

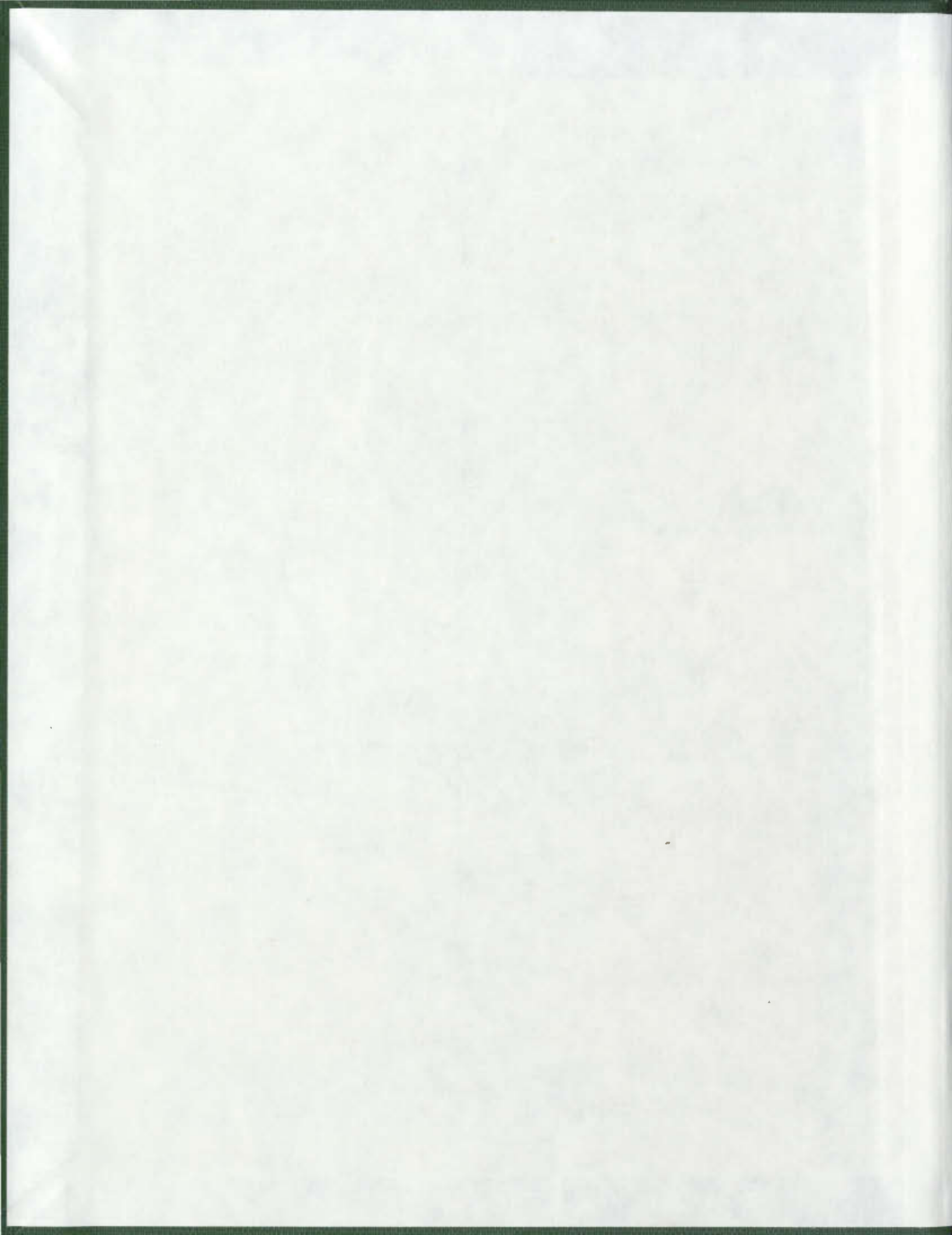
A REPORT OF A COUNSELING INTERNSHIP AT THE  
MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTRE,  
WITH A REPORT OF AN ASSESSMENT OF THE  
VOCATIONAL CHOICE GROUP COUNSELING PLAN

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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A REPORT OF A COUNSELING INTERNSHIP AT THE MEMORIAL  
UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTRE, WITH A REPORT  
OF AN ASSESSMENT OF THE VOCATIONAL  
CHOICE GROUP COUNSELING PLAN

by



Marylynn Murphy, B. A.

A Report submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

This report contains two parts; the first describes an internship of 13 weeks which was completed in the Counselling Centre of Memorial University. The second is the report on a study completed as a part of the internship.

Part one includes a detailed description of the internship, including its rationale and a list of the goals the intern set out to realize. Also included is a description of the nature of the supervision offered and a listing of the specific activities of the intern. The setting is also described. A discussion of the degree to which the various goals were met is also included.

Part two describes a research study aimed at assessing the feasibility and suitability (defined in terms of staffing needs and preparation, materials and time costs, setting compatibility and user acceptance) of the Vocational Choice Group Counselling Plan offered by Sprague and Strong (1970). It also offers an example of a possible model which might be used by similar settings seeking to assess the utility and practicality of adopting this or similar service approaches. Based on the use of the Plan with two groups (total N = 14), it was concluded that the Plan was useful, feasible and suitable, and that the approach used to assess it might provide a model useful to other centres considering the adoption of this or other similar approaches.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their generous help throughout this internship, I wish to thank my field supervisor, Dr. George Hurley, and my departmental supervisor, Dr. Gary Jeffrey, both of whom gave freely of their time and expertise. They helped make the experience valuable. Thanks are also extended to the Department of Educational Psychology, and more particularly its head, Dr. Glen Sheppard, for the variety of assistance provided throughout the entire program. I also thank the Department of Graduate Studies for the financial support provided to me while I studied for my degree.

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## PART I

### Rationale for the Internship

Graduate students in the Educational Psychology program at Memorial University have the option of undertaking an internship, as opposed to a thesis, to partially meet the degree requirements. An internship is to consist of a 13 week continuous placement in a setting conducive to the professional growth of the intern. The opportunity for a variety of experiences pertinent to counseling must be available. The internship, rather than playing a remedial role, is designed to add to the competencies of the intern.

The internship option was deemed the most appropriate by this student for four reasons.

1) The intern wished to gain additional practical experience in the counseling field, as she felt that such experience would help prepare her to assume the role of a counselor. She had previously had limited experience in actual counseling.

2) While the program at Memorial had provided an opportunity for placement in a junior high school setting, the intern wished to expand her area of competency through contact with an older clientele.

3) The internship provides an opportunity for expanding

2  
skills. The intern plans to seek employment in a community based counseling centre and will therefore need expertise in a variety of areas.

4/ Completion of the internship requires the intern to undertake a research project, in addition to regular counseling duties. The intern felt that additional experience with research related directly to vocational counseling would be professionally relevant.

#### The Setting

In the outline of requirements for the setting, as provided by the Department of Educational Psychology (Note 1), it is stated that the setting must be capable of providing the intern with "a variety of clients appropriate to his eventual employment," and of providing "experiences that are related to tasks judged to be part of the role contemplated by the intern in his initial vocational placement."

The outline suggests that the following be considered in selecting the setting:

- 1) The quality of professional supervision.
- 2) The quality of learning opportunities and experiences.
- 3) The relevancy to, and usefulness of such experiences in the actual setting in which the internee ultimately expects to work.
- 4) The availability of time for full-time involvement of the intern for a minimum of thirteen consecutive

weeks.

- 5) Availability of a qualified field supervisor on-site.
- 6) Ready access to the university supervisor:

The Counseling Centre at Memorial University was chosen as an appropriate site for the internship. The Centre has six full-time counselors who are available to help clients (most of whom are university students) to develop their personal capabilities and promote growth and intellectual development. Individual counseling, as well as a wide range of other services is offered. The services can be grouped under three headings:

- 1) Learning Enhancement Programs: Programs offered include Speed Reading and Comprehension, Organizing Ideas for Term Papers and Essays, and Oral Communication.
- 2) Career Planning: The Centre serves as a drop-in centre, and helps students gather information relevant to educational and career goals, perform self-exploration of career-related interests, clarify values, acquire more effective decision making strategies, and develop both short and long-term goals.
- 3) Individual and Group Counseling for Other Personal Concerns: Programs offered include Test Anxiety Management, Relaxation Training, Biofeedback Training, Assertiveness Training, Smoker's Clinic, Weight Control, Personal Growth, Sexuality, Men's and Women's Awareness Groups, and Yoga.

The Centre is on campus, and therefore readily accessible to the campus supervisor. Other interns have found that full and varied training can be obtained there.

#### Goals for the Internship and Selected Activities

The intern identified nine goals to be met during the internship. A list of these goals and activities designated to meet them follows.

Goal 1) To become more aware of her strengths and weaknesses as a counselor.

This was to be accomplished through: a) regular evaluation by those people involved with supervision of the internship, b) involvement with a range of the services offered by the Center.

Goal 2) To learn more about selected approaches to counseling, and to determine their appropriateness to the intern in relation to her developing theory of counseling.

This was to be accomplished through: a) extensive reading, b) discussion with professional counselors at the Center, c) conducting both group and individual counseling.

Goal 3) To become more familiar with the problems faced by young adults, in terms of personal, educational and

career development.

This was to be accomplished through: a) personal, social, educational and career counseling, b) appropriate reading in the area, c) discussions with the field supervisor about a variety of problems.

Goal 4) To gain further experience in group dynamics.

This was to be accomplished through: a) conducting a group in career awareness, b) reading in the area.

Goal 5) To learn more about career development and the problems faced by students as they try to choose careers.

This was to be accomplished through: a) work in the Career Planning Centre, b) individual counseling, c) conducting a group in career awareness, d) appropriate discussion and reading.

Goal 6) To become involved with a range of services offered by the Centre. To gain an understanding of the theoretical basis of the services and the methods for delivering them.

This was to be accomplished through: a) instruction by, and discussion with, counselors at the Center in their areas of special interest, b) appropriate reading and discussion, c) actual practice with the techniques,

particularly with reference to biofeedback and relaxation training.

Goal 7) To become familiar with the administration, scoring and interpretation of a number of formal tests and inventories.

This was to be accomplished through: a) instruction by counselors at the centre, b) reading test manuals, c) actual administration of the instruments.

Goal 8) To gain experience useful in completing research in practical settings.

This was to be accomplished through conducting a study. The research was to investigate the feasibility and suitability of offering group career counseling at the university Counseling Centre.

Goal 9) To gain experience in public speaking and dissemination of information to others, including both professional and student audiences.

This was to be accomplished through: a) giving at least one lecture, b) giving at least one seminar.



Description of Activities

Note: This section details the actual activities of the internship. Included are descriptions of the activities, along with information as to the amount of time devoted to them. Also included is a general statement, as to the degree the above mentioned goals, as reflected by the activities, were realized.

1) Reading:

Reading and study in three areas was carried out. These were career development, counseling techniques and theories, and group methods. Books which were read, either in part or completely, were:

Brown, B. B. Stress and the Art of Biofeedback. New York: Bantam Books, 1978.

Ellis, A., and Harper, R. A. A guide to Rational Living. North Hollywood, California: Wilshire Book Co., 1961.

Mitchell, A. M., Jones, G. B., and Krumboltz, J. D. (Eds.) Social Learning and Career Decision Making. Cranston, Rhode Island: Carroll Press, 1979.

O'Neil, H. F., Jr. (Ed.). Learning Strategies. New York: Academic Press, 1978.

Schoenberg, B. M. (Ed.). A Handbook and Guide for the College and University Counseling Center. London: Greenwood Press, 1978.

Shapir, D. Neurotic Styles. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1965.

Skinner, B. F. About Behaviorism. New York: Vintage Books, 1976.

Weinrach, S. G. (Ed.). Career Counseling: Theoretical and Practical Perspectives. New York: McGraw Hill, 1979.

A number of journal articles were also read. The intern found that reading in these areas added significantly to her available knowledge. As this was seen as a valuable activity, 39 hours of approximately 450 available during the internship were devoted to it.

2) Individual counseling:

Individual counseling of both a Personal and Career nature was carried out. The intern saw 14 clients individually, each more than once, and five of these returned for four or more appointments. The majority of the clients came for career counseling, however it was found that personal problems were often a major reason for the difficulties in choosing a career. In fact, the intern began to wonder if the division between personal and career counseling is really meaningful. A wide variety of clients were seen and this provided the experience with an older age group which was desired. Since counseling was a main focus of the internship, 64 hours were spent on it.

3) Testing:

The intern administered a number of tests including: The Self-Directed Search (administered 14 times); The Kuder DD (given twice); The Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (given 25 times); the Missouri Occupational Card Sort (two administrations); Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (given 14 times); Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale.

(administered twice); and The Destiny Manual (administered once). The use of formalized tests was found to aid definition of problems and to provide additional information. The intern spent approximately 40 hours testing.

#### 4) Group Counseling:

A Career Awareness group was conducted, both to provide some experience with this form of counseling, and to meet the requirements for a research project (see Part 2). The intern felt that the experience provided an opportunity to become more comfortable with group processes. Generally, members seemed pleased with the experience and the intern developed additional competence with handling a group. Fifteen hours were spent in group counseling.

#### 5) Supervision and Consultation:

Several one hour meetings per week were held with the field supervisor. During these sessions counseling methods were discussed and taped client sessions were reviewed. Meetings were also held frequently with the departmental supervisor to discuss both counseling and research. Two major meetings involving the field and departmental supervisors and the head of the Educational Psychology Department were held, one at mid-term and one near the end, to review the progress of the internship. The intern spent 30 hours on supervision.

#### 6) Dissemination of Information:

The intern set this goal as it was felt that being able to present oneself and one's ideas to others is an important part of being a professional. To fulfill this goal, two lectures and two presentations were given by the intern.

1) She spoke to staff members at the Canada Employment Centre for Students to explain her Career Awareness group, and 2) she presented information about a client she had been seeing to the other counselors at the Counseling Centre. Lectures were given 3) to a third year adolescent development class, and 4) a graduate class in career development. Seventeen hours were spent on these activities.

#### 7) Individual Instruction:

The intern sought and received instruction in a) methods of teaching speed reading, b) use of biofeedback, c) relaxation training, and d) administration of selected tests, including the Missouri Card Sort, Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, and the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory. While much more experience in teaching speed reading would be necessary if the intern wished to offer the course, a valuable introduction to the area was obtained. Eight hours were devoted to this.

#### 8) Career Planning:

The intern spent 104 hours in the Career Planning Centre, assisting students and learning about the operation

of such a center. While it may seem that a great bulk of internship time was spent on fulfillment of this goal, the intern found it very rewarding. The Career Planning Centre was quite busy and much student contact was obtained. A variety of concerns were met. The intern learned a great deal about the concerns faced by university students planning a career. Counseling was often conducted during this time.

#### 9) Research:

The completion of the research portion of the internship involved a considerable amount of time. The intern spent 76 hours on this goal. This time was spent conducting library research, reading for and writing a report, and learning to use, and using, some computer services. The research portion is an important part of the internship, hence it is presented as a separate part of the report. In general, this requirement was met by conducting a group in career awareness with the intention of determining its feasibility and suitability for the Counseling Centre at Memorial, and other similar university settings.

#### Conclusions

The internship combined very well the benefits of practical experience with those of research. Each day the intern participated in the functioning of the Centre as would any new staff member. Enough direction was provided

to allow learning, however, the intern was allowed a great deal of independence. As the time passed, a sense of professionalism was developed by the intern.

Exploration of each of the nine areas listed in the previous section served to both provide new information and skills and to strengthen those skills obtained earlier. The intern faced new challenges with individual and group counseling. A variety of new instruments for human assessment were examined, thereby her understanding of testing was increased. The access to the Career Planning Centre could only serve to broaden knowledge of techniques for assisting those who are planning careers. Of course, exposure to other professionals working in the counseling field has to increase awareness of the broad spectrum of competencies needed to be a good counselor.

The Counseling Centre at Memorial is a very good setting for an internship. The latest in equipment is available, including biofeedback machinery and videotape equipment, to allow the intern new experiences. On the staff there are also several counselors whose combined interests range from cognitive psychology to career counseling. The one drawback which might be found, with relation to gaining experience in individual counseling, is a shortage of clients, particularly during the summer when there are fewer students at university.

## PART 2

### Research.

To fulfill the internship requirements as determined by the Department of Educational Psychology, interns must undertake a research study as an integral part of the internship. The following study was compiled because it met these requirements, was compatible with the interests of the intern, and with the services provided to students by the Counseling Centre.

### Introduction

Work, its value and meaning, are central issues in the lives of most people today, as they have been through the ages. However, with the increasing sophistication of our society, youth is more likely to demand that work be fulfilling and worthwhile, while at the same time being unaware of the requirements of employment (Borrow, 1979). Because of this, Borrow writes that the counselor "committed to facilitating the complex process of career development in youth" faces a serious challenge (p. 8). In a somewhat narrow, but very clear definition, London (1973) states that career guidance should

assist the individual in arriving at wise choices among occupational and educational options, in

securing employment for which he is trained, and in making the necessary adjustments and advancements on the job. (p. 3)

Career guidance is being offered to a wide range of people. Industry, for example, utilizes the service to assist the hard core unemployed, the work alienated and the executive in mid-life crisis. The U.S. Army and Air Force provides career guidance to assist returning and retiring servicemen in adjusting to civilian life. According to surveys of American colleges and universities, the psychological service most often requested is career guidance (Crites, 1978). This became recognized as a beneficial service for a range of clients approximately fifty years ago. Before that time, only those people who had special placement problems received such assistance.

The difficulties involved in making a career choice in our complicated world seem to have caused the growth in the role of career guidance. Advances in technology, increased emphasis on continuing education, and changes in the family, are examples of factors which have made career choice increasingly difficult. The university student, in particular, must deal with this society, while also facing additional pressures to make a choice quickly when he/she often is not prepared (Berger, 1971).

To meet the needs of many groups, a great many demands are being made of vocational guidance services. They must now provide help in a variety of areas to a range of people who



previously would not have been assisted. A brief look at the range of approaches employed to assist the client in career planning is useful.

With the increased need for career guidance, there was a corresponding increase in the approaches to services and methods offered. Unfortunately, there is no general agreement as to which type of service works best and therefore the range of choices continues to grow, as do the variations within each type (Holland, 1981). Campbell, Walz, Miller and Kriger (1973) identified and discussed eight basic methods: (a) behavioral approaches, (b) computer assisted counseling, (c) educational media, (d) group procedures, (e) information retrieval systems, (f) simulation gaming, (g) vocationally relevant curriculae, and (h) work experience programs. These methods each provide a different type of service to the person seeking help choosing a career. Each approach has difficulties and advantages.

This study focused on the use of a group to provide career counseling. In general, research into group counseling suggests that a number of beneficial effects may result from this approach to counseling (see Review of the Literature for further discussion). The rationale for using groups for career counseling is the same as it would be for using a group for any other type of service, in that there is reported increased economy, as well as benefits from social modeling, sharing of common difficulties, and reality testing in a social situation (Hoffman & Cochran, 1975).

Research generally focuses on the effectiveness of group counseling in terms of increases in some form of career maturity or decision-making ability (Kratzing & Nystul, 1979; Egner, Roos & Jackson, 1978). There are, however, other criteria which come into play when evaluating the effectiveness of a program. These criteria are particularly important when evaluating a program relative to a particular setting and/or population. Along with its other benefits, a program must be suitable and feasible.

This study will focus upon both the feasibility and suitability of group counseling. Feasibility in this study is to be considered relative to university and similar counseling centres. This study will consider such factors as whether a centre would have the capability to offer the program, relative to its staff, equipment and resources. Suitability will refer to considerations which may effect whether a center would want to offer a program, presuming it to be feasible (see Research Questions). To be suitable the program must be within the professional resources of the setting, cost/effective, and generally acceptable to the clientele.

This study examined in-depth one particular program which appears to be situationally appropriate for a university counseling center. Its feasibility and suitability for use in such a setting was assessed. The goal of the study was to compile a comprehensive, yet concise, report which, while specific to the particular setting for which

it was proposed, also provided a model potentially useful to other centres who might desire to offer a similar program.

Very little is written concerning methods for determining feasibility of programs, however, each guidance centre must make important decisions as to which programs it will offer. The Counseling Centre at Memorial University has informal guidelines which stress that the cost to the centre and potential benefit of programs to students be considered (Hurley, Note 2). In keeping with these, criterion used to consider suitability for this study were: (a) student interest in the group, (b) attendance and drop-out rates, (c) expressed satisfaction of members with the group. Suitability can be seen as a measure of the extent to which the program was successful in maintaining interest and satisfying members. Feasibility will be determined according to (a) availability and cost of materials, and (b) the staff time and overall cost involved in offering the group.

In deciding to implement the plan, it was decided that if student interest had appeared low, or if the group was not perceived by students to be of sufficient value to keep them attending, then the program would be considered not suitable. It should only be offered if it meets a demand, as determined by student request. Self reported satisfaction of members with the group is an important factor to be considered when determining the suitability of the approach. Satisfaction was considered in terms of student

reported enjoyment of each facet of the experience, and feelings that the experience was helpful. In determining feasibility, it was decided that if materials needed for the group were either expensive or difficult to obtain, the group method would be judged to be less feasible than others available. Finally, if so much counselor time was needed to offer the group that the cost per student became prohibitively high, according to the budget of the center considering offering the group, the feasibility of the group would again have been questioned.

The Vocational Choice Group Counseling plan was used in this study (Sprague & Strong, 1970). There have been favorable reviews of the plan which stress its good balance of decision making and self-exploration, and its popularity with clients (Hoffman & Cochran, 1975; Tolbert, 1980). The plan requires that the client complete selected inventories, receive instruction in decision-making and take part in case-centered group counseling. Case-centered counseling, as described by Hewer (1959), involves concentration of the group on one member at a time.

#### Research Questions

The specific research questions which will be addressed by this study are:

- 1) Is the group feasible, i.e., will counseling centres

- be able to provide and afford the staff and materials necessary to offer the group.

2) Is the group suitable?

a) Is there sufficient interest in the group among the student population to justify offering it?

b) Are members satisfied by the experience? (see Method section).

#### Review of the Literature

This section reviews a) literature establishing a need for career counseling, b) several methods of career counseling, and c) then focuses on the use of groups for career counseling. Finally d) literature relating to the assessment of feasibility is examined, and e) several reviews of the Vocational Choice Group Counseling plan are discussed.

a) The Need for Career Counseling

The need for career counseling has been addressed by a number of authors. Tolbert (1980) sees the provision of assistance with career planning and development as one of the primary responsibilities of the counselor. He examined the need for career counseling in terms of "finding personal meaning in work, the changes taking place in the world of work, job discrimination, job changing, school drop-outs,

and educational programs" (p. 23). London (1973) also lists factors in our society which make career guidance essential.

These factors are:

1. Technological changes in our economy and their impact on the labor market.
2. Changes in the home and in the role of women.
3. Changes in the composition and distribution of the work force.
4. Lack of awareness on the part of youth of their own potentialities and of the world of work.
5. Changes in the educational system and the expansion of vocational education.
6. Opening up of new and expanded employment and educational opportunities for minority groups.
7. Changes in the attitude of people toward the Judeo-Christian work ethic.
8. Labor turnover and the persistence of unemployment.
9. Failure of vocational and professional school graduates to follow the occupations for which they were prepared. (p. 11)

Berger (1971) examined the particular problems faced by the university student. He points out that the student is faced with a great deal of freedom to make a vocational choice. College opens up many options to him, and in our society there is a large choice. He also faces pressure from society to make a choice quickly. Extra pressure is also added because university is expensive and the general feeling appears to be that time spent there should be directed toward productive training. Unfortunately, many college students do not have the knowledge about themselves, or the world of work, which is needed to make a wise choice.

#### b) Approaches to Career Counseling

In attempting to respond to the need for career counseling, many approaches have been used. Those commonly

discussed appear to be individual counseling, group counseling, computer systems, interest inventory interpretation, and, of course, the provision of various kinds of information about the world of work.

During individual career counseling, the counselor works directly with the student providing very personalized counseling and guidance. The approach has the advantage of being the best way to ensure that the clients needs are met. However, it is very time consuming, therefore, fewer people can be reached. It has also been suggested that a counselor working on an individual basis without aids will not be able to provide the amount of information needed (Holland, Takai, Gottfredson & Hanau, 1978).

Methods for group career counseling are as numerous as are the approaches to individual counseling. Generally, such groups have a small number of clients and meet regularly for a set period of weeks. The purposes of these groups are broad, often including exploration of the self and dissemination of information. Groups have the advantage of allowing the counselor to reach more people. They also have the potential for greater amounts of information exchange and for positive effects due to association with peers (Hoffman & Cochran, 1975).

Perhaps the most commonly used approach to career guidance involves making information available to those who need it. Computer systems excel at this. Computers are limited in their uses, however, particularly if they are

not utilized in a personalized manner. While they will not replace the counselor, they can save a great deal of counselor time (Tolbert, 1980). For example, a relatively new and sophisticated system, DISCOVER, developed by IBM, has been found to "help pupils specify career plans, understand occupations, and increase their self-understanding" (Tolbert, p. 172). The Department of Employment and Immigration in Canada has recently introduced the CHOICES computer system, which can help students narrow their choices and find specific information.

Interest inventories, as a final example, are generally used in conjunction with some other form of counseling, however, they are included here as a method in recognition of their widespread use. Generally, the inventories provide the client with information about the type of career to which he is most likely to be suited. Research into the effectiveness of the use of inventories as a means of providing career counseling has generally shown that they can accomplish some of the effects of more time-consuming methods, particularly in the area of increasing exploratory behavior (Holland et al., 1978; Krivatsy & Magoon, 1976; Zener & Schnuelle, 1976).

#### c) Group Career Counseling

This study focuses on group career counseling. In general, research points to a number of beneficial effects resulting from this approach, including improvements in career maturity and decision making skills for clients, and



an ability for counselors to reach more clients and be more economical. Katzing and Nystul (1979) found that a self-development based group was more effective in increasing attitudinal career maturity than was individual counseling, or a group approach involving the supply of information. Each treatment lasted for three hours. The self-development group, which began with instruction in decision making, increased congruency between expressed interest and vocational interests, as well as maturity of choice. The researchers concluded that counselor time is better spent in a self-development group than in one providing information, or in an individual situation.

Egner, Roos and Jackson (1978) offered a program for teaching career decision-making skills and found that students in the program scored significantly higher ( $p < .001$ ) on career maturity, as measured by a questionnaire developed for the study, than students who had not taken the course. Their 10 week course looked at values, occupational information and decision points. The members' career choices were considered to be more realistic and mature at the end of the program than at the start.

Nolan (1973) found that subjects who received 90 minutes of group counseling showed an increase in information seeking behavior over a group who completed the Self-Directed Search. He concluded that counselors who need to consider offering groups more often in order to increase efficiency to meet increased demand.

Healy (1974) concluded that "a theoretically derived counseling procedure is effective in helping clients to increase the certainty of their career plans and their willingness to engage in planning." His clients were measured on three factor scales; these being: planning orientation, resources for exploration and information and decision making.

d) Assessment of Feasibility

While there is little, if any, literature dealing directly with methods for the assessment of the feasibility of programs, there is a body of work concerned with evaluation of guidance programs. This work often considers the practical side of a program. Beaumont, Cooper and Stockard (1980) emphasize that the counseling centre examine the role and status of the staff, availability of facilities and equipment, the budget, and the institutional support and commitment. Tolbert (1980) provides guidelines for counselors developing career-education programs. He suggests that: a model be chosen; goals formulated; needs assessed; objectives formulated; personnel, facility and equipment resources determined; criterion measures specified; and budget considered.

In assessing the feasibility of developing a course to train adult career development specialists, The Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in Washington, D. C., focused mainly upon establishing need. They surveyed existing programs, contacted academic and vocational faculty

and administration, and conducted a mail and telephone survey of public and private social service agencies. They also conducted a pilot program to determine the practicality of operation and satisfaction with outcomes.

#### Vocational Choice Group Counseling Plan

More specifically, this study will focus on the Vocational Choice Group Counseling Plan (Sprague & Strong, 1970). The plan is based upon the case conference approach developed by Hewer (1959). Of the approaches to group counseling that are available, it appears to be one of the best. Tolbert (1980) refers to it as offering a good combination of decision-making and group counseling. Hoffman and Cochran (1975) describe it as theoretically sound and enjoyable for participants. They state that the program has a low attrition rate and that it is deserving of further examination.

The plan has elements of a self-development based group, in which the focus is placed on understanding the self. This type of experience has been found effective in increasing career maturity (Kratzing & Nystul, 1979). The Vocational Choice Group Counseling plan also includes career decision making and several researchers have emphasized this as important (Egner & Jackson, 1978; Miller & Benjamin, 1975). Completion of interest inventories is also part of the plan as reported by Sprague and Strong (1970). The selected benefits and uses of inventories have been discussed earlier

in this paper.

Goals of the plan, as reported by Sprague and Strong, are: (1) Each member is to become expert in problem-solving for vocational choice. The skills of each member as a vocational counselor should improve. (2) Each member should form a picture of himself, his interests, abilities and needs, as applied to work. (3) Members will benefit from group interaction. They will gain support, exchange information and have experience in organized thinking and problem-solving.

The group leader serves as an expert on problem solving and a resource person who performs psychological testing and aids interpersonal interaction. The first meeting provides a time for orientation. Vocational indecision is described and some problem-solving techniques are given. Members are given a copy of the Occupation Outlook Handbook provided with the Self-Directed Search Interest Inventory and a list of other potentially useful resources. It is during the second meeting that the use of tests is discussed and that members receive results of tests taken before the group began. The leader explains how to interpret the tests. During each of the next seven meetings, one member presents his own situation for discussion.

Sprague and Strong (1970) sent questionnaires to members of five groups. Members said they had enjoyed the experience and found the inventories useful. They also reported that they liked the case presentation format. One-

half of the members had made a choice or were close to choosing.

### Procedure for Conducting the Study

#### a) The Vocational Choice Group Counseling Plan

The Sprague-Strong plan was offered to students who replied to promotions of the group. Posters advertising that the Counseling Centre would offer a group were placed on bulletin boards throughout the university before the date of registration for spring semester (see Appendix C for a copy). To provide additional advertising for the group, professors teaching first-year Psychology announced the group during classes; handouts, providing the same information as the posters, were available during the registration period; the group leader spoke to staff at Canada Student Manpower asking that they promote the group; and an advertisement was placed on the Educational Television monitor, a university cable station. Students were given two weeks to register.

The Self-Directed Search (SDS), Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS), and The Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (SCII) were completed at the end of the registration period.

The SCII, the latest edition of the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, was developed in 1974 and revised in 1981, with the aim of comparing client's interests to those of

people working in a number of occupations (Campbell, 1977). EPPS developed in 1954, is designed to provide measures of 15 normal personality variables (Edwards, 1959). The SDS is a self-administered, self-scored, and self-interpreted interest inventory which has the benefit of providing the client with immediate information concerning possible career directions (Holland, 1979).

The group began one week after testing and lasted for five weeks. The procedure for the group was followed as described by Sprague and Strong. The duration was changed to suit the number of people registered. Because of high registration, the respondents were divided into two sections, with nine people in the first and five in the second. Sessions were planned so as to allow a 45 minute presentation and discussion for each person. Each week, the concerns of two people were focused upon, and the meetings lasted approximately 90 minutes. Since two people did not complete the group, this meant section one met for four weeks after the original session, and section two met for three weeks after the first session. The plan is designed by Sprague and Strong for ten meetings of one hour each, assuming 10 participants, however, it has been offered for six and eight week periods (Hoffman & Cochran, 1975). The group offered by Sprague and Strong met for a total of 10 hours, while this group met for seven and one-half. Members of the section which met for the shortest time were invited to join the longer running section.

b) Suitability of the Plan

In order to determine the suitability of the plan, a number of procedures were followed:

1) To determine interest, a record was kept of registration numbers as well as drop-out and attendance rates.

2) Self-profiles were completed by members following the final group meeting to provide information as to both the amount of interest in the program and the success of the program (see Appendix C for copies). The profiles recorded (a) each student's reason for joining the program, (b) the nature of the student's problem at the beginning and end, (c) his/her progress in choosing or learning how to choose, (d) his/her satisfaction with the program, and (e) his/her relevant individual information.

3) Members were asked to rank order the importance for themselves of career information, decision making skills, self-exploration, interest testing and job search skills, both before and after the group. The final rating only would point to suitability of these aspects. The earlier rating was for comparison only. They were also asked how firm their career choices were and how concerned they were about making a choice. Following the final meeting, they were asked to rate how helpful they found the group as a whole (for a copy of the questionnaire, see Appendix A). A rank ordering on a seven point scale was used so that the

group member was afforded a fair range. This is a common scale and often used by social psychologists. Because of the absence of an appropriate published questionnaire, questions were formulated which answered most directly the questions posed. The appropriateness was attested by a number of experts in the field. At a later date, there was some question concerning the matching of the stem and response categories in item three, and while this was not felt to be a serious problem, it should be noted.

c) Feasibility of the Plan

In order to assess the feasibility of the plan, a number of further procedures were followed:

- 1) Time required to offer the program was determined by keeping an accurate record of all time spent working on the group. This included time spent planning, giving inventories, and conducting the group.
- 2) Cost of materials was calculated.

Method of Statistical Analysis

To determine suitability to clients:

- 1) Records of attendance were maintained to determine interest. No inferential statistical analysis was performed on these, however, the number of people registered, along



with drop-out and attendance rates, were calculated.

2) Member satisfaction was assessed by statistical analysis of the rating scales. Five aspects of the program were rated (see Appendix A for copies of the questionnaires). Pre and post ratings of firmness of choice and level of concerns were collected. T-tests were performed to determine the significance of differences. A Correlation Matrix comparing between gender, age, year in university, and size of community, firmness of choice, level of concern and satisfaction, was prepared (see Table 3).

Member profiles were examined for the number of times statements regarding satisfaction and other relevant statements were made.

To determine feasibility:

No statistical analysis was performed on this data, however, as mentioned in the previous section describing the method for conducting the study, a number of procedures were followed.

1) Materials needed were listed and sources from which they are available were noted.

2) Staff time required to prepare for and administer the group was determined by recording all hours spent working on the group.

## Results

### Analysis of Self-Profiles

Ten group members, who were present or could be contacted later, were asked to complete short self-profiles following the last meeting (see Appendix B for copies). Five main questions were asked. They were: a) Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time, b) Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career? c) Did the group help you? How? d) How interesting did you find the group? and, e) Would you like anything done differently during the group?

In response to question a), regarding reasons for joining the group, six of 10 people replied that they were seeking more information specifically dealing with types of careers available. Three replied simply that they were confused, while two said they needed help narrowing their options, two wanted to understand themselves better, and two wanted help making a decision. One person was frustrated by earlier poor decisions and another member mentioned finding groups enjoyable.

In response to question b), regarding firmness of career choice, six members said they were close to, or had made a choice, when the group ended. Four were still undecided. Five members were actively looking for more

information before making a definite decision. Two commented that they now realize the career must match their personalities, while one member felt he/she had a better idea of what is interesting, another said he/she can now look more realistically, and a third now feels more capable of seeking information. This question repeats that asked in the final questionnaire, however on this form members had the opportunity to elaborate.

Nine members said they found the group helpful and the tenth person answered ambiguously, in response to question c, regarding the group's helpfulness.

Six members said they found the discussions helpful; four said they learned more about themselves; three felt they received valuable information; and one felt the tests were helpful.

When responding to question d), concerning the level of interest in the group, seven members said it was very interesting, and two said it was fairly interesting, while the remaining two did not give specific answers. Four members stated that the atmosphere was informal, relaxed and friendly, while three said they enjoyed the discussions, one enjoyed the tests, and another found it valuable to meet other people with the same problem.

When asked in question e), whether anything in the group should be done differently, a number of suggestions were made as to ways in which the group could be run differently. Four people said they would like more time for

discussions, three would have liked more specific career information, one wanted individual sessions, another wanted more group participation, and another felt there should be more people.

#### Analysis of Questionnaires

Of the people who completed the group, four were male and eight were female. The mean age was 20.91, and ranged from 17 to 34, and the mean year in university was 1.64. Six were from an urban community (over 25,000) and six were from a rural area (under 25,000). Five people heard about the group from the posters, four were told by a friend, three heard about it from a professor, two from the Canada Employment Centre for Students, one from educational television and another from the group leader.

No significant difference was found between firmness of career choice before and after the group ( $t = .45$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $p > .10$ ), or between the level of concern about making a choice before and after ( $t = 1.78$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $p > .10$ ). However, because the study is both clinical and exploratory in nature, it was decided that in order to maximize the value of the collected data, careful attention would be given to any trends which appeared. It is fully appreciated that in the absence of clear significance, definite conclusions cannot be drawn, but directions that future research may take could be found. Looking at the means, from the seven point

rating scale used, members rated themselves as more than somewhat satisfied with the help provided by the group (Mean = 5.0). The firmness of career choice dropped slightly from the beginning (Mean = 5.72) to the end of the group (Mean = 6.18, 7 = not firm at all). The level of concern rose slightly from the beginning (Mean = 4.6) to the end (Mean = 6.2, 7 = very concerned) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Member Ratings of Firmness of Choice, Level of Concern and Satisfaction with the Group

	Pre-group $\bar{X}$	Post-group $\bar{X}$	t
Firmness of choice	5.72	6.18	.45*
Level of concern	4.6	6.2	1.78*
Satisfaction with the group	N/A	5.10	

\* Not Significant

Note: A rating of 7 = not firm at all, very concerned, and very satisfied.

Five options which could be offered in a career awareness group were rated by members according to which were considered the most important for career groups in general and which were most helpful in the group just completed. Members were asked to rank-order items with values one through five (see Table 2). Using the Sheffe method of multiple comparisons to look at importance, Option B, which was information about job search skills, was found to be ranked significantly higher than any of the other options. The only other significant difference in ranking was found between Option A, information about careers, and Option C, interest testing. Option A was considered more helpful (see Table 3).

The Sheffe method was also used to test for significant differences in ranking of the options on helpfulness in the completed group. Option one, information about careers, was rated significantly higher than the other options. Option two, information about job search skills, was significantly higher than any except the first.

The only other significance was between Option four, self exploration through discussion, and Option five, decision making skills, with four being the lowest (see Table 4).

The same options were rank-ordered before the group. The means are shown in Table two. The information was not considered to add significantly to the study and is therefore not discussed further.

Table 2

Mean - Rating of Options Which Were Available to Group

	Pre-group		Post-group*		Post-group*	
	mean	rank	mean	rank	mean	rank
			of importance		of helpfulness	
Information about careers	1.9	1	3.2	4	3.4	4
Information about job search skills	3.3	5	4.4	5	4.4	5
Interest testing	2.4	2	2.4	1	2.5	2
Self-exploration through discussion	2.6	3	2.5	2	1.8	1
Decision-making skills	3.3	4	2.7	3	2.6	3

Note:

Post-group importance = those options most important in a career awareness group.

Post-group helpfulness = those options which were most helpful in the group just completed.

Items were rank-ordered one through five, with five being high and one low.

Table 3  
Comparison of Options According to Importance

Comparison	F
A,B	22.0*
A,C	11.0*
A,D	7.66
A,E	8.73
B,C	47.82*
B,D	31.43*
B,E	64.48*
C,D	1.27
C,E	6.73
D,E	3.16

$F' = 10.24$       d.f. = 4,50

\* significant at .05 level



Table 4  
Comparison of Options According to Helpfulness

Comparison	F
A,B	31.79*
A,C	13.2*
A,D	47.83*
A,E	28.76*
B,C	27.98*
B,D	78.57*
B,E	65.56*
C,D	10.02
C,E	1.56
D,E	27.16*

$F' = 10.24$       d.f. = 4,50

\*Significant at .05 level

A significant correlation was found between gender and firmness of choice after the group was completed ( $r = -.63$ ,  $p = .018$ ), indicating that males had made firmer choices than females. The correlation between gender and level of concern after the group was also significant ( $r = -.76$ ,  $p = .006$ ), indicating that females were more concerned about making a choice. Other significant correlations indicated that members from urban areas had made firmer choices than those from rural areas ( $r = -.67$ ,  $p = .012$ ) and that rural members were more concerned about making a choice ( $r = -.88$ ,  $p = .001$ ) (see Table 5).

Table 5

Percentage of Attendance for Each Meeting and Overall

Meetings	Percent Attended
One	92
Two	100
Three	100
Four	66
Five*	57
Overall	85

\*Only data from group two included here as group one only met four times.

The materials used to offer the group cost approximately \$140. This included the cost of purchasing and scoring inventories. These were the only materials used. This cost breaks down to just under \$12 per person for 12 people completing the course.

Fourteen people registered for the group. The overall attendance rate, calculated from the average per session, was 85%. The drop-out rate was 14%. Rates for each of the meetings were also calculated (see Table 6). There was a drop in attendance at the last session. This may have been caused because members were told they would be asked to complete questionnaires at that time.

It was found that exactly one-half of the members had used counseling services before, and one-half had not. This finding was not felt to add significantly to the study.

#### Discussion

The discussion is broken into two sections. Part A provides a detailed description of the group, along with discussion of relevant points. It is presented in a diary, or case study format, to enable interested centres to offer the group. Part B is a description of the results obtained from the questionnaires.

Table 6

## Correlation Matrix of Nine Variables

	Firmness of Choice Pre-Group	Firmness Post-Group	Concern Pre-Group	Concern Post-Group	Satisfaction with Group
Gender	-.4191 p = .100	-.6326 p = .018	-.0269 p = .471	-.7582 p = .006	.1111 p = .380
Age	-.0141 p = .484	.1967 p = .281	.2404 p = .267	-.0436 p = .456	-.1237 p = .376
Year in University	-.1809 p = .297	.0674 p = .422	.3439 p = .182	-.4914 p = .090	-.1429 p = .357
Community	-.3484 p = .147	-.6708 p = .012	-.1666 p = .334	-.8854 p = .001	-.4781 p = .097

a) Description of the Group

The Vocational Choice Group Counseling Plan (Sprague & Strong, 1970) was offered to 14 university students.

Following is a description of this group. The description is designed to provide direction to centres desiring to offer the group, and to indicate its feasibility and suitability so centres can better judge if the plan is useful to them.

Time: The total number of hours spent working on, or conducting the group was 27.5, by the intern, and 4.5 by other staff members, for a total of 32 hours. This included 11.5 hours for promotion, six hours for testing, and 12 hours for conducting the group. To offer this group, with 12 people completing the program, would therefore take approximately one week of staff time by one staff member, distributed over six to 10 weeks.

Interest: There was more than sufficient interest to justify offering the group. Twenty-three people expressed interest in the program. The first fourteen to register and to complete the inventories took part in the group, while the remaining nine students were invited to come to the Centre for individual counseling. It should be remembered that the group was offered during summer semester when the registration is considerably lower than it generally is during the fall and winter. Also, during the summer students probably do not want to commit themselves to activities which may keep them inside during nice weather. There

were 1647 students registered for third semester, as compared with approximately 7,000 in the fall and winter semesters. While only 23% of the regular number of students in the group were in attendance during this summer, registration in the group was as high as it generally is for winter groups. Therefore, it could be expected to be higher during the regular semester. Registration in groups offered by the Counseling Centre at Memorial is usually around 12 to 14 people. Of the fourteen to register, two students dropped out of the group. Once again, this is compatible with statistics generally found at the Centre. As mentioned in the results, attendance dropped during the last meetings, however, it was considered quite good overall (85%), and the drop-out rate was quite low (14%) (Hurley, Note 3). Attendance tended to drop as more students completed their turn presenting their career decision-making difficulties.

Promotion: A total of 11.5 hours were spent on this aspect of preparation, plus 4.5 hours by other staff members. Promotion is a time consuming procedure which can easily be forgotten when allotting hours to be spent on the group. In order to reach all students, a) posters were hung around campus, b) an announcement was placed on the ETV monitor, a university cable television channel, c) first year Psychology professors described the group in their classes and encouraged students to attend, d) the intern spoke to staff at the student manpower centre, and e) hand-outs about the group, containing the same information as the poster, were

available at registration.

Of the students who registered, five heard about the group through the posters, four were informed about it by friends, and three heard from their professors. These were the most profitable methods of exposure. Anyone considering offering the group might ask if the time spent on other methods of promotion is really valuable.

Testing: A total of six hours were spent testing. Providing interest and personality testing is an important facet of this group. Several aspects of testing need to be considered, including selection of inventories, scheduling testing sessions, and scoring.

The selection of inventories took approximately 40 minutes. The Self-Directed Search (SDS), Edwards Personal Preference Inventory (EPPI), and the Strong-Campbell Vocational Interest Blank (SCVIB) were given before this group began. The EPPI and SVIB were given by Sprague and Strong (1970) to their groups, and the intern felt that these inventories were reliable, valid, and provided relevant information to group members. Sprague and Strong also administered the Kuder DD and Allport-Vernon Lindzey Study of Values (AV). The Kuder was not given by the intern because she felt it would provide much information which overlapped with that provided by the SVIB and would cause too much increase in testing time. The AV was not offered because it was not readily available at the Centre, and, once again, it was felt that there would be too much information overlap

to justify the increase in testing time. The SDS was given because students could complete it at their leisure and receive immediate information.

The SDS and SCVIB were found to be quite useful by the members. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said with regards to the EPPS. Members felt that this inventory did not add any additional relevant information. It was not often referred to during the group meetings. The intern also felt that since these tests were not interpreted during individual sessions there was some danger that members would find results disturbing or confusing and the tests may actually do harm.

Approximately three hours were scheduled for testing. Some problems were met when trying to schedule people since clients need to come for at least two hours if all testing is to be completed at the same time. While a group member can miss one group session, and not necessarily need it repeated, all members must complete the inventories. While one three-hour session was planned for testing, only nine of fourteen people were present at this time. Other members were tested individually during the next week. These sessions took about 10 minutes of counselor time each, since clients can complete the inventories without supervision.

Scoring took two hours. In this instance, only the EPPS had to be scored by the group leader. Manuals provide information about scoring procedures and a leader planning to use other inventories requiring scoring should be able



to estimate required time.

Meeting One: Approximately 2.5 hours were spent preparing for this meeting, with 1.5 of these hours used reading and one hour spent writing. This meeting is the most demanding for the group leader in terms of preparation time. During this meeting information on problem-solving and interpretation of the inventories was provided. Problem-solving was described in terms as outlined by D'Zurilla (1971). To begin, member were given name tags, and approximately 10 minutes were spent on introductions. No special group exercises to facilitate introduction were used. The intern described herself and explained the goals of the group. The meeting continued with a general orientation toward problem solving. The intern explained that career problems do occur and that they can be dealt with as long as the person is willing to recognize the problem and to think things through. Four steps were then described.

1) Problem Definition: Members were told that they must provide enough details of a problem related to career choice which each member was asked to identify and describe to the group to allow for the formation of an operational definition. They were asked to think in terms of both internal, or personal, and external, or situational, events, and to identify the major goals and issues that make the situation problematic. A hypothetical person who wants to make \$20,000 per year, but does not want to train, was described as an example.

Problems ranged from fairly concrete, well defined, individual concerns to problems which were somewhat more general and less focused. The format of the group was flexible enough to allow for these differences.

2) Generation of Alternatives: All members were told to then try to think of strategies, or what to do, and tactics, or how to do it, which would help to resolve the problem situation. It was explained that during group meetings, particular attention would probably be paid to this step. Members were asked to think back to the hypothetical person in step one and to describe steps which he might take.

3) Decision Making: This step was described as the point at which you pick the best strategy level. Clients were told to ask themselves what would be the likely consequences of the strategies and tactics, should they be successful in implementing them. They were told to then try to rate the alternatives as to their desirability. The hypothetical example was referred to once again.

4) Verification: This step was not concentrated upon. It was described to members as the point at which you ensure that the tactic you have chosen is the proper one. It is a time of implementation.

A break was held at this point, after which the results of the EPPS were interpreted for members and questions were answered. The SDS was also discussed. To conclude the

meeting, two volunteers were requested to talk about their situations during the following week. It was explained that the group would follow the problem solving procedures as described in an attempt to help the person concerned progress in making a career decision. After some encouragement two people did volunteer.

**The Remaining Meetings:** The remaining meetings all followed the same pattern. Each week two people presented their situation with regard to making a career decision. The group would then ask questions of, or make suggestions to the person concerned. The problem solving process was loosely followed, with focus being placed upon the appropriate step for the presenting member. While some members were still trying to identify the problem, others were concerned with finding means of verification. There was a variety of problems in the group, and it is felt that this helped contribute to the high interest.

Members remained on task during most of the time, however, the intern did suggest several questions which should be kept in mind in case the discussion should get stalled. The questions were: a) what is the problem? b) what is the goal? c) what are some alternatives? d) how should they be rated?

Members enjoyed the discussions, and usually could have continued with each situation for quite some time. An arbitrary stopping time was set and followed as the group sessions could have continued for quite some time without it.

#### b) Competencies of Group Leaders

Keeping in mind the goal of this study to determine feasibility, whether or not the leader of this group needs any special competencies becomes a question of importance. Generally, the leader should be a competent counselor aware of the dynamics of group interaction, with some ability to interpret tests and a good knowledge of the tools and techniques available for career exploration. Most counseling centres, particularly those based in universities, will have at least one such person on staff. The leader will have to familiarize himself/herself with the format of this particular plan, but no indepth training will be required.

It is, of course, impossible to sort out the effect of the leadership of this intern on the group which she conducted. Assessments by supervisors and group members were positive. Therefore, it is hoped that the leaders influences were good. This, of course, would effect the ratings of satisfaction, however, any competent counselor with the necessary skills should produce as good results.

#### c) Discussion of Analysis of Questionnaires

Judging from the results of the questionnaires and self-profiles, the group, in general, was considered to have achieved some measure of success. The members indicated satisfaction with the process. A detailed discussion of these results follows.

Looking at the basic information about group members,

it can be seen that twice as many females as males joined the course. The mean age was 20.91, and the mean year in university was 1.64. This information may prove useful to the center promoting a career awareness group. It appears that females around 21 years old and in second year university may feel the greatest need for career guidance. Of course, females may simply be more willing to seek help when it is available, however, a course aimed specifically at this group still may be more suitable.

This conclusion is further substantiated by the correlational data which indicated that females, at the end of the course, were more concerned about a career choice and had not made as firm a choice as males. A number of issues are raised by these findings. If more females are concerned about career choice then special efforts should be made to assist them. However, judging from their ratings of concern, the group seemed less able to help females than males. On the other hand, there was no difference in their ratings of satisfaction, so perhaps females are simply more cautious about committing themselves. This study cannot claim to answer this question. Either way, a centre may wish to consider offering a special career course aimed specifically at women.

Those members from rural areas also were less firm and more concerned about their choices at the end of the course. Reasons for any of these differences must be offered very tentatively, given the small subject pool, however, it may

be speculated that students who grew up in rural areas were not exposed to the large number of options which suddenly become available to the university student and are therefore bewildered by them. Perhaps the urban male has had more exposure and has always been aware of the need to decide, and therefore needs less help adjusting. If one were to implement this group on a larger scale, one addition to the procedure might be to collect sample profiles. These could be used to assist both clients and group leaders. Clients could benefit from seeing information about others in similar situations, and leaders could use the information to help prepare for the type of concerns they may meet.

When conceptualizing the study, it appeared that a major measure of success would be increased firmness in career choice made. The lack of difference in firmness of, and level of concern about career choice as measured at the start and end of the group, leads to questions about the effectiveness and therefore the suitability of the career group. In retrospect, judging from the fairly high level of satisfaction and the number of favourable comments in the case studies, it must be concluded that the course is providing some benefit. It became apparent that the desirable outcome of the course should not be just to make people choose, but rather to also make them more aware of what is involved in choosing and of how to choose. While it was not statistically significant, from a heuristic point of view, it is worth noting that the slight rise in

level of concern, as indicated by the means of the ratings, may indicate that people were thinking more about their career decision. Also, examination of the mean shows that the firmness of choice was decreasing.

While no data concerning this point was gathered, an impression gained while leading the group was that it may be causing members to become aware of considerations involved in career choice, and that members may be going through a period of readjustment. This conclusion also fits with the findings showing more concern in women and rural members. If these members did indeed come to the group less prepared for the decision-making process, they would be less likely to have adjusted to the new information, and would be more confused. Perhaps with a longer course there would be a more significant finding. In fact, one of the most frequent statements made in the case studies was that the group should have been longer. Other centres considering the group might consider extending the time it is to be offered. This would have implications for the feasibility of the group as it would increase the amount of time needed to offer it. Additional research is needed to clarify this point.

The ratings of the options (see page 36) could provide valuable information as to ways to increase the suitability of the course. It would be best if the options members felt were most important were those which provided most help. The two post-group ratings were similar (see Table 2

in Results section). However, this finding is probably severely confounded by the fact that members may be strongly influenced by their experience with the group just finished and, therefore, the rating reflects needs not met after the group. Also, this could be a short-term effect which would disappear with time.

Looking at the self-profiles of the 10 members who completed them, the response to question A shows that when the group began, most people were looking for information about specific careers. Judging from the ratings of options, this changed as the course progresses, which would support the idea of a period of readjustment. People become aware that career decision making involves more than gaining information about specific jobs.

Contradictory to the ratings on the questionnaire of firmness of choice, six people in their self-profiles said they had made, or were close to making, a choice at the end of the group. Perhaps the operative word here is "close". Members may now feel that they are closer to a choice because they are actively seeking information and have a better idea of how to look, and yet may feel that they are not at all firm in their choice since they are now aware of how much is involved in the final selection. Five members did say that they are actively looking, and five said they feel better able to look.

The group appears to be successful when the answers to the question concerning helpfulness are examined. Nine



members said the group was helpful and one answered ambiguously. This is surprising when you look at the ratings of firmness of choice and level of concern, but not if the idea that there is a period of readjustment is accepted, and people are indeed now more aware of how to choose.

The most frequent suggestion for change was that there be more group time, both for each session and for the entire group. As mentioned earlier, this may have implications for feasibility. The centre must decide how much time is available. Also, three people still wanted more specific information. Some consideration should be given to the meeting of this need.

The time spent on the group, both for preparation and actual group time, does not seem to be high. The total time was 32 hours, with 12 people completing the group. Each person received an average of 6.5 hours of counselor contact (six hours for group two and seven hours for group one), apart from the time spent doing the inventories. This is their total time in the group. To provide the same amount of time with a counselor on an individual basis would take 78 hours plus the time spent on inventories. There is some question as to whether individual or group time is most valuable, however, that cannot be answered here.

The cost of materials for the group was approximately \$140. This included cost of purchasing and scoring inventories. Therefore, the cost could fluctuate depending upon the tests used and the group size. The figure for this

group was not considered high. It broke down to approximately \$12 per person.

The amount of interest shown, as discussed in the description of the group, was considered more than sufficient. With 14 people registered, it compared to the usual group registration at the Counseling Centre, yet only one fourth the usual number of students were in attendance at the university since it was summer session.

#### Summary and Recommendations

The Vocational Choice Group Counseling plan appears to be both feasible and suitable for use in this, and other comparable, university counseling centres. In terms of feasibility, the time to offer the group is not high and the cost per person is quite reasonable. Its suitability is indicated by high interest and high satisfaction.

However, it is recommended that the time of the group be increased. Several meetings can be added with little increase in counselor time needed. Also, the centre may want to consider focusing on women, or, if appropriate, members from rural areas. Above all, centres should consider using this, or other similar career awareness groups frequently.

A model was presented here for use in assessing feasibility and suitability of groups for use in university counseling centres. Other centres may find it useful to follow similar steps. To assess feasibility, a) the

counselor time to be consumed is considered, b) the cost of materials is calculated, and c) the physical resources of the centre are considered. To assess suitability, a) the level of student interest must be determined, b) the amount of satisfaction with the group should be measured, and c) any changes in the desired direction should be measured. A pilot group must actually be offered to assess suitability.

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Appendix A

Pre and Post-group Questionnaires

CAREER AWARENESS GROUP

## Background Information

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you hear about the group:

Posters \_\_\_\_\_

ETV Monitor \_\_\_\_\_

Professor \_\_\_\_\_

Group Leader \_\_\_\_\_

Student Manpower \_\_\_\_\_

Friend \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate the following:

a) How firm is your career choice?

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

very  
firmmoderately  
firmnot firm  
at all

b) How concerned are you currently about making a career choice?

1                    2                    3                    4                    5                    6                    7

not  
concernedmoderately  
concernedvery  
concerned

Have you ever used counselling services before?

in high school? \_\_\_\_\_

in university? \_\_\_\_\_



Were counselling services available in your high school? \_\_\_\_\_

Please rank the following options according to how important it is to you that they be offered in a career awareness group. The number 1 should be assigned to the most important and number 5 to the least important.

Information about careers \_\_\_\_\_

Information about job search skills \_\_\_\_\_

Interest testing \_\_\_\_\_

Self-exploration through discussion \_\_\_\_\_

Decision making skills \_\_\_\_\_

Are any of these options of no interest to you? Please list them.

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Final Questionnaire  
CAREER AWARENESS GROUP

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

1) How firm is your career choice?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

very  
firm

moderately  
firm

not firm  
at all

2) How concerned are you about making a career choice?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

not  
concerned

somewhat  
concerned

very  
concerned

3) How much did the Career Awareness Group help you make a career choice?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

not at all  
satisfied

moderately  
satisfied

very  
satisfied

4) Please rank the following options according to how important it is that they be offered in a career awareness group. The number 1 should be assigned to the most important, and number 5 to the least important.

Information about careers \_\_\_\_\_

Information about job search skills \_\_\_\_\_

Interest testing \_\_\_\_\_

Self-exploration through discussion \_\_\_\_\_

Decision making skills \_\_\_\_\_

- 2 -

- 5) Please rank the following according to how helpful you found them in the career awareness group you just completed. Place the number 1 by the option which was most helpful and 5 by that which was the least helpful.

Information about careers \_\_\_\_\_

Information about job search skills \_\_\_\_\_

Interest testing \_\_\_\_\_

Self-exploration through discussion \_\_\_\_\_

Decision making skills \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix B

Copies of Members Self-Profiles

Self-Profile

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 18 \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: 3rd \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR: French \_\_\_\_\_

Jobs you have held:

1) NIL \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

I was hoping that I would get more information about different types of courses available for majors in French.

- 2 -

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

I don't know what I want to do exactly. I have no firm ideas. I did get a little more direction and information which I shall check into and hopefully something will pop up.

Did the group help you? How?

I talked with people and getting to know them and their career problems helped me analyse my own.

How interesting did you find the group?

I enjoyed talking with people who have the same problems I do.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

I think individual sessions might be a good idea. Also, having the information available during group discussions might help.

Self-Profile

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ 21 \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: \_\_\_\_\_ 3rd \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR: \_\_\_\_\_ Undecided \_\_\_\_\_

Jobs you have held:

1) \_\_\_\_\_ Service Station Attendant \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_ Cashier \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

I decided to join the group to see if it would help me make a decision about which way I should aim my career goals.

No, I hadn't made any real career move at that time.

- 2 -

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

Nothing really firm, there are still some areas I would like to explore career wise. One thing that strikes me as a good idea now, is to investigate a career in education or possibly writing, before I do make a final decision. There are still other areas I have looked into already, to go back to.

Did the group help you? How?

Yes, it let me feel I was doing something constructive, if only for a few weeks, ..it gave me some fresh viewpoints, and helped me to underline major areas of difficulty.

How interesting did you find the group?

The group was pretty interesting, but I think that the group should of had a little more participation.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

Perhaps if the meeting had been twice a week, included a little larger group or a tiny bit longer, it would have allowed some people to open up more. But still, I think this concept proved very effective and the group instructor, (correct term?), did a very good job of making us feel at home.



Self-Profile

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 17YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: 1stMAJOR: Undecided

Jobs you have held:

1) Hostess2) Cashier

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

An announcement was made in Psychology Class and I thought it would help me make a decision. I had a tentative choice at the time but I thought it would give me a chance to explore other angles and other areas.

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

Yes. The career planning group helped me organize my thoughts about a career and showed me different angles I could approach my decision with. It helped me realize my position in the career planning stage. I now realize where my studies are taking me and it helped me want to research an area of interest I had always looked at but never actually thought seriously about. I was able to make a commitment to get information about my area and come to some sort of blending together of my goals to form a general idea of where I want my life to go.

Did the group help you? How?

Yes. It helped me pinpoint what I want out of life and my career. It provided an outlet for me to discuss my specific problems and receive suggestions from others.

How interesting did you find the group?

Very interesting. When discussions were participated in, they provided many important facts and ideas. I enjoyed participating in the discussions and the tests provided many new areas for me to consider.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

Perhaps have more discussion than was brought up in this group, perhaps people just needed to talk a little more. The group could have provided more job information, yet it was altogether helpful for my needs.

Self-Profile

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 19

YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: 1st

MAJOR: Unspecified

Jobs you have held:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

I joined a career awareness group because I felt that it could help me to find out about myself and to find out more about different careers. No, I didn't make a tentative career choice at that time. I had a career in mind but I finally realized that I was not the type of person to do this.

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

No, I don't have any firm ideas about a career. I know now that I got to try to decide on a career that my personality is suited for. I want to help people and be around people. I don't want a career that don't circulate around people. Every job deals with people but some more indirectly than others. I know that for me to be able to get a career dealing with people, I have got to be more open and talk to them.

Did the group help you? How?

Yes, the group did help. The group didn't really make me choose a career but it helped me immensely to explore myself and, to find out that I know what I want to do, but it's my personality and shyness that is standing in my way.

How interesting did you find the group?

I found the group really interesting. It is really informal and you don't get uptight about it.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

I wouldn't want anything different in the group.

Self-Profile

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 23YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: 3rdMAJOR: Psychology

Jobs you have held:

- 1) Psychiatric Nursing Aid (untrained)
- 2) Power Engineer
- 3) Group Home Worker
- 4) Stock Boy at Dept. Store
- 5) Housekeeper at Hotel
- 6) Kitchen Worker

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

Its a novel idea at MUN which should happen more often! Its a source of information and strategies.

I have a career area decided upon.

- 2 -

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

To continue my Psychology major and to diversify so I gain knowledge into many areas i.e. science, education, research, etc. I want a job that will fulfill my desires so it probably will involve several areas of endeavour vs. one specific area of research.

Did the group help you? How?

Yes. It's interesting to gain other opinions and see other attitudes re. careers

How interesting did you find the group?

Fairly interesting.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

More specific career talk vs. less general "lifestyle" approaches to career orientation.

Self-Profile

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 18 \_\_\_\_\_

YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: 1st \_\_\_\_\_

MAJOR: Education &amp; Psychology \_\_\_\_\_

Jobs you have held:

1) Working in a Senior Citizens Home.

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

Because I enjoy being with groups that try to help each other out with their career choices. I like to find out more about different careers, and it also helps me narrow my choices down to what I'm most interested in.

No, I still haven't narrowed it down to what I really want to do. It is a choice between a Guidance Counsellor in a school or one in a community.

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

Yes - It is to be a Guidance Counsellor of some sort. I really enjoy being with people and helping them out. Therefore I think that a career as a Guidance Counsellor would be what I'm looking for. If later I decided that it is not, my career choice would still be involved with helping people get to know themselves better and find out what they want to do.

Did the group help you? How?

Yes - The group helped me think about the different things that I could do to find out if the career I have chosen now is what I would really be happy with.

How interesting did you find the group?

I found the group very interesting, because I enjoy listening to others talk about themselves.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

No - I think that it is fine the way it is.



Self-Profile

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 17YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: 1stMAJOR: Undecided

Jobs you have held:

- 1) Kitchen Helper
- 2) P.E.T. Operator
- 3) Gardener
- 4) Farm Hand

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

I was undecided about a career or a major study field. I had heard from a Professor about this group and I believed that it was worth a look. (It was)

Before joining this group, I had looked at many different fields but I did not have any idea as to what I would do for a career.

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

Not as infirm as before. This group taught me how to look.

It was analysed that I "leaned" towards music arts or college teaching; each corresponded to my SCII. As a result of this, I am now looking closer at areas related to these.

Did the group help you? How?

Yes, the group helped me to look in the right areas and how to go about searching.

How interesting did you find the group?

I looked forward to the group each week, and was sorry that it ended so quickly.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

Yes! More time.

Self-Profile

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 17YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: 1stMAJOR: Faculty: Science

Jobs you have held:

1) N/A

2) \_\_\_\_\_

3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

I decided to join the career awareness group to get as much information as possible on the careers available to me! By listening to other peoples problems and discussing my own, I felt I would be able to try and make a decision about my career.

I didn't have a tentative career choice made at that time although I did know that my choice would mostly deal with a science major of some kind.

- 2 -

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

I have firm ideas about a career. First of all, I am going to get more information on the different sciences...medicine...and computer science! Then I will try and look at all the different aspects involved in these careers (job possibility, money). Most of all, I will try to decide if these careers are really for me. I will try to see if I can branch out into different jobs. Finally, I will have all the information I need to decide on the career which would best suit me.

Did the group help you? How?

Yes, the group helped me. Other members of the group and the co-ordinator made various information available to me. By talking to other members, I was able to look at the kind of career I wanted and the various aspects of it. The various tests helped me tremendously in decision-making.

How interesting did you find the group?

I found the group extremely interesting. There was a nice atmosphere made by the other members and the co-ordinator which helped me to discuss my problem. The friendliness of the other people (the fact that they really wanted to help) made the group more interesting.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

The only thing different that could be done to the group is to extend the time of each meeting.

Self-Profile

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 22YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: 1MAJOR: General Arts

Jobs you have held:

- 1) Waitress
- 2) Chambermaid
- 3) Attendant
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

I didn't really know what I wanted to do in my life. I was frustrated at attempting many different career choices, only to find half way through that I was not interested in them.

I hadn't made any tentative career choices at that time.

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

I have fairly firm ideas now, though I may make small changes in the course of the career. I would like to finish first year MUN, then go to cosmetology school. From there, I would like to work and perhaps branch out into other areas, such as working in a fitness spa or writing about cosmetology.

Did the group help you? How?

The group helped me by encouraging me to go to cosmetology school and gave me other options that might work for me if cosmetology school didn't work out. Also, the instructor helped me find a way to go in regards of money.

How interesting did you find the group?

It was very interesting in that I found other people who had problems similar to me. They couldn't decide between one career or another. Seems this, made me feel less like the only frustrated one.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

If there were more people, more ideas could be given.

Self-Profile

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: 20

YEAR IN UNIVERSITY: 1st

MAJOR: Undecided

Jobs you have held:

- 1) Counsellor
- 2) Sales Representant
- 3) Babysitter
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you decide to join the Career Awareness Group? Had you made a tentative career choice at that time?

Many career and jobs are available for University Students. In order to choose one or an area of study that suits your capabilities can be hard since most of them we are not aware of. I joined the career awareness group in order to be aware of what is available through studies at University and to know myself better through personality and interest tests in order to pick the right choice. Many tentative of career choices came up through my mind while attending the group. As time went by it became I could canalyse my interest better.

Do you have any firm ideas about a career now? Please describe your thoughts now in terms of a career.

No. I do not think anyone does at anytime in their career! Now when I think of planning a career I think of myself first. I realize what my dreams are and what reality can offer me to guide my life toward those unattainable dreams and goals that can be reached are set. I have a better idea of what would or would not interest me.

Did the group help you? How?

Yes, through discussion I managed to learn more about myself and realized why I would like to do more of one thing than the other.

How interesting did you find the group?

Very. The people were open-minded and had a friendly and helping attitude towards me.

Would you like anything done differently during the group?

No. I wish that some people would not have dropped out, because they did not give themselves a chance to live this experience.



Appendix C

Poster to Advertise the Group

UNDECIDED ABOUT A  
CAREER DIRECTION  
or  
MAJOR AREA OF STUDY?

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**JOIN A CAREER AWARENESS GROUP !**

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