evaluations and to general expectations, values, and evaluations. Their expressed occupational preferences are judged according to their prestige level, with the elimination of low-level jobs. They also rule out occupations requiring effort beyond their ability level, as they perceive it. The final stage is an orientation to the internal unique self. In this stage of development, they seek to create personal identities, and to arrive at more specific occupational choices. Choices made in adolescence are limited to a collection of occupations considered acceptable at an earlier age to one's gender, social class, and intelligence.

Career education in the elementary grades has the potential to counteract the effects of occupational reduction based on social class, inappropriateness, or sex stereotyping. Herr & Cramer (1996) purport that career education at the elementary level is intended to avoid this premature foreclosure of choices. Bailey & Nichlen (1989) reported that many children are quite

willing to ask questions about careers after being exposed to nontraditional occupational role models.

According to Hughes (1993), career education at the elementary level can help children sense the relationship between what they study in school and future occupations. An elementary career education program allows children years to employ their abilities in various opportunities and to witness the outcomes, whether they are good or bad. This practice can enable students to develop a stronger understanding and to take control over their futures.

An initial component of an elementary career program is self-awareness. Isaacson & Browne (1996) stated that if self-understanding is fostered at an early age, then students are more likely to understand others better, and establish more productive relationships now and in the future.

As demonstrated above, an elementary career program has great potential to empower elementary school children to grow in career consciousness, self-awareness, and optimism about future opportunities. However, if such a program is to make a difference, simply providing separate career units telling students about work is not sufficient. Career development must be integrated with other instructional goals appropriate for elementary education. Furthermore, more efforts must be made to help students learn to use information in their career decision making. Effective programs involve careful planning. Younger children function more successfully in the concrete realm. Thus, career education programs must be concrete, not abstract in their design. For example, an elementary career program dominated by college preparation will serve no purpose to young children and eventually their interest will diminish.

To be useful in the elementary school, career information must be available in a wide range of reading levels and other sensory modes (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Activities and/or learning experiences should provide ways for all students to experience success. Furthermore, opportunities should be provided for children to share their knowledge and experience of work.

Implications for the High School and Later Years.

It is obvious that schools can play a central and crucial role in increasing the significance given to career in life planning. However, this role will not be successful with isolated courses in junior and senior high school. Instead, what is needed is an integration of career concepts in all subjects across all grade levels. For example, in elementary schools, many classes go on field trips to places like the fire station or the zoo. It would be very easy to include a discussion of workers' roles and how they contribute to the total zoo experience. Information about the animals and about the workers could vary from grade to grade and from class to class, and could easily be integrated across the curriculum.

Hiebert (1993) believes that people do not choose a career at a single point in time. Instead, careers develop over time as a result of the experiences people have, and the types of activities in which they find meaning. Thus, career-related activities, such as field trips, could assist young people to become more active in their career paths. He points out that educators, employers, parents, youth and adults are demanding comprehensive programs that will lead students of all ages through a sequential process of career development that will enable them to succeed.

For young people, choice of career path is an extremely important venture. Leaders in education, government and business are realizing that what is needed is an all-inclusive movement to heighten the image of career in people's minds, and the provision of a type of program that young people need in order to make realistic and informed career decisions. (Hiebert, 1993).

The claims that schooling ought to better prepare youth for the 21st century have become increasingly prominent. Despite this recognized need, career education programs are not keeping pace with technological advancements. Thus, there is a shortfall in terms of what students are learning and what they need to know.

Balcombe (1995), in a review of the importance of career education in the 1990s, purports that too often too much of the counsellor's time gets consumed with "social counselling." Thus, leaving little time for the group of students who require academic and career guidance. In the article, Balcombe cites quantitative evidence indicating the shortcomings of present-day career education. One of the sections in a Canadian Press release in 1993 described "attitudes towards the future" in grades 11 and 12. Included in this release, were the following points: (a) when discussing career counseling most students said their schools have been only "somewhat helpful" (55.8%), 20.4% described their schools as "not helpful at all," while only 22.7% felt their schools were "very helpful"; (b) students felt better prepared to enter a community college than to enter the workforce, or a university; (c) students felt that they would be in the same financial position as their parents when they reach their parents' age; and (d) Canadian students' educational goals are high, and most students aspire to a graduate or professional degree. Such information leads us to question how well students are being prepared

for the world of work by the existing methods.

In an interview with Willard Daggett, the director of the International Center for Leadership in Education, John O'Neil (1995) brings similar information to light. Willard Daggett argues that high school graduates get stuck in dead-end jobs, or college graduates are unable to find work in their field because the curriculum does not prepare the students for the world in which they are going to live.

He believes this is because the economy has moved from an industrial-based economy to a technological information-based one. Furthermore, unskilled and low-skill jobs are rapidly disappearing and being replaced by high-level skills that require the use of a wide array of knowledge to access information and to manipulate data. His solution is the development of a school that has a single curriculum for all students, that is both "rigorous" and "relevant."

These rapid advances in technology are producing major changes in the present workforce and are affecting the way we must prepare youth to function in the world. Starr (1996) states that to meet the needs of our youth today and into the future, they must be provided with a systematic process that will enable them to acquire reasonable educational and career plans. This process, according to Starr, must include: (a) extensive career awareness activities beginning at the elementary level, centered around concepts such as: exploring careers, self knowledge, decision making, understanding and getting along with others, learning about family responsibilities, learning about school, and developing good work habits; (b) further career exploration that will provide the basis for making practical career choices, such as learning more about career paths, job clusters, and individual interests and aptitudes, and planning for further education and training; (c) increased knowledge of self and others that will help students know

what is important to them, how to respect other's opinions, and how to effectively communicate their feelings; and (d) broaden knowledge of our changing world and its impact on them.

One of the new trends in career education is the movement to implement what is called "school-to-work transition programs". Paulter (1991) defines the school-to-work transition as "the process that each individuals pass through on their way to more schooling, more education or employment. Relevant research, (Cheek, 1991; Goldberger & Kazis, 1996; and Grubb, 1996) supports the belief that this movement was created out of high youth employment, national studies that question the effectiveness of career education, fear of a shortage of skilled workers, and unrelated employment of occupational program graduates.

An effective transition from school to work does not suddenly begin when students have completed their training programs. According to Cheek (1991), it should start very early and continue throughout childhood and adolescence. He also states that the school must shed the views that firstly, education is separate from life experiences; and secondly, work should only occur when education is complete. A successful school to work transition should be based on the right of every student to obtain an education for the purpose of experiencing life and preparing for what comes next.

A comprehensive transition program involves students in career awareness, exploration, decision making and planning, and preparation. Each of these four phases builds on the others starting in the primary and elementary years.

In the view of career-related researchers, work-based learning is central to an effective school-to-career system. According to Goldberger & Kazis (1996), in the earlier grades, students should be exposed to workplaces through job shadowing, in-school jobs, and employer

involvement in classroom and community service projects. In the high school years, the learning environment should expand to work sites as students become more mature and ready to leave the classroom for workplace experiences.

Cottrell Middle School in Oregon offers a formal program that includes offering in-school jobs to all students. The program enables middle students to experience many of the conditions of work in the outside world, and gives them opportunities to apply abstract knowledge to practical problems (Yatvin, 1995).

As the program now exists, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders are hired to perform jobs identified by school staff members. Students fill out applications, provide references, and go through interviews. During their term of employment, students must fill out daily time sheets and undergo periodic evaluations by their adult supervisors. Students earn wages in the form of tokens that can be spent for parties, field trips, items in the school store, and gifts at the end of the year auction. Some of the job choices offered by this program include: physical education assistant, playground assistant, groundskeeper, lunchroom orderly, and clerical aide. By allowing students to work as science aides, groundskeeper or gym managers, Cottrell Middle School is recreating the world of work in its own way.

Cheek (1991) in his article of school-to-work transition described four possible formats that schools can incorporate to provide effective work experience. They include apprenticeships, cooperative education, internships and shadowing. Business and industry can provide a realistic environment for children to learn occupational skills.

In the future, helping students make the transition from school to work will present both challenges and opportunities. However, success can be ensured through the experiences of, and

experimentation by, partnerships of employers, schools, and post secondary institutions. Taking this approach, the transition to work will become a more natural one.

Parental Role

Parental influence in career development is an important dimension of the study of family, school and community partnerships (Young, 1993). According to Super (1988), the children's opportunities to develop high self-esteem exist first in the home, then the neighbourhood, church, and school, as the children learn to identify with models and explore roles. Most people would agree that parental involvement in children's education is an essential way to encourage children's achievements. This involvement according to De Ridder (1990) starts at birth and continues as the children progress through the fantasy, exploration, and trial stages of career development.

As adolescents enter the critical ego development stage (Erikson, 1963), they seek answers to questions regarding their identity and career aspirations. Parents can have a great influence on their children's career direction as they attempt to discover the work they will do in their life (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993).

Children also form many of their attitudes about work and occupations from such family environment factors as parents' socioeconomic status, their educational level, and their aspirations (Penick & Jepson, 1992). In his study of the influences on adolescents' career development, Mortimer et al. in 1992, (Lankard, 1995) found parental education to have the most effect.

It would seem that parents with a higher level of education tend to pass along its importance to their children. De Ridder (1990) reports that lower levels of parent education may limit children's career development. "Being born to parents with limited education and income reduces the likelihood of going to college or achieving a professional occupational goal and essentially predetermines the child's likely vocational choice" (p.4).

In addition to family background, family processes influence career development. Children learn about work and work experiences from such family processes as interaction, communication, and modeling (Lankard, 1995). Similarly, Way and Rossman (1996) suggest that the day-to-day family patterns of decision-making, good or poor work habits, conflict resolution and communication skills are instilled with children forever. By discussing their feelings regarding the work experience, families provide an environment in which children can understand the realities of work. Middleton and Loughhead (1993) suggest that children's aspirations should be viewed from a "interactional rather than singular process of influence; focusing on the contexts and situations in which career development occurs" (p. 163). That is, the interaction of such variables as ability and attitude toward school, family environment, parental aspirations and childrens' perception of parental encouragement influence childrens' career goals.

Way and Rossman (1996) outlined two models of family involvement. The "social mold" model occurs when parents try to shape their children in a particular image. This is done by modeling and supporting desirable career-related behaviours and attitudes. In the other approach, parents encourage children to be autonomous and successful in shaping their own lives. Middleton and Loughhead (1993) describe similar types of parental involvement, namely, positive

involvement, noninvolvement and negative involvement. It is parents' negative involvement that may cause adolescents to feel anxious about their career decisions or exploration. Parents in the "negative involvement" category are often controlling in their interactions with their children. These children often follow the career direction desired by their parents so as not to disappoint them. After doing so, they are left with feelings of guilt and frustration when they do not achieve their parents' goals (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993).

Teaching children to be independent and autonomous will result in better preparation for the new world of work that involves transition, adaptation and change. Although families can provide the ideal social context in which their children can develop interests and acquire skills necessary in career development, this is often not the case (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993).

Many parents face increased pressure in their own work life. Their work environments are often not supportive of family needs, demanding longer hours of their employees. These parents may also have to face decreases in job security and/or workers' benefits. In addition, parents may experience a great deal of social and personal pressure to prepare their children to be successful and knowledgeable in whatever career they choose. This pressure can be heightened when it is suggested that poor parenting is the cause of low achievement among youth (Way & Rossman, 1996).

According to Herr and Cramer (1996), the changing family structure also makes it increasingly more difficult for children to experience "stable and informed parental support." More infants are being born into single-parent households. Furthermore, many of the children living in female-headed families grow up in or near poverty (p. 351). Because of their fear of falling below the poverty line and personal stresses, many parents feel that their career advice or

other support would be inadequate. Other parents do not understand how to purposefully contribute to their children's development. Thus, to maximize their children's opportunities, creative, cooperative working relationships must exist between school personnel and families.

Way and Rossman (1996) contend that families that interact at school and provide support, increase work readiness. In fact, students who demonstrated this work readiness were found to come from families that had: (a) asked regularly about or helped with homework, (b) attended school functions and inquired about their child's progress, and (c) helped develop potential job skills by encouraging hobbies. Families who encourage education and positive attitudes towards schoolwork assist in the development of learning strategies such as seeking challenging courses, developing ideas beyond the project and continuing to work in the face of any uninteresting topic (Way & Rossman, 1996).

Implications for School Personnel

Structuring or guiding parental involvement in adolescent career development is increasingly seen as an important element of a school's career counselling. De Ridder (1990) suggests that counsellors collaborate and help parents to improve their effectiveness in guiding their children. The classroom teacher or school counsellor can discuss with parents and students the goals of the career awareness program, and by offering simple activities or guidelines parents can use with their children.

Schwartz (1996) outlines several ways parents can encourage career exploration in their children: She suggests that parents (a) talk to their children about their own work, or jobs of friends and relatives, so they will learn about several options; (b) encourage discussions on

conflicts often faced between career/school and leisure time; and (c) ask their children what they like to do and encourage them to explore careers based on their interests.

The Maryland State Department of Education designed a brochure that contained more practical approaches to assist parents in becoming active and effective partners in their children's career development. The following tasks can help children become aware of various occupations and their value, the importance of doing a job well, and how to make wise decisions: (a) taking them to work and pointing out the different jobs and skills needed; (b) making them aware of workers in non-traditional career roles (for example, a woman in construction or a man in nursing); (c) using television, books, and magazines as tools to explain reality versus fantasy in the world of work; (d) having them assist with chores at home; (e) demonstrating the need to gather all the facts, anticipate consequences and outcomes, and accept compromises based on information gathered; and (f) encouraging them to make choices.

In many ways, children's career choices may depend upon the parents' personal support, advice and finances. Because of the unsettling and ever-changing economic, occupational and familial situations, the continued parental support may not always be present. Thus, an active partnership between the parents and the school is encouraged to help improve students' self-confidence and performance. As a result, more students will be better prepared to match occupations with their potential.

Conclusion

The philosophy of elementary schools and the goals of career education go hand-in-hand. Self-knowledge, awareness of future educational and occupational alternatives, and development

of decision-making skills are considered important in both elementary school philosophy and practice (Herr and Cramer, 1996).

The lifelong nature of career development, described by Super and others, appears to be widely accepted. As with personal and social development, career development is divided into a series of stages. An individual's movement through each stage is gradual and, almost always to a higher level.

Career development in early childhood is characterized by needs for self-awareness and a variety of exceptions and feelings of competency. Thus, to meet these specific needs, an elementary career development program should consist of an array of career awareness activities centered around concepts such as feelings of autonomy and control, the need for planful behavior and the desires for exploration.

Gottfredson (1981) found that elementary school students have already begun to internalize perceptions and preferences toward the available fields of work. It has been suggested that "occupational reduction" begins as early as age six and that by grade four, children have built a job-prestige hierarchy similar to that of adults. Reports also indicate that many students who dropped out of school "physically" at age sixteen have already dropped out of school "psychologically" as early as grade three (Herr and Cramer, 1996). This often occurs because they fail to see the connection between the school curriculum and their experiences outside of school. Without opportunities to develop an awareness of themselves and of available careers, many elementary school children may learn inadequate behaviours or incorrect information about themselves and/or their opportunities.

Thus, career education programming must focus on broadening students' views of themselves and their perceptions of careers, as well as, enhancing their self-esteem. These goals can also be attained through family processes such as: interaction, communication, and modeling. Parents can have a great influence on their children's career direction as the children attempt to discover their chosen occupations. Therefore, a comprehensive, planned program involving school and home can produce skills to empower elementary school children to foster career consciousness, self-awareness, and optimism about future opportunities.

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Paper #2

Describing Elementary Career Competencies through Appropriate Activities

Introduction

In Paper 1 of this portfolio, I examined the current literature of career education for primary and elementary students. Numerous career development theories were identified with the Developmental approach discussed in greater detail to provide a theoretical foundation of career counselling at the elementary level. Furthermore, selected career development competencies, specific to the elementary grades were delineated. In this second paper I examine these competencies as they relate to the curriculum. The information may also serve as a guide for elementary teachers and counsellors in their programming on career development.

The objective of this second paper is to discuss three career developmental competencies which are deemed to be essential in one's career development and to examine the literature that describes these competencies for the elementary student. The three specific competencies that will be examined include: (a) awareness of self and a positive self-concept, (b) interpersonal and communication skills necessary for interacting with others, and (c) awareness of changing male/female roles. Several career-related activities for achieving these goals will also be described. As with the other competencies a brief overview will be provided for self-concept. However, this particular competency will be discussed in greater depth in the third paper.

To begin to formulate an answer to the question, "What am I going to do when I grow up?" children require, among other things, wide-ranging exposure to a variety of workers and work settings. As outlined in the previous research paper, students, parents and the business

community have been claiming that students are not adequately trained for the high-technology jobs of today and tomorrow, or for the possibility of numerous occupational changes.

Over the years career education's position in the educational agenda has not been clear. The views as to how schools ought to prepare students for adult life are as diversified as the programs. While the array of programs such as transition-to-work, technological education, and co-operative education, are important, it is not clear that they adequately address the career development needs of students.

In response to this concern, a new vision of career education must be implemented in the schools. According to Gitterman, Levi and Wayne (1995), schools must act deliberately to ensure that all students have access to current and accurate career information. It must be understood by administrators and teachers that decision-making strategies are significant in assisting students to make successful transitions to work, further education, and training. Finally, providing students with learning experiences should extend to individuals and businesses in their community.

Career education can be viewed as a distinct, yet closely linked, aspect of personal growth and development. Theorists like Ginzberg (1972) and Gottfredson (1981) and Super (1980) view career development as a lifelong process characterized by a number of developmental stages. In accepting a developmental approach to career development, individuals must focus on and achieve specific tasks commonly met at each developmental level or those about to be encountered at the next level. Increasingly, career education is focussing on three aspects of the individual: self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration and career planning. These components are deemed by the author to form the core of an effective

career education model.

In order to execute this vision of career education, schools need to have clear and specific outcomes for each component. It is necessary then to examine the competencies and indicators formulated by Blueprint for Life/Work Designs 2000 that helps to provide a framework for schools when designing their own career education programs. Following is a summary of selected competencies and indicators extracted from The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs:

[Elementary School Student Competencies and Indicators]

Personal Management

Competency I: Knowledge of the importance of self-concept

1. Describe positive characteristics about self as seen by self and others.
2. Identify how behaviours affect school and family situations.
3. Demonstrate a positive attitude about self.
4. Identify personal interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses.

Competency II: Skills to interact with others.

1. Identify how people are unique.
2. Demonstrate effective skills for interacting with others.
3. Demonstrate skills in resolving conflicts with peers and adults.
4. Demonstrate group membership skills.

Competency III: Awareness of the importance of emotional and physical development on career decision-making.

1. Identify personal feelings.
2. Identify ways to express feelings.
3. Demonstrate healthy ways of dealing with conflicts, stress and emotion in self and others.

Learning and Work Exploration

Competency IV: Awareness of the benefits of educational achievement.

1. Describe how academic skills can be used in the home and community.
2. Identify personal strengths and weaknesses in subject areas.
3. Describe school tasks that are similar to skills essential for job success.

Competency V: Awareness of the interrelationship of work and learning.

1. Identify different types of work, both paid and unpaid.
2. Describe the importance of preparing for an occupation.
3. Describe how one's role as a student is like that of an adult worker.
4. Describe the importance of cooperation among workers to accomplish a task.

Competency VI: Skills for understanding and using career information.

1. Describe work of family members, school personnel and community workers.
2. Identify work activities of interest to the student.
3. Describe jobs that are present in the student's community.

Competency VII: Awareness of the importance of personal responsibility and good work habits.

1. Describe the importance of personal qualities (e.g., dependability, promptness).
2. Demonstrate positive ways of performing working activities.
3. Demonstrate the ability to work with people who are different from oneself (e.g. race, age, gender).

Competency VIII: Awareness of how work relates to the needs and functions in society.

1. Describe how work can satisfy personal needs.
2. Describe ways in which work can help overcome social and economic problems.

Life/Work Development

Competency IX: Understanding how to make decisions.

1. Describe how choices are made.
2. Identify strategies used in solving problems.
3. Describe how decisions affect self and others.

Competency X: Awareness of the interrelationship of life roles.

1. Describe the various roles an individual may have (e.g., family member, friend, student, and worker).
2. Describe how family members depend on one another and share responsibilities.
3. Describe how work roles complement family roles.

Competency XI: Awareness of different occupations and changing male/female roles.

1. Describe how work is important to all people.
2. Describe the changing life roles of men and women in work and family.
3. Describe how contributions of individuals both inside and outside the home are important.

Competency XII: Awareness of the career planning process.

1. Describe the importance of planning.
2. Describe skills needed in a variety of occupational groups.
3. Develop an individual career plan for the elementary school level.

The career activities, extracted from the activity manual titled *Careers Now! Making the Future Work*, discussed in this section can be used as single exercises or used in conjunction with others to reinforce career awareness concepts while simultaneously building on significant competencies. These indicators can be modified to provide more relevance for any population.

In the previous paper, five major approaches to career development were noted. They included trait-and-factor, actuarial, or matching approaches; decision theory; situational, sociological, or contextual approaches; psychological approaches; and developmental approaches. Although at first glance these theories would appear separate and different from one another, this is not the case. According to Herr & Cramer (1996), the collective finding of these descriptions of career development is that, like all human behaviour, career development is complex and is part of the total fabric of personality development. (p. 234).

Whatever the process of occupational or career decision making, it would appear that the development of career-related behaviour is characterized by progressive growth and learning from infancy through adulthood which occurs within a network of external and internal forces on the individual. Thus, the act of choosing a career path is not a single behaviour at that point in time. Instead, it involves a series of interdependent decisions that are closely linked to the individual's personal history, past experiences to both future perceptions and alternatives.

If such a comprehensive career program exists in the K-12 school system, the students are likely to be better prepared to select and obtain appropriate information regarding their occupations. Therefore, there will be an increasing likelihood that the decisions will be appropriate for the individual.

Personal, educational, occupational or career development incorporates complex learning processes that begin in early childhood and continue throughout life. As a result of their background or environment and their experiences, elementary-aged children bring to school varying ideas and attitudes. In most cases, these attitudes and ideas reflect their adult caregivers, which in some instances may be outdated and inadequate. Through a comprehensive career program, these children can be made aware of the ever-changing world of work.

According to Isaccson & Brown (1996), early in elementary school, children need to understand the interplay of their present and future choices and decisions and should be helped to grasp the idea that much of what happens in their future will be of their own doing. Thus, the goal of career development programming must be to broaden students' views of themselves as they relate to careers and others as well as to improve their self-esteem.

In this next section, I will define and briefly review the literature on three specific career developmental competencies as they relate to the elementary school-age population. Selected activities from the source *Careers Now! Making the Future Work*, will be described to help school counsellors and teachers achieve these goals.

Self-Concept

The first competency that will be discussed is the development of awareness of self and of a positive self-concept as it relates to career opportunities. The self has only recently emerged as a worthy construct for theorists and practitioners of behavioural psychology. The very origins of the behaviourist movement depended upon the identification of what is observable. Thus, hypothetical constructs were both conceptually and methodologically uninteresting. This

argument deemed self-representations unmeasurable since they could not be clearly operationalized as observable behaviour (Harter, 1990).

Due to several trends over the past fifteen years, the study of self-constructs has become more palatable. With the birth of cognitive psychology, self-theorists revived the self as a cognitive construction. Theorists have also become more precise in their definitions of self-constructs. This has resulted in creating a more observable measure of the self. (Harter, 1990).

Self-concept is a complex combination of thoughts and feelings about the self that reflects ongoing behaviour and that also mediates and negotiates this behaviour (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Researchers have described the self as cognitive representations; associative memory networks; hierarchical category structures and a system of self-schemas or generalizations from past social experiences. Despite the various models used to define self-concept, self-theorists generally agree that the self-structure is multidimensional and multifaceted (Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Markus & Wurf (1987) provide a comprehensive social psychological perspective of self-concept and elaborate on several types and sources of self-representations. Firstly, there are core conceptions that are most important to the individual and believed to have the most powerful effect on behaviour and information processing. Another set of self-conceptions is 'possible selves' - the selves one would like to be or is afraid of becoming. Finally, there is the working self-concept that consists of an array of self-knowledge continually accessible to the individual at any point in time.

Sources of individuals' self-representations may vary. People use social comparison and interaction to receive information about themselves. (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Representations

of the self are also created from emotions, motivations, cognitions and internal physiological reactions (Harter, 1986). Trope, in 1983, suggested that some self-representations result from individuals' direct attempts at self-assessment. According to Markus & Wurf (1987), the information the individual receives about the self and how he or she processes self-conceptions determines the growth of self-structures.

There is an increasing body of research identifying self-perceptions as developmental (Damon & Hart, 1986; Gottfredson, 1981; Harter, 1990). Harter (1990) described the nature of self-representation within the framework of Piaget's stages. This position proposes that self-descriptions shift from a concrete behavioural and social exterior to a more abstract psychological interior. During the preoperational period, the young child can only give specific examples that describe observable behaviours or characteristics about the self. For example, *I have blue eyes* or *I love ice cream*. With middle childhood comes the emergence of concrete operations that allow a shift from a consideration of observable attributes to self-constructs that are more conceptual or trait-like. Such trait labels represent the ability to organize observable, behavioural characteristics into higher order generalizations about the self. Finally, adolescents reaching the formal operational stage can now integrate trait labels into higher-order abstractions about the self. One's psychological interior is now described in the form of beliefs, wishes, emotions and motives. Harter (1990) argues that although these abstract self-representations indicate a more advanced cognitive structure, they simultaneously become separated from concrete behaviours, increasing the possibility of distortion.

Damon and Hart (1986), in their longitudinal study of age-related changes in children's self-understanding, concluded that self-concept develops in an orderly, predictable pattern

during the ages of four through eighteen. However, they caution against confusing this stability with “absolute behavioural constancy,” which they believe is non-existent over the course of development.

In Super’s developmental approach, a basic theme is that the individual is a socialized organizer of his/her experiences who chooses occupations consistent with his/her self-concept (Herr & Cramer, 1996). Although all aspects of self-concept are needed to create an occupational identity, Oyserman and Markus (1990) suggest that the construct of possible selves may serve as an incentive for future behaviour. These authors state that:

Possible selves are conceptualized as the elements of the self-concept that represent the individual’s goals, motives, fears and anxieties. They give precise self-relevant form, meaning, and direction to these dynamics. They are specific and vivid senses, images or conceptions of one’s self in future states and circumstances and are viewed as essential elements in the motivational and goal-setting process (p. 113).

Possible selves represent the aspect of self-concept that individuals strive to become, could become or fear to become (Oyersman & Markus, 1990). According to Day, Borkowski, Dietmeyer, Howsepian and Saeng (1992), a well-developed possible self serves as a greater motivation than a vague one.

Day et al. (1992) highlight important assumptions regarding the development of possible selves in children. They point out that: (a) children are motivated by visions of themselves in future states but the more remote the end state, the less vivid the image of the possible self; (b) children may be aware of the concrete means to their goals; (c) the availability and salience of role models, as well as the expectations of significant others and the children’s own past

performances are important determinants of possible selves; and (d) development involves coming to terms with unreasonable possible selves, as well as extending one's knowledge of more plausible possible selves. (p.187-188).

Miller (1989) argued that self-awareness must be foremost in the area of career development during elementary school. Furthermore, such elements as decision-making or career awareness are meaningless without self-awareness. Thus, children must be exposed to career activities involving concepts of directions/guidelines, desire for explanation, feelings of autonomy and self-awareness.

Self-Concept Activities

In keeping with the goals of fostering career education and in attempting to foster the growth of a positive self-concept in our students, a variety of career awareness programs were developed. The following activities have been adapted from such programs (Careers Now! Making the Future Work, 1994). The activities highlight objectives such as the identification of personal interests, strengths, abilities and weaknesses and description of characteristics about the self as seen by others.

Self-Knowledge

Competency I: Knowledge of the importance of self-concept.

Activity #1

Describe positive characteristics about self as seen by self and others.

Title: Wow! Is that really me?

Purpose: Students help each other create a list of positive characteristics.

Grade: 3-6

Procedures:

1. As a group, brainstorm a list of positive characteristics and write them on the board. Some examples of positive characteristics may include helpful, funny, kind, happy, friendly, likes to share, honest, smart, good at sports, math.
2. Divide students into groups of two, give them each a large sheet of newsprint and have them find a space for themselves. Taking turns, have each students draw their partners' outline as he/she lies on the sheet of newsprint.
3. Once the tracing is completed, ask the students to fill in the outline with positive characteristics of each another. Students should write on their own as well as their partners' body outline. These could be phrases or one-word descriptors. Concentrate on attributes other than physical ones.
4. Students may also decorate their outlines before they are displayed on the wall. Discuss how these characteristics could help at home, school or work.
5. Display outlines on the classroom wall or outside in the hall.

Activity #2

Identify personal interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses.

Title: Picture Me

Purpose: Identifying students' interests, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses using a collage.

Grade: 3-8

Materials Needed: Old magazines, catalogues, newspaper, a sheet of bristle board, scissors, glue and photograph of each student.

Procedure:

1. At the beginning, allow students 5-10 minutes to think about their interests, abilities, strengths and weaknesses.
2. Distribute a half sheet of bristle board and place the collection of magazines in the center of the classroom.
3. Have students tape their photograph in the center of their bristle board. Next using the magazines and other material, have students find and cut out pictures or words describing their strengths, interests, weaknesses, etc., and glue them around the photograph. (Remind students that in a collage every part of the sheet must be covered with pictures).
4. Have each student present and explain his or her collage to the group.
5. Display them on a wall or bulletin board.

Although the acceptance of the self as a measurable construct has been a while in coming, it is now considered to be a critical component in mediating and negotiating an individual's behaviour. Markus & Wurf (1987) defined the self-structure as multidimensional and multifaceted in their descriptions of the types and sources of self. In particular, the literature of possible selves highlighted important information that can be employed by educators to assist children in their creation of an occupational identity. Having well-developed possible selves serve as strong motivation in a child pursuing a career based on that individual's skills, interests

and abilities.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills

Most areas of development influence, or are influenced by, human interaction. It is for this reason that many theorists deserve recognition when describing social development. While there has been much controversy surrounding Sigmund Freud's work, other theories were built on his studies. Erik Erikson, following the work of Freud, identifies eight stages in the human life cycle. Each stage involves a central developmental crisis that may impair or facilitate development depending on how the individual copes with the crisis (Good and Brophy, 1986).

Jean Piaget described how humans interact with and adapt to their environment using a process referred to as schema development. According to Piaget, all humans approach a situation with a set of schemes. He explained that depending on the situation, individuals might assimilate aspects into existing schemes or accommodate existing schemes to understand new or unique concepts. Piaget believed that the sequence of acquiring schemes is universal but that their rate and the forms they take depend on an individual's environment, maturity and social transmission (Good and Brophy, 1986).

Lawrence Kohlberg (1984) elaborated on Piaget's ideas and developed a stage theory of the development of moral judgment. He discussed three general levels of moral thinking with two stages at each level. According to Kohlberg, individuals begin with obedience to rules for fear of punishment and progress to abstract consideration of universal principles such as fairness, human dignity and justice.

Because of the obvious similarities among these theories, Ollhoff (1996) has extracted from these theories their shared focus of stages. He identifies The Four Stages of Childhood are: Stage 1 (ages 0-1); Stage 2 (ages 2-5); Stage 3 (ages 6-12); and Stage 4 (ages 13 and up).

Stage 1: Ages 0-1

Little attention is given to these years mainly because many theorists believe social development is almost non-existent. Piaget refers to this stage as the sensorimotor period, a time when the child is developing and co-ordinating behavioural skills rather than verbal or cognitive ones. Erikson identifies the issue of trust versus mistrust as the major crisis of infancy. Erikson believes that experiences during this dependent stage help to form basic dispositions toward others.

Stage 2: Ages 2-5

Stage 2 is the onset of the preoperational period. For Piaget, this stage is characterized by the development and retention of representations that allow learning to become more cumulative. This skill encourages more systematic reasoning and problem solving by reducing dependency on concrete experiences. Kohlberg suggests that individuals at this, what he labels, preconventional level, are highly egocentric and obedience is based on fear of punishment. For Erikson, this stage centers on the crisis of autonomy versus shame and doubt. There is a transition from being treated as a helpless infant to being treated as a child capable of exercising some self-control.

Stage 3: Ages 6-12

Piaget refers to this stage as the concrete operations period. Here, children can think logically but still depends on direct, concrete experiences to provide cues for thinking and

reasoning. During this period, Kohlberg believes children identify strongly with parents and authority figures and want to please them. Progressively their moral ideals become more generalized and they are motivated to maintain the social system as a whole. Erikson calls this stage industry versus inferiority. During this period, children are exposed to new roles and related role expectations outside of the family and home. For Erikson, mastery of such developmental tasks can lead to sense of industry and self-control.

Stage 4: Ages 13 and up

According to Piaget this stage is characterized by the development of the ability to think abstractly and comprehend material meaningfully with concrete experiences. Some theorists prefer to subdivide the formal operations period into two stages: preadolescents just entering the stage (transitional students) and older students who are already capable of abstract logical reasoning. Kohlberg argues that people who attain this what he terms as the final level of postconventional morality, develop an awareness that laws should be written to obtain the greatest good for the greatest number. Also, individuals have a belief in and sense of personal commitment to universal principles of justice, fairness and human dignity. Kohlberg feels that few persons ever reach this final stage. In adolescence and young adulthood, Erikson speaks of achieving a stable and satisfying sense of identity and direction. According to Erikson, adolescents who attain this goal tend to move more smoothly into adult occupational, spousal and parental roles.

While the ages of these fundamental changes may differ, there are certainly major themes found in all theories. These theorists provide an essential foundation for future research into different aspects of developmental growth and in particular an individual's social development.

Research has argued that such interpersonal relationships exert a strong influence on individual development throughout the life span. For example, children will view others as trustworthy and themselves as effective and worthy of love when they have experienced secure and responsive relationships. However, children who have insecure attachment relationships often have been exposed earlier to insensitive caregiving. As a result, they develop according to Bowlby a more negative view of themselves, others and the world in general (Lynch and Cicchetti, 1997).

In research with eight to ten year old children, Boivin and Hymel (1997) evaluated a social process model describing how social behaviours (aggression and withdrawal) and negative peer status and peer experiences lead to negative social self-perceptions. From their study it was found that "the impact of peer rejection and withdrawal on social self-perception appears to be mediated in part by actual negative experiences with peers" (p. 143). Although other intraindividual and interpersonal process might be involved, Boivin and Hymel (1997) argue that peer rejection is an indicator of maladjustment and a central factor in the child's concurrent social adjustment.

These internal perceptions and expectations (Cicchetti & Lynch, 1993) influence the way in which children approach and handle social interactions. For those involved in the area of education, studies have found a link between these expectations and children's readiness for learning.

Aber and Allen (1987) characterize "secure readiness to learn" (p. 411) as the combined wish and ability to deal effectively with one's surroundings and establish positive relationships with adults. Successful secure experiences, while striving to attain this goal, will provide an

environment which will encourage cognitive competence, a positive attitude toward school, and thus more readiness to learn.

In comparing non-maltreated children versus children of insecure relationships, it was found that children of latter experience appeared less ready to learn (Aber & Allen, 1987). An overdependence on adults, lower motivation, and lower cognitive growth define this lack of readiness. Similarly, Harter (1990) has indicated that when compared to non-maltreated children, maltreated children exhibit increased academic, motivational, interpersonal and disciplinary problems in school.

In addition, children from socially disadvantaged families often exhibit irrational and stereotypical thinking, making it difficult to comprehend rules and regulations. Eventually this impedes them from relating to and being respected by peers and adults in schools (Kazdin & Johnson, 1994). Low self-esteem, social isolation or rejection, and poor self-control are examples of affective processes that reflect negatively on school performance (Grolnik & Ryan, 1990).

It can be logically argued that early affective and social processes are important in preparing children for school competence. Studies have demonstrated that there is a relationship between school-aged children's feelings of connectedness in and out of school. Furthermore, Connell points out that attributes of a positive attitude, active participation and cognitive flexibility characterize children engaged in school, whereas the opposite is true of children who are alienated in school (Lynch and Cicchetti, 1997).

There is a continued importance placed on teacher-child relationships for children's school-related adjustment and self-perceptions. Ryan and Grolnick (1986) reported that the

more the teacher was perceived as supportive and autonomy-oriented, the greater the child's feelings of self-worth, competence and intrinsic motivation to learn.

Similarly, Ryan, Stiller and Lynch (1994) examined early adolescent's representations of relationships to teachers, parents, and friends in relation to various measures of school adjustment, motivation and self-esteem. The findings demonstrated that students who feel more secure with and supported by parents and teachers also indicate a more positive attitude, greater sense of control and autonomy. In essence, these findings support the growing concept that schooling is an interpersonal as well as an academic institution. Now that there is widespread evidence supporting the need for childhood friendships and interactions, researchers are concentrating on teaching the social skills with which to form these relationships (Freeman & Arth, 1996; Lawhon, 1997; Sugai & Lewis, 1996).

According to Ollhoff (1996), the art of making friends is not instinctual or genetic but can be taught. Teaching children and youth to be socially competent is becoming a central theme within schools. Social competency can include such individual attributes as empathy, cooperativeness and a fairness or focus on observable behaviours such as saying "thank you", waiting one's turn, or raising one's hand when in need of help. Gresham (1986) defines social competence as "an evaluative term based on judgements and criteria that a person has performed a task adequately. These judgements may be based on opinions of significant others (parents, teachers), comparisons to explicit criteria (number of social tasks correctly performed in relation to some criterion), or comparisons to some normative sample" (P. 146).

Although it has been accepted that social competence came as a natural part of socialization process, research has been encouraging social skills teaching/training (Elias &

Weissberg, 1990; Lawhon, 1997; Oden & Asher, 1977; Shure & Spivak, 1980; Sugai & Lewis, 1996). Sugai and Lewis (1996) believe that social competence can be taught directly using social skill instructions. Students can perform actions (e.g., verbalizations, behavioural rehearsal) while teachers led the students through a process similar to teaching academic concepts. Using this method, students are led systematically toward specific, organized goals and objectives. This concept assumes that social and academic skills are acquired in much the same way.

Another social skills program (Oden & Asher, 1977) provided verbal instruction to elementary students on such topics as: participating in group activities, co-operating in play, communicating with and supporting peers. When measured a year later, the children on this program were found to exhibit the same positive behaviours.

Whether social skills are developed directly or indirectly, parents, teachers and significant others should provide an environment that promotes the development of social problem-solving skills, anger management sharing, appropriate expression of feelings, acceptance of others and friendly sociable behaviour. Such an environment will encourage children to develop and exhibit healthy, positive characteristics that will eventually lead to very satisfying relationships.

The following activities illustrate examples of the previous theory and research which argues that social competence can be taught using social skill instructions and related activities. These activities are designed for students, grades 4-6, but can be adapted to most grades.

Interpersonal Communication Activities

Competency II: Skills to interact with others

Activity #1

Demonstrate skills in resolving conflicts with peers and adults.

Title: Friends Again?

Purpose: Students will learn about assertive behaviour and identity behaviours as assertive, non-assertive, or aggressive.

Grade: 4-6

Materials: Drawing materials.

Procedure:

1. Introduce the concept of aggressive behaviour by asking for examples of when he/she or someone else pushed, screamed, slapped, or criticized to get what he/she wanted.
2. Introduce the concept of non-assertive behaviour by asking for examples of when he/she or someone else gave up, ran away, refused to give his/her opinion, went along with the group even though they felt it was not a good idea.
3. Introduce the concept of assertive behaviour by asking for examples of when he/she or someone else gave his/her opinion without hurting others, told the most popular group in school that you did not agree with his/her ideas.
4. Divide students into groups of two and have them role-play situations with either an aggressive, assertive or non-assertive behaviour. After each role-play the rest of the class can guess which of the three types is being acted out.

Possible role-play situations:

- ❖ Your friend borrowed your soccer ball and lost it.
- ❖ You are a new student at school and would like to join a group of kids playing tag.
- ❖ Your group has an assignment to complete and you seem to be doing all the work.
- ❖ The waiter has just brought you your meal and it tastes cold.

Activity #2

Demonstrate group membership skills.

Title: People Bingo

Purpose: Students collect information from others in a group and find out more about one another.

Grade: Can be adapted for any age.

Materials Needed: Pencils and bingo sheet

Procedure:

1. Distribute a People Bingo sheet and allow students a few minutes to complete it by writing their name in the boxes that apply to them.
2. Explain that they are playing a form of bingo, attempting to find classmates who match each of the boxes. Encourage the students to move around the classroom getting other individuals to sign the matching bingo box. Students can only use each other's name once.
3. The student calls out "bingo" when he or she has a classmate's name in every box.

4. Have the first bingo winner discuss their sheet. Discuss what boxes the other students needed signed.

It would seem that social development follows the same patterns as the other aspects of development. According to such theorists as Piaget, Kohlberg and Erikson, there are numerous stages in which critical attributes must be acquired in order to move on to the next developmental phase. The rate at which these stages are successfully attained depends upon the child and his or her environment. Research has shown that a child who is exposed to supportive, healthy relationships will exhibit increased academic, motivational and interpersonal success in and out of school.

Children learn by watching and imitating, and the development of social skills is no different. Therefore, teachers, parents and other adults should take every opportunity to model appropriate social behaviours of acceptance, co-operation and understanding. As children develop these skills, they need to be directed, sometimes redirected and guided towards healthy behaviour. It is from these skills that children will form and maintain healthy relationships through childhood and into adulthood.

Changing Gender Roles: Implications for Gender Stereotyping

Psychologists' interest in gender issues has varied over time. In the beginning there was some interest in gender as an aspect of career development, cited in the works of Hollingworth, but it did not become a widely used variable in psychological research until the mid-1960's. In particular, developmental psychologists have had an ongoing interest in such gender issues.

The idea that male and female children become “masculine” and “feminine” at an early age has been widely accepted. This process, referred to as sex typing, involves the acquisition of sex appropriate preferences, skills, personality attributes, behaviours and self-concepts (Bem, 1987).

Due to the continuous interest in the development of sex role behaviour, several theories have been advanced to explain this occurrence. The three most important theories have emerged from psychoanalytic, social learning and cognitive developmental approaches.

Psychoanalytic Theory

The oldest and probably most recognised of these sex-typing theories is psychoanalytic, which originates from Sigmund Freud. Freud believed that human behaviour could be explained through sexuality. His theory described five stages of development. These are oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital.

Freud proposed that males and females develop similarly through the first two stages but differ from each other during the phallic stage. During this stage children focus on their genitals. Boys suffer from a castration complex while girls feel inferior upon seeing the male penis, that is, penis envy. The problems created by this anxiety are somewhat resolved when the child identifies with the same-sex parent. It is the child's identification with the same-sex parent that serves as the primary avenue through which the child becomes sex-typed. According to Freud, this act of resolution is more complete for men than for women.

Although the psychoanalytic theory is probably the most recognized, there is very little empirical work to support it. Despite Freud's work regarding penis envy and castration anxiety, sex typing is not found to be determined by a child's discovery of genital sex differences or

identification of same-sex parents (Jacklin, 1989),

Social Learning Theory

According to the social learning theory, the development of gender roles follows the very same general principles of learning that guide the development of other socialized behaviours. This theory emphasizes the rewards and punishments that children receive for sex-appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. However, Mischel proposed that these sets of behaviours are not the same for girls and boys (Jacklin, 1989). Children are also believed to imitate models of the same sex. Gottfredson (1981) contends that because a child's thought processes are predominately concrete, he/she focuses on the most visible cues of sex role, such as observable behaviour and clothing. His/her models may include parents, other children, other adults or even characters from print or visual media. Social learning theory views the child as a passive recipient of cultural factors rather than as an active participant in organizing and understanding his or her social world. This belief is inconsistent with numerous observations that children often create and strengthen their own account of society's gender rules.

Cognitive-Developmental Theory

In contrast to social learning theory, cognitive-developmental theory focuses on the child as the primary agent of his or her own sex-role socialization and assumes that sex typing naturally emerges from principles of cognitive development (Bem, 1987).

Cognitive developmental descriptions of gender-related behaviour was outlined by Kohlberg (1966). The basic assumption is that children cannot understand generalized concepts such as their own sex and gender-role expectations until their cognitive abilities develop to a level at which they can understand the constancy of gender. Proponents of cognitive-

developmental theory readily agree that young children will naturally develop a gender-based self-concept and value system even without external pressure to behave in a sex stereotyped manner (Bem, 1982)

There also exists research that disconfirms cognitive-developmental theory. It has been demonstrated for example, that children have knowledge regarding their own sex-appropriate behaviours and attitudes well before the age Kohlberg states they acquire gender constancy (Jacklin, 1989).

Gender Schema Theory

More recently, a fourth theory of sex typing combining features of social learning theory and cognitive developmental theory was introduced- namely gender schema theory (Bem, 1981). Similar to cognitive-developmental theory, gender schema theory suggests that sex typing is mediated by the child's own cognitive processing. Like social learning theory, gender schema theory maintains that sex typing is learned and, thus inevitable and unmodifiable. More specifically, gender schema theory suggests that sex typing, in part, results from a child's readiness to process information in terms of a growing gender schema. This program is entitled, gender schematic processing.

A schema is defined as a set of ideas that helps an individual organize information. Thus, gender schemas are said to develop from all the diverse information an individual receives that relates to issues of gender. This information may consist of modes of behaviour, properties of objects, attitudes and feeling, for example, placing traits such as "affectionate" and "meek" into a feminine category and traits like "rugged" and "strong" into a masculine category.

Another aspect of the gender schema theory is the belief that children's self-concepts become sex-typed. According to Bem (1981), as children learn about their culture's gender schema, they also learn what attributes are to be linked to their own sex and that these qualities themselves are differentially applicable to the two sexes. Adults rarely describe a little girl as "handsome" or a little boy as "sensitive". Children, in turn, apply the same schematic selectivity to themselves resulting in self-concepts that are sex-typed and behaviours that adhere to society's definitions of femininity and masculinity.

Markus, Crane, Bernstein and Siladi (1982) examined information-processing consequences of self-schemas about gender. Their studies revealed that individuals identified as 'feminine schematics' remembered more feminine than masculine attributes, endorsed more feminine qualities, and were able to provide more examples of past feminine behaviour than masculine behaviour.

A similar pattern of results was found for masculine stimuli for those individuals identified as 'masculine schematics.' However, in contrast to masculine and feminine schematics, androgynous individuals did not differentiate in their processing of masculine and feminine attributes. Furthermore, androgynous subjects were viewed as aschematic, that is, having little or no self-knowledge structures regarding masculine or feminine concepts, qualities and features. Overall, these findings suggest that important differences do exist in how individuals organize gender-relevant knowledge and in how it is integrated into the self-concept.

In other research, the relationship between sex role identity and psychological well being was examined. Allgood-Merten and Stockard (1991) investigated the relationship between traditional masculine traits (self-efficacy) and feminine traits (relationality) and self-esteem in

fourth graders and high school students. Based on previous evidence, self-esteem was used as an indicator of psychological well-being. While both self-efficacy and relationality were associated with self-esteem for both sexes in the fourth graders, results from the sample of adolescents indicate that only self-efficacy (masculinity) is generally associated with self-esteem.

Only one group of androgynous males reported an association between relationality (femininity) and self-esteem in adolescence. In contrast among the brighter high school girls, there was no association of feminine attributes with self-esteem. These findings suggest that as children, feminine traits have importance but that they lose value, as they become adolescents. This obvious depreciation of those attributes that are feminine makes it very difficult for bright ambitious women to feel good about themselves.

The literature presented suggests that gender stereotypes still exist in society, usually portraying the male as the dominant person and females as subordinate and confined to the home. To avoid limiting many boys and girls to less than full lives because of their gender roles, change must occur. Changes are needed in the way the media, teachers, parents and society view gender issues.

In order to promote change we must first address the question, "Is children's gender-typed behaviour modifiable and flexible?" The literature yields differing conclusions regarding this issue. Some studies have reported increased flexibility in adolescence relative to childhood (Carter & Patterson, 1982; Katz & Ksiansnak, 1994). On the other hand researchers have argued that gender stereotyping flexibility decreases as a child becomes an adolescent. (Galambos, Almeida & Petersen, 1990; Stoddart & Turiel, 1985).

Although several explanations can be suggested for these inconsistent findings, Alfieri, Ruble and Higgins (1996) identify two possible reasons. First, the age, which represents the stage of adolescence, varies widely. Some studies refer to high school ages (9th - 12th grades) while others investigate late elementary or junior high school ages (7th - 8th grades). Another possible reason may be the exclusion of the examination of other changes during adolescence that may lead to an increase or decrease in flexibility.

In their study, Alfieri et al., (1996) helped resolve previous inconsistencies found in the literature by proposing when and why changes in gender flexibility versus rigidity occur during adolescence. These authors measured the flexibility of gender stereotypes in adolescents in Grades 4 to Grade 11. The results revealed increases in flexibility were present after a change in an individual's social environment, that is, the transition to junior high school. However, stereotype flexibility then decreased during middle and late adolescence. Thus, this time of transition associated with relatively high gender stereotype flexibility provides an opportunity to foster the notion of equality between the sexes. Parents, teachers, school counsellors, and other adults can provide information during this social life transition to reduce sexism and gender stereotyping.

As the importance of gender-role flexibility becomes more apparent we must now consider the conditions that can facilitate the change of gender-typed behaviour. Despite limited research regarding this question, different factors have been found to contribute to the success of counterstereotyping measures.

Katz and Walsh (1991) conducted two studies of 8 - 11 year old children that explored factors related to willingness to demonstrate gender-atraditional tasks. The first factor is the

developmental level of the child. Katz and Walsh (1991) found older elementary children to have greater cognitive flexibility with regard to gender, and older elementary boys, in particular, had more stereotyped preferences. Neither pre-existing preferences nor level of cognitive flexibility were highly predictive of the performance of gender-atraditional behaviour.

A second factor involves the effectiveness of a variety of modification techniques. First, children who observed atraditional models receiving positive reinforcement were more willing to perform similar tasks. Thus, attempts to modify targeted behaviour without positive consequences may be unsuccessful. Second, peer reinforcers were more effective with younger children and on child-oriented tasks, whereas adult reinforcers were more effective with older children on adult-oriented tasks. The most consistent result to unfold was that male examiners evoked the most atraditional behaviour from children. Katz and Walsh (1991) explain that these findings may reflect higher demand characteristics displayed by male examiners and parental sex-typing patterns in which the father plays a more significant role than the mother. Therefore, if males are seen as more influential in gender socialization, a male adult who encourages gender-atraditional behaviour may validate it.

Home and School as Gender-Role Influences

Gender role socialization and development are moulded by numerous individuals in assorted environments that include parents, teachers and peers at home, in school and at play.

Research (Langlois & Downs, 1980; Rheinhold & Cook, 1975), has shown that parents not only provide different toys and furnishings for their sons and daughters, but tend to reward gender-typical play and punish gender-atypical play. Rheinhold and Cook (1975), for example,

found more vehicles, sports equipment, toy animals, machines in rooms belonging to preschool boys and more dolls and doll houses in the rooms of preschool girls.

Gender role socialization of children occurs in school also. According to Flynn and Chambers (1994), teachers contribute to gender inequality in four critical ways. First, teachers reinforce traditional male and female roles and prevent development of a mutual understanding through gender segregation. They separate boys and girls when sitting, forming lines and performing classroom tasks. As well, teachers continue to have different academic expectations for boys and girls. Teachers often encourage and expect boys to excel in math and science, leading the girls to doubt their abilities in these areas. Finally, teachers, unknowingly, tend to interact with boys and girls differently. Boys receive more direct instructional time, praise, criticism and counselling. Girls, on the other hand, experience less contact, less praise and less constructive feedback.

Peers exert a powerful influence on gender-role development also. Maccoby (1988) has suggested children's growing preference to play with same-sex children may be due to different play styles in each gender group. Boys' interactions appear to be more dominant whereas girls' interactions are more gracious and polite. It appears girls behaving in this manner have little influence over boys and thus, children quickly learn that the masculine style is what is needed.

In another study regarding children's judgements of peers, McAninch, Milich, Crumbo and Funtowicz (1996) found that girls who behaved in a masculine stereotypical manner were judged to be competent by both sexes. In addition to receiving the highest rating, female peers also rated the "masculine" girl as bossiest.

Despite universal and important changes in our society, these findings suggest children of the present generation are still responding to peers in some gender-stereotyped ways and girls may continue to be viewed negatively when they behave in a masculine manner. Since schools are a part of society at large, interventions that attempt to change attitudes toward gender stereotypes and behaviour must emerge through school personnel and programs.

Teachers' Role in Gender Socialization

Career planning is one of the most critical components in forming the future work force and can no longer be put into the lap of the school counsellor. (Hosler, 1994). Every classroom teacher must be willing to begin this process starting at the elementary level. This wholistic approach to career education will eventually lead students to an informed selection of potential occupational alternatives. In particular, females will experience a school system from kindergarten through Level III knowledgeable in ways to gain equitable, successful employment.

In her article, Hosler (1994) describes various activities a teacher can do to provide an environment that fosters equal opportunity despite gender. Beginning at the elementary level, students should be made to learn about their personal likes and dislikes and the various occupations. For example, a "career day" can be organized in which different occupations, particularly non-traditional roles, are represented by men and women working in these careers. The adults can discuss their occupations with the children. Content in their school texts that stereotype gender can be discussed with the children. Where at all possible, toys, stories, and games should be free of stereotypes of what is expected of boys or girls.

At the middle school level, students are beginning to comprehend how their occupational alternatives are affected by their personal and social choices. Students can actively look for examples of stereotyping on television, in magazines or newspapers and discuss how such stereotyping affects their career goals. At this level students may also benefit from mentors, particularly those who represent non-traditional careers.

Within the classroom, at all levels, teachers need to discuss the fact that boys and girls are equal partners in all environments. Cooperation rather than competition must be encouraged with males and females working together. Hosler (1994) invites teachers to serve as role models for non-sexist behaviour and language, in or out of the classroom. The goal of such a career program is to encourage all students to seek careers that are not based on gender, but on personal skills, interests, and abilities.

As pointed out in the literature, gender stereotyping still exists in society and in the education system in particular. General suggestions for teachers have been highlighted to address these gender issues and how educators can increase educational and eventually occupational choices for both sexes. The success of such an initiative will be more likely if it has its beginning at the elementary level. The following activities have been adapted for the elementary grades. These activities encourage students' awareness of different occupations and changing male/female roles.

Career Exploration Activities

Competency XI: Awareness of different occupations and changing male/female roles.

Activity #1

Describe the changing life roles of men and women in work and family.

Title: The Jobs of Mom and Dad

Purpose: Students role-play traditional and non-traditional scenes and discuss how they have changed.

Grade: 4 – 7.

Material: None

In order to give the students ideas from which to use in their role-play, allow 10-15 minutes at the beginning for a brainstorming session of jobs their parents perform at work and home.

Procedure:

1. Using the list from the brainstorming session, ask the class to label each job as traditionally done by women, traditionally done by men or done equally by both.
2. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4, with boys and girls in each group, and have them role play a traditional scene. For example, mother as a homemaker while the father works outside the home maybe in an office.
3. After the role playing, discuss how these traditions are changing and how males and females are choosing non-traditional careers.
4. Have the students go back into their groups and repeat their role-plays but this time boys and girls will reverse their previous roles. That is the students will act out non-traditional roles.

5. Discuss class reactions.
6. Ask the students if there are there any jobs, which can be done by only one gender?

Activity #2

Describe how contributions of individuals both inside and outside the home are important.

Title: Help Wanted

Purpose: Students gain an appreciation for the contributions of family members who care for them.

Grade: 4 – 6

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. Write the word "homemaker" on the chalkboard or flip chart. Using a web, outline the students' ideas of what they believe a homemaker does.
2. Ask the students to identify what family members do what chores.
3. Have the students interview members of their family to find out what they do in and out of the home.
4. Have the students share their interviews with the rest of the class.
5. Discuss class reactions.

With parents' help, have the students choose a chore at home to complete for the whole week. At the end of the week, have students write about their feelings regarding their contribution as a family member.

There is considerable evidence that suggests that gender-role stereotyping begins quite early and is shaped by numerous sources including families, friends, teachers, books and movies. The process of gender-role acquisition has been explained through four dominant theories within psychology with gender schema theory being the most recent. Despite assumptions by such theories that sex typing is inevitable and unmodifiable, the literature has proven otherwise. Educators of children and adolescents need to be aware of the negative impact of gender stereotyping on both sexes. The students' gender stereotypes are shown to limit their future decisions regarding various aspects of their lives, including choice of profession and career development. Eliminating gender inequalities in school will require a sincere effort by teachers. Teachers need to be alert to the research that states male students receive more attention in the form of instruction, praise and support for their academic potential. Females must be given an equal amount of support. As the work force becomes more competitive across nations, the best person, not gender, for the job is a necessity. Thus, school systems need to be committed to an educational environment that fosters equality between sexes in preparation for these opportunities. However, when the messages transmitted to students are not consistent with messages relayed in society, their influence is limited. Furthermore, intervention programs at schools are only successful if they are a part of a more comprehensive program, i.e., society.

Conclusion

Although numerous career competencies for the elementary student were delineated, the significant influence of self-concept, peer and adult relationships, and gender typing on the development of an individual's occupational identity cannot be denied. Well-developed possible

selves serve as strong motivators for children to pursue occupations based on their skills, interests and abilities. Most areas of development influence or are influenced by human interaction. For example, people use social comparison and interaction to receive information about themselves (Markus & Wurf, 1987). The literature indicates that too often parents, teachers, school counsellors, and other adults unwittingly provide information to sustain sexism and gender stereotyping, resulting in the development of stereotypical attitudes in our youth. Fortunately, the evidence has proven that children's attitudes are flexible and modifiable up to a point.

Educators of children and adolescents need to be aware of the negative impact of gender stereotyping on both sexes. Eliminating gender inequalities in school will require a sincere effort by teachers, school counsellors, and school principals. Teachers, in particular, need to be alert to the research that states male students receive more attention in the form of instruction, praise and support for their academic potential. Females must be given an equal amount of support for their aspirations and feedback regarding their abilities. However, when the messages transmitted to students are not consistent with messages relayed in society, their influence is limited. Therefore, intervention programs at schools are only successful if they are a part of a more comprehensive program, i.e., society.

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Paper #3

Self-Concept: An Important Construct in an Occupational Identity

Rationale

Self – concept is viewed as the totality of thoughts and feelings individuals have with reference to themselves as objects (Markus, Cross, and Wurf, 1987). These authors propose that the self – concept contains representations of different aspects of the self, such as appearance, temperament, special abilities, achievements, and preferences. Markus (1997) states that attempts to organize, summarize, and explain ones' own behaviour, for example industriousness or friendliness, results in the formation of cognitive structures about the self or self-schemata. These self-schemata are derived from past experiences and work to process any self-related information contained in the individuals' social experiences. These established schemata are then used to determine what information is attended to, how important it is, and eventually what happens to this information.

The Blueprint for Life/Work Design 2000 highlighted building and maintaining a positive self-concept as the first level to be addressed in the career competency hierarchy for elementary career education. Similarly, Miller (1989) stressed self-awareness as the initial stage of career development in elementary schools. He argued that without self-awareness other levels of career development, such as occupational awareness and decision-making, become meaningless. Thus, the construct of self-concept should be examined closely in order to understand its role in the development of an individual's occupational identity.

The third and final paper of this series examines selected literature, past and present, on

self-concept. The introduction of the self-concept as a measurable construct, the aspects of self-concept, and how to encourage a positive self-concept are some of the topics that will be discussed in detail in the following paper.

Introduction

At the turn of the century the notion of self was first introduced by such theorists as William James, James Mark Baldwin and George Mead (cited in Oosterwegel & Oppheimer, 1993). Oosterwegel and Oppheimer provide a summary of these theorists' work, emphasizing their interconnections.

For James, the self had a dual nature: the "I" or self as the knower or subject and the "Me" or self as the object of thought. James concentrated on the "Me" believing the empirical study of "I" was not possible. James also believed that the "Me" self contained an actual and a potential version.

Mead took James' idea about the "Me" self as object, a step further. He stated that in order to view the self as object, individuals need to build a model of self from others' perspectives. Thus, according to Mead, the self is basically a social structure and it is shaped by social experiences. An individual cannot experience his or herself directly but forms a model of him or herself indirectly from the opinions of his/her social group.

Bretherton (1991) believes that Baldwin went beyond James and Mead by emphasizing the individual's own active role in acquiring a sense of self. Baldwin regarded the self (person) as a product of an influential relationship between the individual and the environment that allows the individual to assimilate new experiences into already available "me" copies or self-

schemata. What these theories demonstrate is a common vision of the self as a multidimensional, dynamic construct and, consequently, the self can be studied and explained from a wide and diverse range of perspectives.

A broad range of theoretical perspectives have shaped the psychological study of self. Learning theorists such as Albert Bandura (1977) emphasized the concept of self-efficacy and how this component determines an individual's initiation and persistence of behavioural performance. Psychodynamic and psychosocial theories such as those of Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson have studied the development of the self within a hierarchical series of stages involving central crises. Even sociologists have demonstrated an interest in the self as it is shaped in its social environment.

In an attempt to organize such diverse theoretical approaches to the study of self, Connell and Wellborn (1991) briefly discuss the understanding of self within three areas: social, motivational and cognitive psychology.

Social Approaches to the Study of Self

The approaches of social psychology and sociology both emphasize the role of the social environment within which the self develops. Although early behaviourists such as B. F. Skinner explained self-development with the context of such social factors as reinforcement and praise, this view soon gave way to the inclusion of an important concept known as self-perception. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy and Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control were significant contributions. Essentially, these social theorists identified the source of these self-perceptions as the pattern of socially administered rewards and punishments. Theorists such as Bowlby (1982) and Boivin and Hymel (1997) argued that an individual's "caretaking" environment is primarily

responsible for the person's developing sense of self.

Motivational Approaches

Proponents of these approaches identify emotional processes, biological drives and psychological needs as central in the shaping of the self. Freud proposed that one's sense of self, that he referred to as "ego", emerges out of the relationship between the urge of biological needs and the limitations of the external world. Erikson blended many of Freud's basic ideas with social expectations. In Erikson, an individual's development is facilitated or impaired, depending on the person's success in solving specific crises. Finally, Maslow (1970) links the development of self to psychological needs. According to Maslow, self-actualization is attained through the satisfaction of a hierarchical organization of biological drives and psychological needs.

Cognitive Approaches

Cognitive approaches view the developing person as a knower of self, as a constructor and processor of information. The focus of information processing and action theory approaches is goals and how these goals translate into cognitive strategies and are regulated by behavioural and cognitive outcomes. Structural approaches study developmental change in the way self-knowledge is organized. For example, Damon and Hart (1986), describe the developmental progression of children's self-understanding. As well, Markus and her colleagues (Markus, 1977; Markus and Wurf, 1987), drawing on research in social psychology, examine how the self develops. They discuss the content and structure of and processes mediated by the self-concept. Because of Markus and her colleagues' significant contribution to the study of self, their research will be discussed in greater detail throughout this paper.

The unifying assumption of recent literature on the self is that the self-concept is an active, dynamic construct which not only reflects ongoing behaviour but also “mediates and regulates” this behaviour (Markus and Wurf, 1987; Rosenberg, 1979). Within this current view, many psychologists and sociologists agree that the self-concept is best defined as a multifaceted structure despite descriptions of hierarchies, networks, schemas, goals or tasks.

The self-representations that comprise the self are diverse. Some are positive, some negative; some refer to the individual’s present experience while others involve past or future experiences. Some are more critical and more supported by behavioural evidence. Some representations describe the actual self, or what the self could be, should be, would be, or is fearful of becoming (Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Markus & Wurf (1987), in their social psychology review of self-concept, examine the following aspects of self-representations: They suggest that (a) Core conceptions are most important to the individual and are believed to have the most powerful effect on behaviour and information processing; (b) Possible selves represent the selves one would like to be or is fearful of becoming. These selves act as incentives for behaviour and provide a context for evaluating and understanding the actual self. The authors further explain that a discrepancy between any two of these self-concepts can result in a state of discomfort; and (c) that the working self-concept is that subset of representations which is comprised of an array of self-knowledge continuously accessible to the individuals at any given time.

Sources of Self-Representations

Sources of an individual’s self-representations are varied. Some self-representation are

shaped by inferences that individuals make about their attitudes, emotions, motivations and character (Harter, 1986). As well, Trope pointed out that representations of the self can result from direct attempts at self-assessment (Markus and Wurf, 1987). Individuals also use social comparisons and direct interactions to receive information about themselves. As children grow older they become more apt at using social comparison to evaluate themselves. According to Markus and Wurf (1987), both the information individuals receive about the self through such sources and how they process self-conceptions influences the growth of self-structures.

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Processes

The importance of the self-system has been demonstrated with the identification of critical intrapersonal and interpersonal, processes mediated by the self-concept. These are reviewed by Markus and Wurf (1987). The intrapersonal functions include: (a) providing the person with a sense of continuity in space and time, (b) integrating and organizing self-relevant experiences, (c) regulating affective states, and (d) representing a source of incentive or motivation. The first resembles one having a 'story' or 'narrative' that integrates a person's diverse experiences. An individual then attaches his/her present group of life experiences to this narrative, revising it when necessary.

The research on information-processing provides important literature regarding the function of integrating and organizing self-relevant experiences. Markus and Wurf (1987), in their brief summary of the extensive reviews, conclude that individuals are more sensitive to and demonstrate greater recall and recognition for self-relevant stimuli. Moreover, self-congruent stimuli are efficiently processed whereas information incongruent with the self is rejected.

The regulation of affect is viewed as one of the most crucial interpersonal functions of the self-concept. This concept involves defending the self against negative emotional states by enhancing and promoting the self whenever possible. When an individual's self-concept is challenged his/her affective state is disturbed. To regulate his/her affect the individual may transfer into the working self-concept positive conceptions that are consistent with previous views of self (Markus & Kunda, 1986), or interact with others who are supportive of one's prevailing view of self (Swan & Hill, 1982).

Another important function of the self is providing a source of incentive and motivation. Theorists have attempted to view motivation directly in terms of self-conceptions. Markus' and Nurius' (1986) conception of possible selves is one such approach. Possible selves are cognitive representations of a person's goals, aspirations, and fears and serve a motivational function, because an individual strives to achieve his/her positive or desirable selves. The perceived potentials presented by possible selves are critical in regulating behaviour.

Although these conceptualizations of possible selves help us to understand that behaviours consistent with their desirable selves will be chosen, they provide little information on *how* these future images of the self will facilitate in producing such action.

Cross and Markus (1990) extend William James' notion regarding the operation of will with recent research relevant to this question. They suggest two methods in which possible selves motivate action: (a) possible selves work to enable the individual to attend or focus on the intended action; and (b) possible selves allow the person to simulate or imagine the necessary behaviours or actions needed to accomplish that desired state. Once the individual holds fast the desired end state in memory, the necessary action needed to achieve this desired state, unless

blocked in some way would naturally begin. This focussing may also suppress or ignore conflicting or distracting ideas. Such attempts to control one's own thinking is most effective when the goal is self-relevant or involves the possible self. In support of James, Cross and Markus (1990) propose that the representations of the desired actions and the plans that form a bridge between the representations actual and possible selves are not separate from overt behaviour.

Several authors cited in the review by Markus and Cross (1990) reveal a connection between envisioning an intended action and performance of that action. Thus, it follows that the people who imagined themselves driving a new car would be more likely to purchase a vehicle than those who simply watched promotional ads on television. These underlying connections between mental and physical events imply that the more precisely an individual can mentally simulate a desired behaviour, the more likely that action will be achieved.

As the individual attempts to realize personally-motivated behaviour, he or she is influenced by social interactions. Other people often serve as the means for attaining one's goals and therefore people both shape and are shaped by their social interactions. An individual can interpret and regulate his/her social experiences through the self-concept. Markus and Wurf (1987) highlight four interpersonal processes that are influenced by the self-concept. They include: (a) social perception, (b) selection of situations and interaction peers, (c) interaction strategies, and (d) reactions to feedback.

The first function, social perception, indicates that an individual is more likely to use the self as a basis for judging others when he/she is more focussed on the self and have more information about the self, than the other. Another function, interaction strategies, focuses on

the strategies a person employs to shape a specific identity in the mind of his or her audience during an interaction aimed at fulfilling possible motives. An identity is an image of the self that an individual tries to reveal to others. Different goals or motives for social interactions are inspired depending on the type of audience. An external audience may lead the person to desire approval, social power, influence and attention. Attributes of predictability and consistency may be the focus with an internal audience.

The last function, reaction to feedback, involves an individual's response to reactions of others and to his or her own behaviour. This feedback may be congruent or incongruent with actual or possible self-images. An individual prefers congruent, positive feedback and, therefore when feedback is incongruent with self-conceptions, he or she may cognitively reconcile the discrepancy, act against it, or act in accordance with it (Swan & Hill, 1982).

Developmental Perspective of Self-Representations

Considering a developmental approach that describes the changing nature of self-representations at different ages across the life span can further enhance our understanding of the functions of self-representations and their links to career development. There are increasing examples of research identifying self-representations as developmental in nature (Damon & Hart, 1986; Harter, 1990; Rosenberg, 1979). The evidence indicates a movement from concrete descriptions of one's behavioural and social exterior to a more abstract explanation of one's psychological interior. Harter (1990) analyzes the changing nature of self-representations within the framework of Piaget's stages.

During the preoperational period, the young child can only give specific examples that

describe observable behaviours or characteristics about the self. For example, *I have blue eyes* or *I love ice cream* or *I am a girl*. Middle childhood introduces concrete operations that entail a shift from observable characteristics to those that are more conceptual or trait-like. Such trait labels as *pretty* and *popular* represent the ability to organize particular qualities into higher order generalizations about the self. Finally, adolescents upon reaching the formal operational stage can now integrate labels into higher order abstractions about the self. One's psychological interior is now represented in the form of beliefs, wishes, emotions and motives. Harter (1990) cautions that although this ability to think abstractly represents cognitive advancement, it may also introduce distortion of one's self-representations that is typical for the period of adolescence.

The bases on which self-judgements are founded also depend upon one's developmental level. Damon and Hart (1986) identify four developmental levels or dimensions on which self-representations are formed. Level 1 occurs with young children who view the self in terms of physical activities and features such as group membership and basic thoughts and feelings. In middle to late childhood (Level 2), the self is considered in comparison to others or to social standards. In early adolescence (Level 3), there is a shift of focus to interpersonal characteristics such as social skills and personality. Level 4 (late adolescence) is defined by the ability to define the self according to belief systems, personal philosophy and moral standards.

Damon and Hart (1986) in their longitudinal study of age-related changes in children's self-understanding concluded that self-concept develops in an orderly, predictable pattern during the ages of four to eighteen. These changes in the levels of self-understanding are gradual and almost always result in children attaining the highest level. However, they caution confusing this

stability with “absolute behavioural constancy” that they believe is non-existent over the course of development. That is, there is always a gradual increase in individuals’ reasoning capabilities as they enter into the next stage.

Implications for the Understanding and Treatment of Maladaptive Behaviour

With the emergence of formal operations in adolescence comes the ability to think about the potential self. Thus, during adolescence self-representations encompass references to possible selves, including both positive and negative depictions of what they may become (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

In their research Markus and Nurius (1986) suggested that a balance between both positive, desired selves and negative, feared selves within a particular realm is most beneficial. As a result, the positive selves can give direction toward desired future states and negative potential selves can outline what is to be avoided. Oyserman and Markus (1990) applied this argument to a study of 238 youths between the ages of 13-16 who varied in the degree of their delinquency. They found that the nondelinquent youths were more likely to demonstrate a balance between their expectations and fears than the delinquent youth. When given the opportunity to describe their own expected and feared possible selves, the more delinquent youth claimed “depressed,” “alone,” or “a junkie” as expected selves and “being involved with crime or drugs” as feared selves.

Oyserman and Markus (1990) propose two important consequences when a balance between expected and feared selves is non-existent. First, the positive influence of feared selves on an individual’s behaviour is reduced. Unable to counter that negative image, the individual

may be less motivated to avoid delinquent behaviour. Drugs or further delinquent activity, as temporary relief from feared selves, may more readily influence these youths. Secondly, without this balance, individuals may drift from the pursuit of one desired possible self to another making it difficult to choose among them at any point in time. These findings provide further evidence that self-representations play a crucial role in motivating delinquent behavioural outcomes.

Because the evidence shows the important role of possible selves as incentives for future behaviour and that an imbalance between expected and feared selves can result in delinquent behaviour it seems appropriate to address the issue of intervention with these youths. Harter (1990) takes a developmental approach in addressing the issue of intervention as well. Harter proposes that because a young child is not capable of understanding the components of self-representations and their causal links, attempts to instill a realistic concept of self will be ineffective. However, parents, teachers and other adults can encourage a young child's positive self-perceptions and provide support to change the negative ones.

During middle childhood we see the emergence of the ability to evaluate the self more realistically within a social context. However, children at this age appear unaware of the connections between the self-components and are unable to engage in introspection. As a result, conflicts are externalized and they look to the environment for a solution. Thus, therapeutic efforts should be aimed toward the determinants of the child's self-representations, many of which are external. Harter (1990) identifies competence in domains viewed as important and social support or positive regard from significant others as two critical determinants at this age. Therefore, two possible interventions are fostering remedial strategies to enhance the child's

competence level or assisting the child in those areas in which he/she is inadequate. Since self worth is also dependent upon social support from significant others, altering a parent's unrealistically negative attitude of the child will be beneficial as well. An alternative strategy may involve helping the child move to a different source of support where he/she may receive more regard.

Because the period of adolescence often brings a shift toward self-reflection, interventions created to directly address self-representations and links between constructs are more likely to be effective. Because, these self-reflections are likely to be somewhat unrealistic or inaccurate, in therapeutic interventions with adolescents it is important to realize that while they may talk openly about themselves, these self-representations may not be realistic. Helping the adolescents to ground in self-perceptions will be a specific focus of insight, as well as more behaviourally oriented treatment. Harter (1990) concludes that these lower levels of self-development may assist in identifying those issues that are most problematic or conflictual. Once these conflicts have been resolved an individual can then begin balancing his/her positive and feared, negative self. As a result of this balance, the positive self can serve as a guide toward an individual's desired future occupational self or identity.

Importance of Self-Concept to Career Development

Significant to the field of career development is the work of Donald Super (1980, 1988, and 1990). Super, in his research, identified what he deemed to be an innate or natural relationship between career development and personal development. Super (1990) refers to his work as a loosely unified set of theories dealing with particular aspects of career development

taken from developmental, differential, social and phenomenological psychology held together by self-concept or personal-construct theory.

According to Super's life span approach, an individual's occupational preferences, competencies, and hence, self-concept change with time and experience. He summarizes this process of change over a series of life stages referred to as growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. As the individual develops and matures, he or she acquires a mental picture of self, that is, self-concept. During the educational period, before entering into the work force, one's anticipated occupational role plays a part in the development of self-concept. During early childhood an individual's expressed occupational choices are often unrealistic and closely linked to their play life. For example, a young child may choose careers such as cowboy, movie star, and pro-athlete. Eventually, the list of occupational choices is narrowed to those careers the individual feels are within reach. Furthermore, in his/her attempt to maintain or improve a favourable self-concept, the individual chooses activities that will assist the attainment of this goal. As the individual gains experience and hones his or her skills, aspects of this occupation are integrated into the self-concept, stabilizing the individual. In some cases the individual may attempt to improve the occupational situation. However, restricting factors from personal limitations or external environment may be encountered. Fortunately, because the occupation and the individual's self-concept have some fluidity, change or adjustment can occur.

Super (1988) states that the development of self-concept through these life stages can be guided and facilitated by the home, neighbourhood, church and school. Because of their frequent interactions with the child, parents, teachers, counsellors and significant others have the best opportunity to observe static or underdeveloped abilities. They can then use these chances

to challenge the individual to push toward higher but reachable goals.

According to Super, the degree of satisfaction people attain from work is proportional to the degree to which they have been able to implement self-concepts. That is, the amount of satisfaction is directly related to the extent that the job fits the self-concept. Essentially, Super demonstrates that the individual is a reflection of his job or major role.

Although all components of the self-concept are important to forming an occupational identity, the concept of possible selves, according to Markus and Nurius (1986), may be crucial to the development of a career identity. They suggest, "... all of these ideas about what is possible for us to be, to think, to feel or to experience provide a direction and impetus for action, change, and development. Possible selves give specific cognitive form to our desires for mastery, power or affiliation, and to our diffuse fears of failure and incompetence" (p. 960).

Day, Borkowski, Dietmeyer, Howsepian and Saeng (1992) highlight several ideas regarding the development of possible selves in children: They state that "(a) children are motivated by visions of themselves in future states but the more remote the end state, the less vivid the image of the possible self; (b) children may be aware of an expected end state with its resulting consequences and affective responses but may not be aware of the concrete means to their goals; (c) the availability and salience of role models, as well as the expectations of significant others and the children's own past performance, are important determinants of possible selves; and (d) development involves coming to terms with unreasonable possible selves, as well as extending one's knowledge of more plausible possible selves.

It is from such assumptions that we begin to understand the critical role of the home and school in the development of a child's self-concept. The reactions and interactions of significant

others indicate to the child whether he or she is liked/disliked, accepted/rejected, successful/unsuccessful. If people who are important to the child consider him or her to be competent in a particular skill then the child will develop a positive possible self in that domain. Parents and teachers, in particular, need to encourage and guide well-developed possible selves so that a child can feel comfortable in pursuing a career based on their diverse skills, interests and abilities.

The Influence of Parents on Self-Concept

Literature (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Saracho, 1980; Super, 1990) has shown that self-concept begins to develop from early experiences within the family, especially with the prime caregiver. From an early age, the child senses his or her competence in activities that are valued by the people important to him/her, and through this the child senses his or her value as an individual. Because parents are the prime significant others in a child's life, they play a critical role in shaping their child's self-concept.

McDonald (1980), in her discussion of enhancing a child's positive self-concept, highlighted several guidelines to achieve this goal. The first guideline for parents is to recognize, respect, and encourage individual differences. Parents need to be aware of and accept their child's inherent qualities rather than expecting the child to change. The second guideline is to teach children to be pleased about the good fortune of others. Thirdly, parents must capitalize on their children's strengths. If parents are more aware of a child's strengths, they could use them to compensate for weaknesses and to find methods to alter inappropriate behaviours and teach new ones. The fourth guideline is to provide a comprehensive range of activities for

children. A child who has been exposed to a wide variety of people and environments will feel less threatened and overwhelmed and be better able to meet any future challenges. The fifth, and one of the most important for parents, is to remember to praise or punish the behaviour not the child. Also, parents need to respond to their child's desirable behaviours instead of just undesirable ones. Another necessary guideline is to provide the child with appropriate models. Parents who display a positive self-concept and high self-esteem treat their children with respect and acceptance and provide them with encouragement and support. The next guideline for enhancing positive self-concept is to gradually allow the child more autonomy. Considering the child's age and situation, parents need to allow him or her to do things independently and to make decisions on his/her own. The eighth and final guideline is to be consistent. When reasonable limits are set and enforced consistently, a child feels more secure and his/her self-concept is enhanced significantly. It would also be beneficial to the child if parents were to make regular contact with teachers to discuss mutual expectations for the child and make these expectations compatible and consistent as possible.

Educational Implications on the Self-Concept

In the role of significant others, teachers, school counsellors and school principals play an increasingly important part in extending the development of a child's self-concept. They continually provide feedback to the child, thus modifying his or her view of self. Thus, according to Saracho (1980), educators have two major concerns in relation to the self-concept. First, they need to consider the development of a child's positive self-concept as an educational goal equal to achieving social or reading skills. They must also be aware of the child's self-

conception, perceived level of competence, life style, and unique purposes for engaging in activities. Once this awareness has been achieved an educational match can be developed.

Early adolescents ask many questions as they struggle to form their personal identities. Educators who promote an encouraging and comfortable environment can help these youth develop a positive self-concept and achieve more academically. Stone and Rottier (1996) cited and described six factors that affect classroom climate and as a result, affect student self-concept. They include: (a) challenge-- a challenging classroom must have high but attainable expectations. Students may give up and feel worse if expectations are too high. Therefore, teachers should differentiate the goals for students, specify the requirements and a reasonable time frame for their completion, and vary teaching methods; (b) freedom-- offer students an opportunity to make some decisions and to learn from mistakes. This can be accomplished by teaching decision-making skills, providing an environment for students to express their ideas and opinions, and allowing for movement in the classroom; (c) respect-- students cannot improve their self-concept if the teacher does not show respect for them. Teachers can demonstrate this respect by learning students' names quickly, finding out about students' interests, listening, and respecting students' privacy; (d) warmth-- warmth implies providing students with a psychologically safe and supportive environment. Teachers must provide a "safe ground" where there is always someone to talk to and where making mistakes is a part of learning. Such an environment can be achieved through communication with students, establishment of physical contact (pat on the shoulder), and willingness to show the teacher's human side; (e) Control-- classrooms with reasonable rules and where enforcement of those rules is consistent can be stabilizing for many students. Thus, teachers should spell out the rules and expectations, involve

the students in establishing rules, and enforce consistency; and (f) Success— many classrooms have a specific orientation toward success or failure. Educators should be most interested in forming a positive, successful attitude. The development of a positive attitude can set the stage to conquer many domains. Students can benefit from such ideas as teaching new concepts in small steps, providing positive reinforcement for trying, and acknowledging success by honouring all students.

These six factors are only a few of the many factors that can influence students' self-concept. However, Stone and Rottier (1996) emphasize climate as established by the administration, school counsellor and teachers as the most important. A supportive climate sets the stage for positive things to occur.

A Special Needs Perspective

Students with physical, emotional and behavioural disorders, developmental delays, or learning disabilities need to develop and learn positive self-concepts just as their "average" peers. Developing coping skills, knowing that they are wanted and loved by their teachers and parents, and developing emotional stability are important ingredients of a healthy positive self-concept.

Mangold (1980) emphasizes two important factors when considering the development of self-concept in exceptional children. First, special needs children may be restricted in their interactions with the physical and social environment. Therefore, they may have fewer opportunities to learn to differentiate their abilities or aspects of self. Fewer experiences with success can also impede the development of a positive self-concept. Secondly, all children

invoke actions and reactions from individuals in their environment. Unusual physical features or behaviour or unique learning styles may trigger negative reaction such as disapproval, avoidance or lowered expectations. Such reactions may affect the children's self-image causing them to withdraw further, resulting in fewer learning opportunities. Therefore, adults need to make special efforts to provide opportunities for successful learning experiences and provide positive and social feedback for exceptional children.

In her article, Glazer (1997) outlined several "acceptable" and "unacceptable" approaches for teachers and parents of a child experiencing learning difficulties. In addition to eliminating critical remarks and altering evaluative terms, Glazer states the *key* to building a positive self-concept with "diverse learners" is direct praise. Direct praise is feedback that is unambiguous, immediate and also corrective. It's specific, reinforces desired behaviours and provides children with the opportunity to take risks. According to Glazer (1997), changing your words and gestures and using direct praise will enhance a child's self-confidence, leading to an improvement in his or her performance.

Educators readily agree that it is important to help students develop strong self-concepts. However, educators also agree that putting a plan in place to develop these strong self-concepts can be quite difficult. To assist educators with this difficult responsibility, Radd and Harsh (1996) developed a Self-Concept series and Weave process that increases self-concept and improves behaviour of special needs students. This self – concept approach can be used by professional educators to intentionally and consistently help students develop a strong self – concept. Although this study was conducted with students having special needs, the ideas derived can be applied to any classroom or even adapted for parents to use at home.

The authors' self-concept series consists of the three following premises: (a) each individual is valuable because he or she is unique; (b) because each individual is special and unique, with a responsibility to help himself or herself, or others. Individuals demonstrate their self-importance by the way they choose to act; and (c) individuals have a responsibility to analyze their actions to determine if they are remembering that they are special.

The self-concept series helps students, teachers and parents see themselves as capable people from whom appropriate behaviours can be expected. Using this approach with students in a special needs classroom reduces the need for external reinforcers. As students see themselves controlling their behaviour rather than an adult, their confidence is likely to be increased. This enhanced self-concept leads to positive feelings about self and others. By using the self-concept series as a way of thinking throughout all aspects of the day, this change will be more internalized

Radd and Harsh (1996) suggest using the self-concept series for such ideas as establishing rules, promoting an internal locus of control, reducing talking out and conflicts with peers and improving time-outs. They suggest first, the adult can post and teach the three steps of the series. Encourage the students to give examples of how the existing rules fit into the series. Next have students discuss or write about their most valuable possession and what they would do to protect it. It is helpful, then, for students to review their list of valuable possessions and ways to protect them. The goal is for students to connect this list to the ways that they would take care of themselves.

One of the most common attributes of behaviourally-challenged students is an external locus of control. Adults need to remind students that, as valuable people, they are capable of

being responsible for their own choices and feelings.

When students put others down they are forgetting that their friends are valuable people. Thus, remind students that there is enough room in the classroom or home for all these valuable people and that putting others down does not make them valuable. Finally, when talking out of order, encourage the students to examine how their choices affect themselves and others. If time-outs are necessary, ask the students to write about or discuss the problem, how their behaviour was hurtful to others and self, and to offer the helpful alternatives to their behaviour. Educators not only apply these concepts to students but also to themselves. This interaction slowly creates change, resulting in a more supportive and positive environment.

Conclusion

The wide and diverse literature involving the study of self has converged to support the common perspective of self-concept as a dynamic, multifaceted construct, mediating the actions of individuals throughout the lifespan. Although the self-concept is represented by several components, the possible self is deemed the most critical for motivating behaviour and providing a context within which to evaluate and understand the actual self. Subsequently, studies by Harter (1990) and Oyserman and Markus (1990) revealed that the concept of possible selves, positive possible selves specifically, could be employed by therapists in changing youth's delinquent behaviour.

Research (Day, Borkowski, Dietmeyer, Howsepian and Saeng, 1992; Markus and Nurius, 1986; and Super, 1990) has also highlighted the important role of possible selves in forming an occupational identity. A well-developed possible self is more motivational than a vague one.

An individual with a positive, vivid possible self has the confidence to set goals and strive to achieve them.

It is from this premise that we begin to understand the important role of home and school in the development of a child's self-concept. Young children sense their competence in all domains in the actions and reactions of significant others in their life. It is through this interaction that children also sense their value as an individual. Therefore, parents and teachers need to be aware of this effect and show respect, warmth and encouragement when dealing with children. These qualities will create a safe and compassionate environment where all children will feel comfortable exploring any or all potential selves. It is this array of well-developed potential selves that guides children toward choosing an occupation.

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