

Chapter 2: A Framework of enhancing career related experience for secondary school students in Hong Kong context

1. Introduction

The Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters proposed “a framework for enhancing career related experience of secondary school students in the Hong Kong context” as a response to changing social environment and policies, and a service to the development of career guidance in Hong Kong. This paper will outline the background, components, and further development of the framework. It is a first draft for discussion and further improvement.

1.1 The NSS curriculum

It had been criticized that secondary school education in the past was examination-oriented, designed to screen students into higher education. The Education Commission (2000) stated the objectives of senior secondary school education as:

- To enable students to have a balanced and comprehensive learning experience in the academic, vocational, organizational, social service as well as the arts and sports domains to prepare them for employment, for learning and for life;
- To provide students with a diversity of options so that they can understand their abilities and aptitudes better to plan for employment and learning in their future life; and
- To nurture in students a longing for learning, independent and critical thinking, creativity, a commitment to their families, their society and their country, as well as a global outlook.” (p.32)

Obviously, emphasis will be put on the vocational development and career planning of students under the new senior secondary school system. In the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum, there will be four core subjects of Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies; 2 to 3 electives including Applied Learning courses; as well as Other Learning Experiences including Moral and Civic Education, Community Services, Aesthetic Development and Physical Development and Career-related Experiences. Therefore, it brings a new opportunity to rethink and strengthen career education and guidance in the secondary school setting.

1.2 Proposing “A framework to enhance Career Related Experiences”

In NSS, career development will be made an integral part of the curriculum. In other words, career development and gaining career-related experience will be an essential component of the curriculum for every student to go through. Career development will also form essential part of the total experience in secondary schooling. It moves from a supportive and remedial service to a more central role.

To further enhance the career-related experiences of secondary students, we suggest a further development on the existing the comprehensive career guidance services in the

secondary school setting. We opine that piecemeal measures cannot effectively further enhance career development for all students. Therefore, we draw on:

- Our experience and expertise over the years in career practices and working with students.
- Relevant research work in comprehensive guidance and career counselling

The comprehensive guidance framework of Gysbers (2000) shed much light on the provision of career guidance in Hong Kong. He explained,

“A comprehensive guidance program consists of three elements: content, organizational framework and resources (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000). The content element identifies competencies considered important for students to master as a result of participation in a comprehensive guidance program. The organization framework consists of three structural components (definition, rationale and assumptions), and the four program components (guidance curriculum, individual planning responsive services and system support. These resource elements consist of the personnel, financial, and political resources required to fully implement the program.” (p.7)

Zunker (2007) commented on the value of the model in application to different settings,

“The value of this model is its comprehensive nature and involvement of school professionals, selected members of the community, and parents. The program’s flexibility allows for local development of needs. Another advantage is the evaluation of student outcomes, professional effectiveness and program designs. The program is driven by a life-career theme.”

This is a comprehensive program giving broad guidelines to enhance career services to secondary school students. At present, the structural provisions and resources are already in place in secondary schools with comprehensive career guidance service rendered by the career team, guidance teachers, school social workers, teachers and the whole school. While there is certainly room to study and improve on these provisions, we would like to focus in this paper on the program content of career guidance in this project to meet the needs of implementing the NSS curriculum.

1.3 Objectives of this paper

A major objective of the project undertaken by the HKACMGM is to formulate an exemplary framework to enhance career-related experiences in the secondary school setting as follows:

***To formulate an exemplary framework of career-related experiences** (事業相關學習歷程架構) for senior secondary level, with components meeting the needs of students with respect to career development and maturity required by the local NSS. The career curriculum would include a framework of career education/guidance, suggest activities and programs that career teachers may select in accordance with the specific needs of their students, and suggestions of*

how career teachers can assist and coach students in formulation of Individual Student Profile.

In sum, in formulating the framework, we have the following consideration:

- to prepare students for the changing needs and requirement of the workplace
- to include career development of students as an integral part of the New Senior Secondary curriculum
- to adopt a comprehensive guidance approach to integrate the concerted efforts of students, school, parents, government and the society
- to build on existing system of career guidance in school setting

With reference to Gysbers' framework, we understand that *a career guidance curriculum needs to be developed*, which will be delivered flexibly in and out of classroom. **Students are encouraged to set up their own individual career plan.** Moreover, teachers, social workers and other personnel should be equipped to play an active role in helping individuals with career planning, rather than just passive information givers. As a result, we proposed a framework with the following key components:

- Formulating a career guidance curriculum
- Linking academic subjects with career prospects
- Organizing in-school career functions and mass activities
- Facilitating work experience outside school
- Enabling individual student planning

The framework is not a rigid, mandatory system working like a "check-list". It *outlines broad directions for development of career guidance in secondary school. Educators can plan and select essential components from the framework for implementation, with the scope and intensity of intervention aligned with professional development of teachers, assessed needs of students, and resources available.* It also recognizes and builds on the valuable prior work and contributions by career teachers. The framework will help career teachers to face the challenges ahead and pursue professional development. Last but not the least, this paper is a summary of trends, directions and suggestions; it is still work-in-progress and further feedback, discussions and comments are very welcome.

The Framework is outlined in the following page, in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 An Exemplary Framework of Enhancing Career-related Experience for Secondary School Students
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Guidance and Counselling for individuals	Career Guidance and Counselling for individual students			
Enabling Individual Student Planning	Reflective construction of Student Learning Profile			
	Initial NSS Study Plan	Revision of NSS Study Plan	Education and career interests research paper	Completion of Individual Student Planning
	Academic aptitude assessments	● Personality and traits tests	● Career tests career interests, career plan, career values	● Assessment of transferable skills
Facilitating Learning Experiences about Work	Job Shadowing and Work Experience Scheme			
	Professional/Business Partnership Program			
	Mentorship Program jointly organized with NGOs, alumni association and PTA			
	Applied Learning Taster Programs		Applied Learning Courses	
	Career visits			
Organizing school-wide Career Guidance Activities				Mock job searching activities and interview workshops for job search and university admission
				Guidance programs on university admission and course selection
				University Taster Programs or Camps
	Guidance programs on further studies, training opportunities, and subject choices	Guidance programs on revision of NSS study plan	Visiting local universities	
Linking study opportunities and career choices	Connection of subjects and occupational choices	Education and Career opportunities of individual subjects		
Formulating A Career Guidance Curriculum	Integrated Life Education Curriculum (meaning of work, understanding self, career projects or interviews)	Career and Life Skills Curriculum (Educational planning, career research paper, understanding self)	Career and Life Skills Curriculum (Educational and vocational goals setting, understanding of the world of work, e.g. trends of local economy, work ethics)	Career and Life Skills Curriculum (Educational and vocational goal setting, career planning, job search skills, understanding self e.g., life roles, understanding of the world of work e.g., qualification framework, work ethics)
	Assessment of students' needs with group assessment instruments, e.g., Self-efficacy inventories developed by Life Skills Development Project			
	S.1-3	S.4	S.5	S.6
DIMENSIONS OF INTERVENTION	STUDY LEVELS			

2 Formulating A Career Guidance Curriculum

2.1 Explanation

To enhance career development of students in the secondary school, a career guidance curriculum needs to be developed. Gysbers outlined the characteristics of a guidance curriculum as,

“the guidance curriculum components contain structured activities that provide all students with opportunities to master life skill competencies drawn from content element of the program. In order for this to happen, guidance people are involved in teaching, team teaching, or serving as resources to others who teach the guidance curriculum. The guidance curriculum typically consists of life skills competencies and structured activities presented systematically through such strategies as classroom activities (and school wide activities).” (p.9)

Law (1996) also commented,

“Much of what educational institutions have to offer is transmitted through their curriculum: in such organizations, importance of careers work is measured by its relation to the wider curriculum. A lot depends upon the balance between two cohabiting cultures: of standards, and of relevance.” (p. 212)

To teach career development in a formal course, one has to integrate the content into formal academic curriculum and conform to academic standards and requirements. On the other hand, from the guidance point of view, we have to make it relevant to the career development of individual students, using flexible delivery methods to process to suit different individuals.

That is why Niles & Harries-Bowlsbey (2005) commented that in promoting career education in school setting we should enhance career development through different types of educational strategies, including academic curriculum, work experience and career planning courses. In the next section, we shall go on to discuss the content and delivery in Hong Kong context.

2.2 Analysis

In the United Kingdom, the content of the career guidance curriculum has been characterised by the DOTS analysis (Law and Watts, 1977; CSU/ NICEC (2002)), namely, Opportunity awareness, Self awareness, Decision learning and Transition learning. Knowledge and concepts from various disciplines like economics, psychology, sociology and literature related to vocational education can be organized into the framework.

Zunker (2007) quoted The National Career Development Guidelines:

Competencies and indicators for High School Students:

(i) Self Knowledge

- Understanding the influence of a positive self concept
- Skills to interact positively with others
- Understanding the impact of growth and development

(ii) Educational and Occupational Exploration

- Understanding the relation between educational achievement and career planning
- Understanding between the need for positive attitudes towards work and learning
- Skills to locate, evaluate and interpret career information
- Skills to prepare to seek, obtain, maintain and change jobs
- Understanding how societal needs and functions influence the nature and structure of work

(iii) Career Planning

- Skills to make decisions
- Understand the interrelationship of life roles
- Understand the continuous changes in male/ female roles
- Skills in career planning

Locally, Yuen, Lau, Leung, Shea, Chan, Hui, and Gysbers (2004) proposed a life skill curriculum for senior high school students, covering academic, career and personal-social areas. In the area of career development, they included competencies in career planning, gender issues in career, vocational training selection, job hunting preparation, job hunting and career goal setting.

In designing the career guidance curriculum in Hong Kong context, we understand that from career development point of view, we have to cover elements about self understanding, education and career opportunities and a certain level of planning and

preparation. It has to fit into formal class teaching in different years of study in senior secondary schools, while also applicable to flexible guidance modes for individuals and small groups.

2.4 Recommendations

In junior forms (secondary 1 – 3), it is recommended that guidance work be focused on self-exploration and grasp a brief idea about the workplace. Introductory exercises of the world of work will be provided to students as well as activities that promote exploration of career interest, values, and skills.

Then the spotlight is shifted from the student self to the world of work and guidance work is based more on individual than group work in senior forms. At secondary 4 students will be advised mainly on individual choice of educational and career planning. It is necessary for students to plan for their future at this stage because subject choice is needed to be made. Career and education pathways will be shown to students at this level. At the same time further exploration of student interest in work can be identified with the work on career interest inventories. Students are guided in interpreting assessment outcomes and supported in making future plans. At secondary 5 the guidance curriculum will place more emphasis on the actual job market. Students will be able to get a taste of university life and the workplace by paying visits to organisations and universities. Students are expected to have clear vision and goal about career at this stage. At the final year of secondary studies, work skills and knowledge will be spotlighted of guidance work. Further career planning and goal setting and education of the actual work skills such as job searching skills and work ethics are taught by mock job searching activities and other career-related activities. Samples of career-focused activities are available in part 3 Career-related Experience and part 4 Guidance Programs. A degree of self exploration is brought back to the curriculum at this stage in understanding life roles of students.

3. Linking academic subjects and career prospect

3.1 Explanation

In Hong Kong, work and education have been quite disjointed over the years. The goal of secondary education is to increase competitiveness of students in public exams in order to squeeze in the limited university quotas. The system shaped beliefs of students and parents to focus more on exams than knowledge, skills and moral

education. Students do not receive much information about what career is available to their subject until the end of university education.

Therefore, we propose to study on the resources and strategies to help students to link academic subject choice and their future career prospects.

3.2 Analysis

Then it comes to the question: what criteria do students use in choosing subject and university courses? Unless substantial assistance is provided in the earlier stage of the education ladder, it is likely that subject choice is based on environmental pressure, knowledge in career sectors, availability of positions, socioeconomic status, and self-efficacy related to subjects.

Environmental pressure includes peer pressure, parents' perception to careers, and socioeconomic status of students and their family. It is claimed that environmental pressure is higher in Hong Kong which is inclined to be a collectivistic society (Leung 2002). This means that career preference of the significant others of the students such as parents is valued higher among Hong Kong students in making decisions of areas of study.

Some students may have additional knowledge and experiences about certain job sectors. The source of such knowledge could be from observation of parent work, family business, or extra-curricular activities that relates to the certain job sector. This can be advantageous for those students because career concepts are brought into their life. Obtaining more knowledge in various job sectors has significant effect on making the 'right' choice in university courses and career (Lent, Nota, Soresi, & Ferrari, 2007).

Availability of positions in the job market also holds a key value in career choice. This can be explained by supply-demand relationship. The demand of labour in different sectors varies in terms of years. The job market in the year of 2006 demands a great number of labourers in the tertiary service sector including the financial and business service field (22.3%) and the trades and hospitality field (24.9%) (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, 2008). Students are the supply of labour in the near future, and the student choice of areas of expertise is greatly influenced by the demand in the current job market due to the fear of unemployment and the desire

of secure employment. For this reason, trends of current ‘hot’ jobs have an effect on course choice of students.

Another determinant of course decision is self-efficacy related to subjects. According to the social cognitive career theory, students tend to develop interests in activities and subject areas at which they feel efficacious and expect to obtain positive outcomes (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Later study by Lent et al. (2007) revisited the theory and suggested that self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are predictors of career and course choice.

Providing sufficient information of graduate opportunities and course details have an effect on course choice of students. Both favourable and unfavourable aspects of job were presented to students with the intent of ensuring that those who accept an offer obtain accurate and realistic expectations. The effect of such information presentation reduced initial job expectations and the number of job offers that are accepted by applicants.

The flexibility and availability of subject choices is closely related to academic results. The Hong Kong examination system places strong emphasis on public examination and academic achievement (Leung, 2002). This system is successful in distinguishing academically high-achievers, and to provide sufficient resources and opportunities for them. Students with better exam performance enjoy greater flexibility in subject choice. On the other hand students with lower academic achievement fill up the vacancies. These students compete for limited resources, being stigmatized as low-achievers, quit school, or leave confused during their rest of the school life.

3.3 Recommendations

Lent et al. (2007) highlighted that the lack of career information is the main source of educational-career indecision. In the case of Hong Kong, career education is administered by a glance of the surface of careers but few achieved to provide in-depth realistic insight of the world of work. Provision of practical information about choice options has been found to be a critical ingredient of decision-making interventions. It is worthwhile to supply sufficient information to students in order to enhance smooth transition from secondary studies to further studies and career.

There are many ways to guide students on transitions on further studies and career. Within the curriculum, group guidance programs, information presentation in lesson,

and career-related activities provide certain knowledge about their advancement options to students. Other than formal career and course choice education in the classroom, it is suggested that career education to be carried out in wider range of activities. For example, during career visits and field trips it is beneficial for the guide to introduce career concepts such as entry requirements, main tasks of the work, and most importantly how it is linked to the education system. Collaborative teaching between university faculties and secondary schools may widen horizon of students with respect to career opportunities opened up for different professions.

4. Organizing career guidance activities focusing on study paths

4.1 Explanation

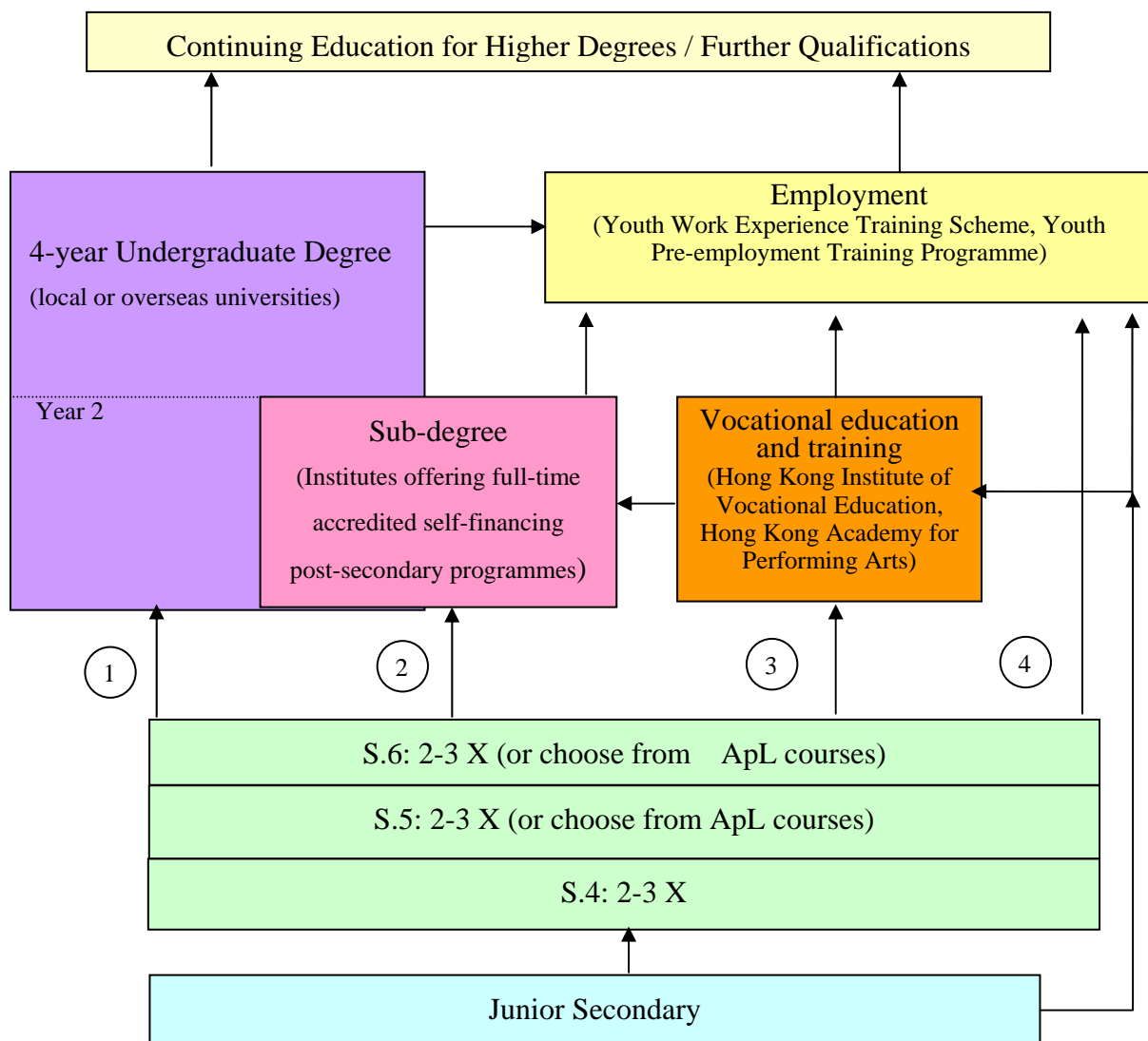
The major decisions that students need to come across during their early stage of life is to decide on their paths of academic advancement. There are moments that students need to make such decision. The first critical decision is to be made at secondary 3 and the second at secondary six, before they complete their secondary education. These decisions raised the importance of guidance activities. It is noteworthy that the ability and confidence to make these critical decisions will not come all at a sudden – *career maturity progressively develops across time, with the stimulation of a diversified array of intervention programs or activities*. The purpose of school-based career guidance activities programs is to assist students to make informed decision of academic advancement and connect study with future work.

4.2 Analysis

It is a belief of many students, parents and teachers that getting into a university course is the goal of secondary education. The reason behind this phenomenon is due to the competitive nature of the local education system. Described by Leung (1999), ‘the layers of schooling in Hong Kong resemble a pyramid structure. As a result of keen competition, students, parents and teachers are more interested in guidance programs for academic advancement than career-related experiences.

It is expected that with the enactment of NSS, a newly derived roadmap of progression paths will be drafted. Figure 4.1 shows a tentative one.

Figure 4.1: Progression Path for Senior Secondary Graduates



Admission requirements of various progression paths:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <p>(1)</p> | <p>Admission requirements of degree courses offered by local universities</p> <p>For general admission requirements, please visit
 http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content_4745/summary%20of%20general%20entrance%20requirements.pdf</p> <p>For specific subject requirements of different faculties/departments, please visit
 http://www.edb.gov.hk/FileManager/EN/Content_6440/university_entrance_requirements_eng_080218.pdf</p> |
| <p>(2)</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>(4)</p> | <p>Admissions requirements of sub-degree courses, vocational education and training, pre-employment training to be confirmed.</p> |

Guidance programs are not only provided in school, but also provided by university and the community. Many universities carry out joint school programs to introduce university life to senior secondary students. The Labour Department also provides information on career opportunities and career guidance. However, our focus now is on guidance programs provided within the school career guidance curriculum. In this light, the following activities are highlighted:

4.2.1 Mock job searching activities and interview workshops for job search and university admission

Mock job searching activities and interview workshops intend to guide students to train practical job search skills. Not very related to the conservative secondary curriculum, yet these skills are useful in their future career and academic advancement. The interviews that students would commonly encounter are senior secondary intake interviews, university admission interviews and employment interviews when the students begin their career. Most of these interviews are important and may have an effect on later life of the students. For this reason, preparation for professional interview manners is necessary in secondary school life. The idea of interviewing is to let employers and admission officers know about the characteristics of each interviewee. Appendix 1 shows an example of the interview program.

4.2.2 Guidance programs on university admission and course selection

Guidance of students to further studies is namely the traditional role of guidance teachers. It is suggested that guidance does not solely focus on information dissemination of local universities, but to take care of the actual needs of students.

Two disciplines of career guidance need to be covered. One aspect of guidance program is the introduction to the academic system and available options. It is necessary to inform them about the ‘rule of the game’, which includes what the students need to do in order to get into the education he wanted, as well as clear explanation of advancement step that the students need to get through. Furthermore, introducing to students the wider systems of academic advancement such as sub-degree options and overseas options is needed.

The second discipline of guidance program is on course selection. It is to guide students to make decisions on university and course selection according to their interest, ability and availability. In Hong Kong, students enjoy freedom on decision of education and their own career. However, according to Leung (2002), career choice of students is restricted by social and environmental barriers and career choice is less flexible than that in the western culture.

Example of such barriers would be future employability and parent expectations. It is essential for career guidance teachers to identify barrier that students may come across in making career choices.

4.2.3 University taster programs or camps

Many local universities set up university taster programs by coordinating with secondary schools to enrich secondary school learning experience. The main focus of these programs is to equip students with thinking skills and problem solving skills. Active participation in taster program activities of students and sometimes teachers is required in these programs. Most of the university taster programs are designed to be interesting and innovative to attract student participation.

Some universities focus on development of skills in a specific area of students. Science programs such as the Summer Science Institute organised by the Hong Kong University Faculty of Science, A Science Enrichment Program for Secondary 3-4 Students by Chinese University of Hong Kong and the scientific workshops of City University of Hong Kong (Chung, 2007) aim to introduce scientific methods to secondary school science students by performing hands-on activities. The four main objectives of the scientific program are to explore potential of students, to enrich their scientific knowledge, to enhance communication skills in science, and to inspire interest of students in science.

Another hands-on program named Program-Based Learning (HKU, 2005) provided training opportunities for secondary students and teachers. The participants stay in a field camp for a few days and teachers were required to lead students to solve problems by collaboration and skill-based learning.

4.2.4 Visiting local universities

The purpose of university visit is to facilitate careers teachers to collect first-hand information of the universities, such as its admission criteria, strengths and future opportunities of graduates. There are two ways to visit a university. One is to book a university tour and the other is to visit during the open day. University tours are usually tailor-made for senior form students who are interested in a particular discipline. In this sense private tours provide more in-depth and specific information about the interested discipline (CityUTEens, 2007). University open days are held mostly once a year. Talks, games, and tours about university facilities are available during open days. It is a valuable experience for students to visit a university.

4.3 Recommendations

Due to environmental and social constraints, career and education options in Hong Kong are less flexible as in other cultures. For this reason it is important for teachers to guide students by letting them realize such constraints, and to come up with solutions in a student-centred basis. Guidance programs should not only to benefit high-achievers (in Hong Kong, however, many educators still insist that career guidance should work like vocational guidance, and thus ONLY students who are not going to universities should be given resources and guidance!) and school leavers, but to focus on providing guidance service to a larger proportion of students. It is highly recommended that guidance programs be provided in an earlier stage so that students would have sufficient time to plan for their career. Finally, it is suggested that guidance programs be carried out on a whole school basis with the integration of different parts in the career guidance curriculum.

Career guidance activities related to further studies is an area in which career teachers have rich experience and expertise. Currently the Education Bureau commissions a 100-hour certificate course on career guidance to one or two tertiary institutions, which provide relatively intensive and comprehensive professional training to career teachers. Self-financed programs are also available from universities. The Hong Kong Association of Career Masters and Guidance Masters will continue to offer professional development and support needed by organizing short courses, seminars and workshops.

5. Facilitating experienced-based learning about work

5.1 Explanation

Herbert and Rothwell (2005) defined work related learning as

“The active acquisition of a range of quality skills and experiences from paid or unpaid employment that will complement a programme of academic study so as to increase the student’s sense of work readiness and long-term employability.” (p. 13)

Watts further pinpointed that experience-based learning can occur without employment. He (1996) defined experience-based learning about work as

“Forms of such learning conventionally include work experience, work visits, work shadowing, and work simulation. All involve direct and personal contact with some mix of work roles, work tasks, work processes, and work environment.” (p. 233)

In Hong Kong, the Curriculum Development Council (2002) explained that career related experiences are broadly included into four main types: actual work experience, guided work experience, outside-school career-related experience, and career-related experience within school. While a wide variety of experience and learning are included here, the focus should be helping students to learn from such experiences. In other words, the key should not be only on the provision of career-related experiences, but on facilitating student learning in the process.

5.2 Analysis

Career-related experience (CRE) is an important component of secondary school education as it provides valuable experience and knowledge about the world of work that students are advancing to. The aim of CRE is to equip students with the skills related to work by volunteering or temporarily working in an organisation, thus providing students with better adjustment of the identity change from student to employee.

The three critical elements of CRE programs are to increase student perceptions on the world of work, to understand and follow work ethics, and to acquire knowledge related to employability. For work ethics, the student will need to learn central values about work, including responsibility to oneself, responsibility to the organisation, respect, and determination. To increase employability, student is required to uncover their potential in order to acquire the skills and knowledge needed for the targeted field of work (Curriculum Development Council, 2005).

Traditionally, career guidance in Hong Kong schools is viewed by practitioners as ‘carried out too early in secondary school’ and ‘not academic’, thus the idea of career-related experience was often overlooked in the past. This created a vicious cycle: students are educated to ignore the application of knowledge and skills to their life and to the world of work. Most students end up with confusion and many have not acquired the skills needed to begin their career (Yip, 2004).

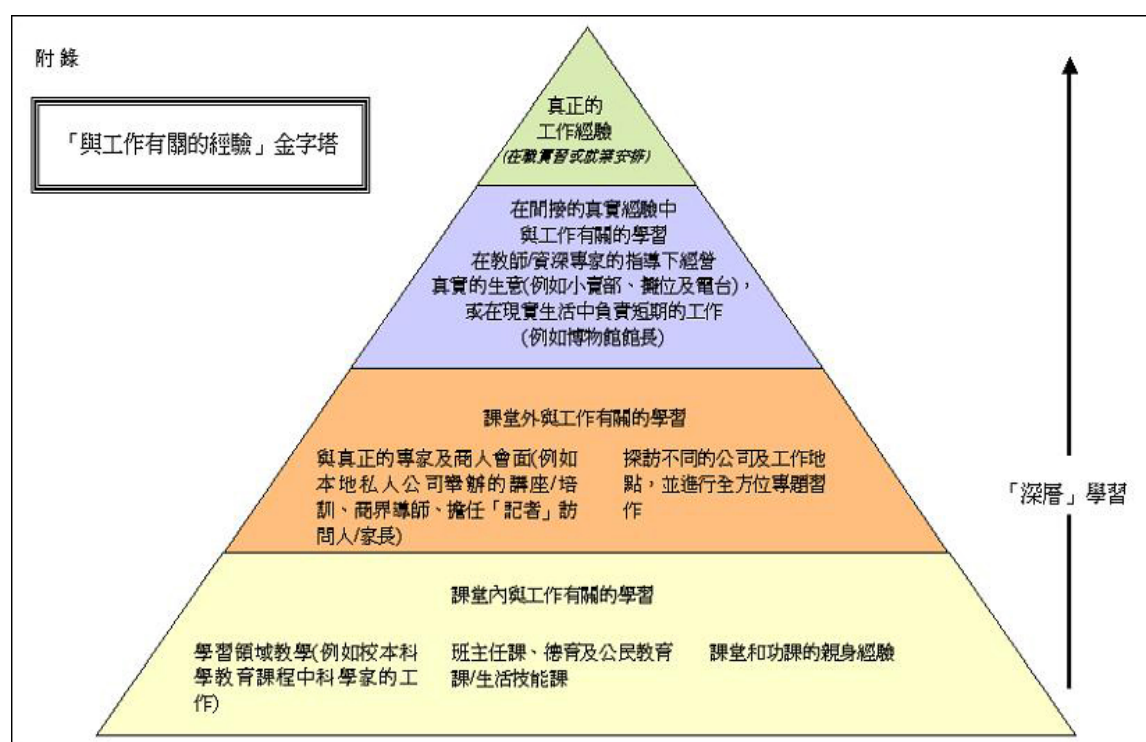
In recent years educators have begun the work of integrating CRE in the Hong Kong secondary school curriculum. In the Basic Education curriculum Guide 2002, CRE programs are described as joint programs organised by school, industrial and commercial organisations.

CRE is composed of in-school and outside-school activities (EDB, 2002). Yet, a research in 2004 shows that only 42% of school principals proclaimed they will provide CRE to their students (Yip, 2004). This shocking result indicated an urgent need for more promotion in CRE in the society.

5.2.1 Types of Career-related experiences

Career-related experiences can be divided into four main types: actual work experience, guided work experience, outside-school career-related experience, and career-related experience within school. Categories of CRE experiences can be organized into a pyramid format (Curriculum Development Council, 2005) (see figure 5.1)

Figure 5.1 CRE Pyramid



Source: Curriculum Development Council, 2005

Higher in the pyramid represents more commitment of students who are able to learn more specific knowledge about work. In other words, students are closer to the real life work situation. Lower rank in the pyramid indicates more general learning of the workplace. Although higher rank activities provide ‘deeper’ learning, not many of the students can benefit from it. Students are selected by teachers and employers through detailed selection process in order to offer them to the position. On the other hand, for lower rank activities it is held within school thus it covers most students.

Actual work experience is on the top rank of the CRE pyramid. It includes internship programs and part-time work which provides real life experience for students. Recent CRE programs mainly offer positions for students in social service agencies, public libraries, youth centres, hospitals, law firms, and business firms.

Ranked the second from the top are indirect CRE experiences. Different from actual work experiences, in indirect CRE programs students are directed by tutors and organizers. It includes the active participation of students in job shadowing, volunteer experiences, mentorship programs, taster programs, and workshops. Activities include running a business or performing actual work tasks with assistances. The advantages of these programs are to allow guides to provide a role model for students, and students are able to learn in a standardized and supported environment.

The third rank of CRE program is extra-curricular career-related learning. It includes workshops, workplace visits, and activities include interviewing experts in different work sectors. Activities which last for shorter periods, such as a few hours or half day, mostly fall in this category. These are quantitative learning programs which target a broader group of students.

At the bottom of the pyramid is career-related learning curriculum. It covers the largest proportion of secondary students. These activities include general studies lessons, talks, and seminars. Activities in this curriculum do not necessarily require students to carry out ‘tasks’ but to receive career-related information in school. These activities have been criticized by being too general and experiences provided to students are ‘unreal’. Yet, the activities give their value by introducing the basic knowledge about CRE and career planning to the school and to encourage students with lower motivation to participate in other CRE experiences.

5.2.2 Students in Experience-based Learning about Work

The focal point of such learning experience is students. The experience should be provided to students and for students. It is empirically and research-proven that work experience accelerates the student learning progress and broadens their view. According to Yip (2004), through career-related activities, students are able to:

- Obtain a broader knowledge of the industry
- Develop positive work attitude
- Enhance personal development including self-discipline, communication skills, and presentation of self

- Examine theory through practice
- Obtain a reference more likely to attract potential employers than other activities

Skills required for students to increase employability can be equipped through active participation in CRE programs. Table 5.1 is a summary of skills.

Table 5.1 Skills needed for higher employability

Take initiative and be assertive	Be Confident
Good interview skills	Negotiation skills
Flexibility and willingness	Ask questions when appropriate
Working well in a team	Time management skills
Be Honest	Good presentation of self
Develop interest in job tasks	Work attitude: work hard and smart
Have a 'can do' attitude	Work well with different types of people

Source: Curriculum Development Council, 2004

5.2.3 Teachers in Experience-based Learning about Work

Teachers hold a critical role in CRE programs. They work as a medium between students, employers, institutes, community organisations and other school personnel (Li, 2007). The success of a work experience program depends on the network, negotiation and organization skills, and vision of career teachers.

Career teachers are strongly encouraged to develop themselves to be good facilitators of experience-based learning about work. To do this, they have to equip themselves with the essential theoretical base and practical skills. The learning based theories of career development, including social learning theory (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996) and social cognitive theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), are particularly useful for this purpose. For instance, the social learning theory proposed that people tend to prefer an occupation if:

- They succeeded at tasks believed to be similar tasks performed by members of that occupation
- Observed a valued model being reinforced for activities similar to those performed by members of that occupation
- Relative or a valued friend stressed its advantages/observed positive words and images being associated with that occupation

Based on these assumptions, a number of coaching, modeling, simulation and learning skills can be employed to help the students to expand students' capabilities and interests, prepare for different work tasks, and take career actions.

More, to enable students to learn from experience, career teachers may draw from Kolb's theory (1984) of experiential learning in which the learning process involves continuously concrete experience, observation and reflection, conceptualization and generalization, as well as application of concepts. Accordingly, Miller (1991) proposed a five-step plan to integrate work experience of students into learning, including preparation, briefing, activity, debriefing and follow-up.

5.2.4 Community Support in Experience-based Learning about Work

Organisations in community serve as both provider and taker in CRE programs. Organisations provide time, resources, and management to give experience and work values for students. In return, CRE programs return benefits to organisations. In most medium to large organisations, CRE programs provide positive public image and fulfil public responsibility which are advantageous in the modern business world (Greenbank, 2002). Communication between students and employers is facilitated in this cooperation and the organisation can keep in touch with the trend of current education and locate possible employees. Experience gained by students on placements can reduce postgraduate training needs, thus to reduce expenditure on training in the long run. Furthermore, experience of some organisations has suggested that students can bring creativity to the office environment (McMahon and Quinn, 1995).

For the past 20 years, the HKACMGM has acted as host, coordinator, and organiser in the Summer Work Experience Scheme commissioned by Careers Guidance Services Section of the Education Bureau. The career guidance organisations share workload of all other parties in management of CRE programs. The Business-School Partnership run by the Home-School Section of EDB assists in lining up business organizations with schools in provision of career-related experiences.

5.3 Recommendations

Greenbank (2002) found that the mentoring role of the academic tutor is crucial to the success of work experience schemes. Both the students and the placement provider needs to be adequately prepared for the program if it is to be successful. To overcome problems related to students, it is essential to inform students of the importance of work experience. Possessing

practical work experience is an advantage for students in future work interviews, and the experience and vision developed from work is valuable to their personal growth.

For teachers, it is essential for them to gain support from the school. The work of career guidance should not fall solely on guidance teacher, but to carry out on a whole school basis. The whole school approach is about involvement of the school head, all teachers, and staff in the program. It is highly recommended for enhancing the work experience of students, and it unifies the school towards a common goal (Hui, 2002).

Once accepted the cooperation agreement, organisations should fully support the work experience schemes by providing clear procedure and guideline. Work tasks of students need to be well planned to avoid over- or under-estimation of the ability of students. Again, reducing workload of CRE involved staff and giving sufficient support to them are recommended in order to enhance commitment and improve quality of the program. Also, it is important for NGOs to work as a buffer among parties to reduce workload of all individuals involved and facilitate communication between parties.

The complexity of joint parties programs is one of the difficulties of managing work experience schemes. It can also be a tough challenge for students. Well communication among and within parties and well developed policies are the key to success. It can only be fruitful if the parties cooperate and communicate well with each other. If work experience is to continue, effort must be made to enhance the role of work experience in school curriculum, to benefit the parties involved, and ultimately to the overall quality of the system and industry as a whole.

6. Enabling Individual Student Planning

6.1 Explanation

Individual student planning plays an important role in enhancing career-related experiences for secondary school students in the NSS. It encourages students to identify personal abilities, make plans, and to develop skills at an individual level. According to Gysbers (2000; p.11), “individual planning focuses on assisting students, in close collaboration with parents, to develop, analyze, evaluate and carry out their educational, occupational, and personal goals and plans.”

There are 3 stages in individual career planning: career preference, evaluation of education options, and development of a career plan (O’Brien, 2006).

Self-recognition is a crucial and initial stage in career planning. Career assessments and individual counseling are the ways to identification of oneself. Student abilities, interests, skills, and achievements can be assessed and interpreted by trained guidance personnel. The use of test information and other data about students is an important part of helping them develop immediate and long-term goals and plans (Gysbers, 2000). Talents and interests can also be reflected by daily activities and hobbies of students.

Approximately 80% of all careers require education or training after secondary school. Therefore the second part of the career planning process is to evaluate the educational options. Students need to familiarize with the training they need to achieve a certain career (O'Brien, 2006). Guidance and advices from parents, teachers, and guidance personnel are required in the evaluation as this gives personal-social, educational, and labour market information to students. This furthers the vision of students and will help them plan for their goals (Gysbers, 2000).

To develop plans to achieve personal, education, and career goal, students need to learn how to build their personal portfolio. Collage of learning information to form a portfolio provides a systematic record for the development of students. Other than academic information, extracurricular activities, outside-school activities, awards, skills, interests, and career plans are recommended into the learning profile. Learning tools help students to identify strengths and weaknesses and to keep records of the learning progress. The learning tool can be used as a vehicle of understanding for students, parents and teachers. With the use of the tool, students can easily keep track of their progress, and it can be a resource in appraisals. Yet it is important for students to realize that no career path is permanent or irreversible. The career choice made can be altered anytime in the future.

6.2 Analysis

The importance of individual career planning is well supported by experimental (Trusty, Niles, and Carney, 2005) and empirical studies (Harrington and Harrigan, 2005). However, local studies suggested that Hong Kong students have little planning in their future career (Wu, 2005). Trusty et al. (2005) commented that 'If students do not plan and behave in ways consistent with their post-secondary educational goals, or if they have no goals, then negative consequences fall to students'. If schools overemphasize intellectual learning, with little or no attention being given to self-exploration and career exploration, this will lead to frustration, regret, and even burnout (Tien, Lin, and Chen, 2005).

Guidance system works best when it meets the needs of students. A cross cultural study suggests that in senior secondary levels students have fewer needs to know about own interests, personal characteristics, and the nature of work. On the other hand, the students at this level are more concerned about life and career implications such as job-related stress, earnings, lifestyle and conditions of employment. Using the results in developing guidance system, this study suggests students at a junior level may need a self-exploration approach of guidance service, and senior secondary students may need a career-oriented guidance approach (McMahon & Watson, 2005).

Well developed and carried-out assessments such as aptitude tests, career tests, personality tests and assessment of transferable skills are useful and common tools in career guidance in schools. The assessments provide additional information about students for guidance personnel to work on. Some tests need to be administered by trained personnel (e.g. MBTI) but others can be done without much guidance. Some tests such as the Self-Directed Search are self-administered. Career teacher needs to choose a suitable and familiar combination of assessments to work with student career planning. Please be reminded that most of the career guidance assessments are used to give an idea about the direction of student development rather than diagnostic tools. *A list of popular aptitude assessments, career interest tests and personality tests can be founded in Chapter 3 of this Handbook.*

An academic aptitude assessment is generally defined as a test designed to assess the logical and critical reasoning, numerical problem solving skills and language ability of the test takers (HKUST, 1997). Some aptitude assessments may also include specific knowledge in a particular area such as transport knowledge for logistic jobs. In Hong Kong, companies such as the Hong Kong Government, MTRC, KPMG Peat Marwick and Hong Kong Telecom use aptitude assessments in employee selection for management level positions.

Personality Tests are assessments to describe relatively stable character pattern of behavior, thoughts, and feelings. In career guidance, the trait personality theory is commonly adopted, for example, the Holland's Typology and the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Rees, Luzzo, Gridley, & Doyle, 2007). **A formal personality test needs to be carried out by trained persons because interpretation of test results can be difficult.** Personality tests are commonly constructed by a number of questions with response scales and a scoring system. Higher scores in the tests do not mean the test takers perform 'better', but indicate a certain categories that he or she falls into.

Career tests fall into the category of psychological assessments. Similar to personality tests, career tests describe character pattern of behavior, thoughts, and feelings, but are more

focused in how the traits impact on the potential success and satisfaction with career options. Tests such as the Self-Directed Search (Holland and Powell, 1994) can be viewed as a guidance activity to explore interests as well as a career assessment. Below is a list of available career tests.

Transferable skills analysis is a battery of tests to measure the level of skills of individuals. It is determined by assessment of past accomplishments or experience. Informal transferable skills analysis can be performed with the aid of career portfolio or career related articles.

It is important that career teachers inform and consult trained assessment personnel before providing tests to students. It is because poor interpretation of test results and misuse of tests can be counter-productive as it misleads students to an inappropriate interpretation of self.

6.3 Recommendation

The NSS system includes career oriented curriculum which aims to equip students with skills required to take control of self-learning and to assist students to prepare for the world of work. Under this curriculum, students have more power and responsibility for shaping their life and career. This is a critical change in the perspective of students.

The Individual Student Profile Tool for S.1-3 and S.4-6 are guidance tools published by Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters in 2008 and 2009. They are well developed local tools for the use of student career planning. Each is composed of three major parts to meet the three steps of individual career planning. It includes self-exploration activities of interest, values, and ability (see Figure 1). Based on Holland's model, a variety of self-directed qualitative tools and localized career interest games are orchestrated carefully and systematically to meet the career developmental needs of students in NSS. To combine personal qualities with opportunities available, students are then guided, step-by-step, to make a long term goal as well as several short term goals reflectively.

To summarize the points, effective educational and career planning needs to include:

- Cautious, thoughtful, and thorough advices from parents, teachers, and counsellors
- Work to help students to engage in school activities
- Educational and career assessments
- Structure in which students develop systematic plans for meeting their goals (Brown & Trusty, 2005).

7. Providing career guidance and counseling for individual students

7.1 Explanation

Career counselling is commonly confused with career guidance in Hong Kong. The nature of career development has been changed in the 21st Century. The term ‘career guidance’ is often used in the United Kingdom. It has a broad definition as a range of programs designed to enable individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational, and personal development (Watts and Kidd, 2000, p.489).’ Career guidance is also an umbrella term to describe the various potential elements in the provision of career support, including group work, information giving, teaching, self-help activities and assessment, and career counselling. On the other hand, career counselling shares similar aspects with career guidance yet the client has more room to explore their own issues. The primary functions of career counselling range from facilitating self and occupational awareness, exploring opportunities, developing career planning skills, helping with stress reduction, working with indecisiveness and addressing to work adjustment (Kidd, 2006). Swanson (1995) defined career counselling as ‘an on-going, face-to-face interaction between counsellor and client, with primary focus on work- or career-related issues; the interaction is psychological in nature, with the relation between counsellor and client serving as an important function. (p. 245)’

7.2 Analysis

The ambition of introduction of student-oriented counselling programs to secondary schools is a new concept to most Hong Kong secondary school teachers. There have been criticisms from teachers about the lack of time and resources for individual counselling, and critiques about the lack of training in counselling skills of school counsellors and teachers (Patton and Burton, 1996). Indeed, most students in Hong Kong have no idea of their own interest and do not explore their genuine needs when they choose subjects. The current career guidance system in Hong Kong is highly informational. Printed materials and seminars are the only source of career guidance provided in many schools (HKYWCA, 2003). Recent studies in the same way indicate a high demand of career guidance and counselling in schools.

Personality and interest assessments that are often used in career counselling may overlook the collectivistic culture in Hong Kong thus may in fact neglect environmental factors. (Young, Marshall, & Valach, 2007). It is essential to take cultural issues into account to fully utilize the practice of counselling. The third factor, cultural factor includes social status, parental pressure, and social equality. For example, if parental pressure is high, career decision is more dependent on the preference of parents compared to students who receive less parental pressure.

7.3 Recommendations

There are insufficient training opportunities for practicing career personnel and not many teachers are interested in the career counselling which seriously affects the quality of career guidance. It is highly recommended that school counselling personnel equip various skills to work with a wide range of student problems, including disabilities and neurosis (Milson & Akos, 2003). Counselling skills including active listening, reflection of emotion, crisis intervention and affirming skills are required in career counselling. Self-learning and courses are available through counselling and education associations (information given in Chapter 4).

In monitoring the quality of school counselling services, the method of supervision has been widely used in the U.S. (American Counselling Association, 2007), the U.K. (BACP, 2007), and Australia (Australian Counselling Association, 2007). Supervision is a social process that involves immersion in the professional culture through which the novice learns attitudes, values, modes of thinking, and strategies for problem solving that are embedded in that culture. In this way the person under supervision acquires a professional identity (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006). The supervision systems of counselling practitioners in the U.S., the U.K., and Australia have created a relatively high standard of school counselling service compared to Asian countries. However, constraints are expected in promoting such system in Hong Kong schools due to the lack of resources and cultural differences. Alternative ways including professional meetings, active participation in seminars and workshops, and continuous learning of new skills can be used by practitioners to promote the quality of school counselling in Hong Kong.

7. A continuum from “guidance” to “counselling”

A career guidance curriculum needs to be developed in three levels: individual, school, and community level. In the individual level, individual student planning guided by teachers will be promoted. Students are encouraged to develop education, career, and life plans according to their preferences and opportunities available.

No matter how well-structured the mass programs are, or how effective the ISP or career tests are in assisting students in career and life planning, INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING still plays a key role in career education. For every student who comes to meet the career teacher or counsellor, the problems and struggles are unique for him or her. They have a need to be listened to, respected, and cared. We understand that this is a source of tension in the workload of career teacher, and in a broad sense, all teachers in school especially when we stress a whole-school approach in school guidance. The following are suggestions on career counselling:

- Reviewing and enriching professional training: Professional development of career teachers should be strengthened. Career guidance and counselling is unique in a way that the teachers/counsellors need to be very sensitive to changes in the education and occupation environment. In this regard, many career teachers tend to skew their time spent on information collection and dissemination at the expense of intensive counselling services. Career teachers may have confusion about their roles and some even lack micro-counselling skills required for career counselling. It is time to reflect and review current professional development courses provided by various institutes and organizations. The curriculum components should strike a balance between practical issues in launching guidance programs and enrichment of teachers' career counselling skills.
- School support: Career teachers, and school administrator also, should be aware of the multiple roles of career teachers as information officers, coordinators of guidance programs, educators, career consultants and career counsellors (Li, 2007). Time allocated for these roles should be in line with the prioritized career-related duties. Nevertheless, it is essential for school administrators to provide ample resources, in terms of physical space (career guidance room or corner), manpower, and reasonable reduction in teaching load so that career teachers are given adequate leeway to conduct individual counselling. Professional autonomy and accountability should be two sides of the same coin. Therefore, with increased support from the school, a sound evaluation mechanism of career guidance services should also be in place.

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