VOCATIONAL AWARENESS THROUGH THE USE OF STIMULATION

W.E. PAWLOVICH
University of Alberta
and
University of Saskatchewan

Abstract

The writer examines the literature to determine the central reasons for the failure of traditional methods of disseminating vocational information. The lack of readiness to receive information by adolescents is cited as one of the major problems in career education today. Several innovative techniques are discussed with an emphasis on simulation techniques. The writer expresses enthusiasm toward the implementation of simulation techniques and presents arguments for their potential benefits in promoting vocational awareness among today's youth.

Résumé

L'auteur étudie la littérature pour y découvrir les raisons principales qui expliquent les difficultés des méthodes traditionnelles à faire connaître l'information vocationnelle. On cite souvent le fait que les adolescents ne sont pas prêts à recevoir de telles informations. On suggère donc de nouvelles approches, surtout celles qui font appel à des techniques de simulation. L'auteur exprime beaucoup d'espoir dans les possibilités de telles techniques et présente des arguments pour indiquer le rôle qu'elles peuvent jouer à rendre les jeunes plus éveillés au monde des carrières.

At the same time that the amount of vocational information is growing the number of methods of disseminating this information to adolescents is also increasing. These methods range from traditional programs such as lectures, speakers, pamphlets and films to relatively recent innovations such as computer assisted programs and simulation games. Even with the numerous methods available, Breton (1972) in his study on the career decisions of Canadian youth reported that only one half of the secondary school students thought they were sufficiently informed about career choices. London (1973) reports that similar results were found in an American study carried out in 1966. The vocational needs of the majority of students have not been met. If traditional programs of preparing the adolescent to receive vocational information and subsequently for decision-making are ineffective, are innovative programs necessary and can they be successful?

TRADITIONAL DISSEMINATION OF VOCATIONAL INFORMATION

Perhaps one of the oldest methods of making adolescents aware of vocational information is simply by presenting them with printed materials. Ginzberg (1971) feels that this continues to be the major approach used to help people learn about the world of work and to familiarize them with the wide range of occupations. Some examples of massive collections of occupational information are the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, an American collection, and the Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations, a Canadian collection. Ginzberg (1971) goes on to state:

> However, the availability of a large body of occupational materials even if it is well indexed, and attractively displayed does not necessarily indicate that the information function is being performed satisfactorily (p. 203).

In citing a study by Campbell (1969) he states that some of the major complaints that students have made about materials are that they are: too general, that they do not answer questions and that they are unrealistic and boring. Ginzberg (1971) as well as Laramore (1968) note that a major drawback is that these materials are often beyond the reach of poor readers. Chick (1970) cites Pierson, Hoover and Whitfield (1967) as finding that much of the occupational information is out of date and lacks objectivity, authenticity, local specifity and realism. They state another basic problem—the difficulty of storing, filming and retrieving the information in

a readily useable manner. Contrary to this predominantly pessimistic view of printed materials Speers and Tkach (1976) feel that many young people will use this information if it is well-organized and available.

Disregard of Theory

In all of the traditional methods the main emphasis has been on simple dissemination of information. However, as Chick (1970) states, due to the fact that career information is rapidly changing and that society is becoming vastly complex, counsellors must be open to new innovations and new methods. The traditional programs may have been less than adequate partly because they were set up with little regard to theory. As Zaccaria (1970) sees it:

> Theories of occupational choice and vocational development represent the results of attempts to know how people choose jobs and function within the world of work. These theories offer a perspective for knowing how to help clients with vocational problems (p. 2).

In all theories of vocational development whether it be trait-factor theory, sociological theory or need theory, the dissemination of information is emphasized as an integral part of the process. Perhaps the only exception to this is psychoanalytic theory. Hoppock (1967) quotes Brill (1949) as stating that there is no need for counselling or for testing, or for occupational information as the client's emotions will lead him to a wise choice if he is left alone. Hoppock (1967) refutes this idea stating:

> So long as people choose occupations, there will be need for someone to help them learn what occupations are accessible to them, what these occupations offer that may meet their needs, and what each occupation requires in exchange (p. 100).

Why Traditional Methods Have Failed

Boocock (1967), Cook (1976), Chick (1970), Higuchi (1978), O'Hara (1968), and Mathews (1976) all give credence to the idea that the reason that the deliverance of occupational information to adolescents if ineffective is because of its remoteness or irrelevancy in their lives. Higuchi (1978) refers to this particular problem in terms of student apathy and Cook (1976) feels that adolescents would rather live in the here and now, leaving the future to take care of itself. Chick (1970) cites Boocock (1967) as saying that vocational counselling is difficult to accomplish because the situation (i.e., vocational decision-making) is not within their realm of familiarity and occurs at a time when it is of relatively little importance to them. Boocock and Coleman (1966) refer to this as "teaching for the long-distance future." Finally Mathews (1978) tries to explain why sincere counsellors have failed in vocational classes:

> They are puzzled and discouraged when their sincere efforts are often met with silent boredom and secret opposition. The connection between the adolescent experience and adult vocational life is vague, unreal, and far-distant. The pressing immediacy of family and peer relationships is a central preoccupation that overshadows other portions of life (p. 15).

Thus it appears to be the responsibility of guidance personnel to transform what seems to be irrelevant and unfamiliar knowledge into information that holds meaning and value.

The idea of remoteness carries with it implications of something that is extraneous, strange and outside of one's self. Theorists, therefore, in dealing with the irrelevancy of vocational information, have directed their attention to the teaching of self-concept. Herr and Cramer (1972) have made the following statement:

> Both educational and occupational information have meaning only insofar as such data are evaluated within the framework of what an individual knows about himself. Self-information is crucial to a student's seeing the relevance of the educational and/or occupational data which he receives. A student needs an accurate picture and acceptance of his strengths and weaknesses in both the cognitive and non-cognitive domain in order to fully realize the value of the information regarding the worlds of work and education. He must be aware of his diverse aptitudes, his interests, his values and his attitudes toward learning and work. Only then can he truly evaluate the information which he receives (p. 278).

THEORIST SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Both Super (1957) and Hoppock (1967) have attested to this idea of combining knowledge of oneself with knowledge of occupations. Super (1957) has stated that "a combination of getting occupational information and consciously considering it in light of information about oneself is better than merely acquiring the information or merely analyzing oneself" (p. 298). Bedville (1976) feels that a useful method of uncomplicating occupational information is to first assist the student to develop self-awareness. London (1973) calls for individual diagnosis before giving the student any information. O'Hara and Tiedeman (1959) have found that adolescents are somewhat aware of their vocationally relevant attributes, but more needs to be done. They suggest that "the concepts of identity and self and intuitively satisfying means of attributing motivation for occupational choice in the person choosing" (p. 292).

Student Must Perceive a Need

Many theorists in the vocational development field such as Super (1957), Hoppock (1967), Ginzberg (1971) and O'Hara (1968) have stressed the idea that a precondition to vocational counselling is that the student must feel a "need" to acquire the information. O'Hara (1968) claims that this felt need is often a socially created state and that a student can be socialized to develop it. He states that unless a student is "vocationally hungry" he will not notice the job work. Super (1957) makes an even stronger case:

> In many occupational orientation programs, information has been broadcast at students on the assumption that they would assimilate it, store it away and use it as needed. Such practices violate all that we know about learning, which takes place in response to a felt need. That is why studies evaluating vocational orientation programs have generally demonstrated the relative ineffectiveness of purely information-giving programs. They have proved effective only when focused on the felt needs of the students. . . . The counselling is necessary in order to help the individual realize his needs, seek appropriate information and accept its implications (p. 304).

Information Must be Structured

Another important requirement in the teaching of vocational information is that the information must be structured. O'Hara (1968) says that vocational learning is seldom structured and thus adolescents have no "cues" as to what aspects they should attend to. He feels that the vocational learning situation must be presented in a patterned and vocationally significant fashion in order that the student get the most out of it. Martin (1970) gives suggestions as to how this should be done:

> . . . in increasing information for personal and vocational awareness, the guidance specialist would do well to make use of materials that employ conceptual schemes, behavioural models or themes that are relevant to ascertained information needs of the student (p. 52).. . . . the guidance specialist must be prepared to identify or devise materials and methods suitable for teaching students how to use this scheme as a "coding" device so that information will take on personal meaning as the student learns to apply the scheme for his own purposes (p. 52).

Specifically, she suggests materials which concentrate on presenting the functional aspects of jobs in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles with its emphasis on people, data, things and functions.

Tiedeman (1975) feels that "by instructing by means of a well conceived design, we are on the threshold of eliminating student abrogation of responsibility for knowing while being instructed, particularly in the instruction associated with career guidance" (p. 708).

Considering Emotional Obstacles

In many ways the work of guidance counsellors can be separated into three distinct areas: educational counselling, vocational counselling and personal counselling. Ann Martin (1970) is one theorist who promotes the combining of these areas. She feels that man is a "complex human being with emotions, knowledge, perception and prejudices" (p. 9). She states that it has been found that man's attitudes and emotional states affect how he perceives, distorts and selects various types of input data.

> The counsellor who looks at the implications of these findings proceeds to assess the individual's stage of perception and awareness to determine whether the individual must first be counselled on affective grounds before providing a process of cognitive information. In the early stages of vocational counselling with adolescents, a great deal of change to take place in the individual requires a change in affect. In considering the utility of information for change the counsellor looks toward a different set of procedures that he would use if he were attempting to fill a "deficit" or produce an increment in knowledge. These procedures call for determining what affective problems of vocational choice and decision may face the student . . . (p. 9).

Martin (1970) feels that once the student is free of emotional obstacles, information can be given but even in this information giving there remains affective aspects. She states that the guidance counsellor must present the psychological and social aspects of an occupation, such as needs, attitudes, values, and job satisfaction, and that this should be done in such a way that the student experiences these elements in a manner similar to the real world and so that he will be involved at the affective as well as the cognitive level. Tippett and Davison (1975), Herr and Cramer (1972) and Hanson and Borrow (1973) support this integration of cognitive and affective processes.

Feelings of Powerlessness

Martin (1970) has stated that a major reason why youth have failed to cope with the adult environment and more specifically facing vocational decisions is due to lack of confidence in his own ability to control any aspect of his environment. Crow (1973) in his study on group counselling refers to this as "feelings of powerlessness" and Ginzberg (1971) states that students are not even aware that they have a choice. In order to counteract the effect of this, Holland (1978) has suggested that students be

asked to participate more fully in the diagnostic process. Tiedeman (1975) suggests that the student must feel he is a significant agent in what happens to him by teaching him decision-making skills and skills of inquiry or search strategies. Boocock and Coleman (1966), Martin (1970), and Ginzberg (1971) also support these methods.

Removal of Threat

Numerous other suggestions as to how to present vocational information to students in a meaningful way have been made. These have not been emphasized to the extent that the previously noted prints have, but nonetheless they deserve to be mentioned. Ginzberg (1971, p. 101) quotes Patterson (1964) as saying the client should not be under pressure, since threat is inhibiting to self analysis. Hoppock (1967) emphasizes the timing of vocational counselling:

> One accepted principle of educational psychology is that the best time to learn anything is just before we are going to use it. It is then that our interest is highest; it is then that there is the least danger that our knowledge will become obsolete before we use it. The appropriate time to teach occupations is just before or at the time that large enough numbers of persons will need and want substantially the same kinds of occupational information (p. 171).

Hoppock (1971) suggests that a general orientation to the world of work can start in lower grades and then become more specific. This idea for a continual developmental program is also supported by Super (1957), Tiedeman (1975), London (1973), Herr and Cramer (1972), and Baer (1964). Finally, O'Hara (1968) and Herr and Cramer (1972) give the suggestion that the student must be given the "language of occupations" before he is actually presented with information. Herr and Cramer (1972) refer to it as a "vocational vocabulary" and O'Hara (1968) as "symbolization". He states:

> . . . the value of the information does not lie in its up-to-dateness but in its capacity to lead to an increased understanding of career development in the world of work. This understanding comes about principally through the manipulation and study of the symbols of that world (p. 640).

INNOVATIONS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Traditional methods of disseminating vocational information have shown to be less than adequate. Chick (1970) says that due to the fact that career information is rapidly changing and that society is becoming vastly complex, counsellors must be open to new innovations in the use of career information. One kind of innovation that attempts to promote vocational awareness is the use of simulation games. Chick (1970) describes simulation games as methods which create and reproduce phenomena that approximate those that are likely to occur in real-life situations and thus give the student an opportunity to experience the work world vicariously. She lists types of simulation games as role playing, modelling, audio-visual techniques, problem-solving, gaming techniques and man-machine interactions. Several types of simulation methods have been developed in the form of kits and games. Boocock and Coleman (1966) have developed the "Life Career Game", in which teams of students have to plan the life of a fictitious person whom they are representing. Kumboltz and Bergland (1969) formulated "Job Experience" kits which introduce a student to a particular occupation and then provide him with a realistic problem faced daily by a worker. Herr and Cramer (1972) describe a role playing lesson used by McCourt (1965) in which a role model is presented by a film and then students are asked to explore vicariously the relevance to themselves of the particular occupation under consideration. Balabuck and Pawlovich (1975) have adapted from the original words of Scott and Rabin (1971) a Canadian version of the "Vocational Readiness Program for Females". Pawlovich (1978) has developed a male counterpart to the "Vocational Readiness Program". These two programs are designed to increase awareness in adolescents of future realities of careers and marriage. They are five session programs which use a non-threatening simulation game format to provoke thought and interest in carefully planning a person's future. The programs are colorful, dramatic and fast-paced and designed to promote small group interaction. In the process of life planning for someone else, participants are exposed to career information and the hazards of job search, the harsh realities of budgeting and the cost of living as well as the ups and downs of actual married life. (A description of "The Vocational Readiness Program for Males" and ideas for implementation are included in Appendix A).

SIMULATION STUDIES

One of the first major reviews of the research literature on simulations was done by Cleo Cherryholmes (1966). She summarized the findings of six simulation studies: Anderson (1964), Boocock (1963), Boocock and Coleman (1966), Cherryholmes (1966), Garvey and Seiler (1966), and Robinson, Anderson, Herman and Snyder (1966). She found that simulations do produce more student interest and motivation but no significant differences were shown in learning retention, critical thinking or attitude change.

Stammer (1977) has done a recent review of

the literature pertaining to simulations. She cites evidence that simulations create more motivation and interest than conventional class activities as reported by Anderson (1964), Cohen, Dill, Kuen and Winters (1968), Shirts and Sprague (1966), and Cohen (1969). Chartier (1972) reported higher learning outcomes at the cognitive level by students who participated in both simulation and discussion than those who participated in either simulation or discussion.

Goodman (1973) points out the problems associated with gaming and simulation, while encouraging their use. His indications that learning takes place during and after the game experience, tends to obscure the research findings. Goodman suggested that researchers focus on the formalized nature of simulation exercises so data will be produced to indicate what is actually going on as decision-making occurs.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Although simulation games have not been the target of criticisms, their limitations have been noted. Loughary (1968) has indicated that they are effective only to the extent that there is carry-over by the learner to the real environment; this carry-over value is dependent upon the extent to which the person perceives the simulated experience or problem as being real. Martin (1970) has also commented upon the importance of presenting realistic situations. If change in the behavior of the student is to occur she feels the student must receive support and reinforcement for performing the tasks.

As noted earlier, one of the problems with exposing adolescents to vocational information is that it often seems remote to them. Boocock and Coleman (1966) state that "simulation games bring the future into the present, allowing the child to play roles in a large, differentiated society of which he otherwise gets hardly a glimpse. Thus they surround a child with an environment which is artificial for the present, but realistic for the future" (p. 218). Secondly the authors promote the games as increasing the players' confidence in their own capacity for coping with complicated situations and controlling their environment. This would seem valuable in terms of Martin's (1970) statement that a major reason for youth's failure to cope with the adult environment is in-school lack of confidence in his own ability to control any aspect of environment. Chick (1970) reports that research has indicated that these gaming techniques teach problem-solving and decision-making skills as well as stimulating and motivating youth to become more involved and concerned with the complexities of career planning. Studies on the effectiveness of these problem-solving kits have found that students who have used them are motivated to seek additional occupational information (Krumboltz and Baker, 1973).

ADVANTAGES OF STIMULATION

Varenhorst (1973) regards simulation games as unique potential as teaching tools. The essence of a simulation game according to Varenhorst in interaction. Simulation games demand intervention among the players, participation is demanded and withdrawal from the interaction is difficult. Varenhorst (1973) states four further advantages of simulation games which include: (1) provision for experiential learning as opposed to abstract or cognitive learning; (2) provision for built in motivation not dependent on the skill of a game leader; (3) provision for training in intuition building, problem-solving and social behaviors, which involves the teaching of facts, processes, relative costs and benefits, risks and potential rewards of alternative strategies for decision-making; (4) provision for specific instruction for individual problems and capabilities, this is accomplished through peer instruction where individuals are learning different things on different levels at the same time.

Virtually all writers of simulation theory and materials encourage further research as well as continued use of the technique. Bandura (1977) appears to lend much support for techniques of the simulation type. Bandura in his social learning theory approach purports that nearly all learning phenomena resulting from direct experiences can occur on a vicarious basis through observation of other people's behavior and its consequences for them. He maintains that man's capacity to learn by observation enables him to acquire large, integrated units of behavior by example without having to build up the patterns by tedious trial and error. He further states that similarly, emotional responses can be developed observationally by witnessing the affective reactions of others undergoing painful or pleasurable experiences. Bandura (1977) maintains that fearful and defensive behavior can be extinguished vicariously by watching others engage in fearful activities without adverse consequences. The contention here is that although simulation is not a direct life experience it is likely the closest phenomenon to it. Therefore it is quite appropriate to relate social learning theory to the simulated experiences.

In light of the evidence available a logical conclusion is that while simulation techniques are not a final solution to promoting vocational awareness, their usefulness appears to be substantial. The contribution of simulation techniques to vocational awareness appears to be in the vital area of motivation and curriculum enrichment. It

has been stated many times that lack of motivation is the major problem in promoting vocational awareness. The possibilities of utilizing simulation techniques in the enhancement of vocational readiness appear to be highly favourable and encouraging.

References

Balabuck, M.J., Balabuck, M.L., and Pawlovich, W.E. Vocational Readiness Program for Girls. The University of Saskatchewan, 1975.

Bandura, A. *Social learning theory.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977.

Bedville, G. We're in this together: a message to guidance counsellors. *The School Guidance Worker,* 1976, *31*, 5, 7-10.

Boocock, S.S. & Coleman, J.S. Games with simulated environments in learning. *Sociology of Education,* 1966, *39*, 215-236.

Boocock, S.S. The life career game. *Personnel and Guidance Journal,* 1967, *46*, 328-334.

Breton, R. *Social and academic factors in the career decisions of Canadian youth.* Ottawa: Information Canada, 1972.

Chartier, M. Learning effect—An experimental study of a simulation game and instrument discussion. *Simulation and Games,* 1972, *3*, 203-218.

Cherryholmes, C. Some current research on effectiveness of educational simulation; implications for alternative strategies. *American Behavioral Scientist,* 1966, *10*, 4-7.

Chick, J.M. *Innovations in the use of career information.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970.

Cook, D. A response to "We're in this together." *The School Guidance Worker,* 1976, *31*, 5, 11-13.

Crow, C.W. The effects of vocational exploration group experience on control expectancy, self-esteem and vocational maturity of high school students (unpublished thesis). Tempe, Arizona: Arizona State University, 1973.

Ginzberg, E. *Career Guidance: who needs it, who provides it, who can improve it.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Goodman, F. *Gaming and simulation. Second handbook of research on teaching.* R. Travers (ed.). Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973, 926-939.

Herr, E.L. & Cramer, S.H. *Vocational guidance and career development in the schools: towards a systems approach.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972.

Higuchi, G. The career action for youth centre—Vancouver. *The School Guidance Worker,* 1978, *33*, 3, 18-27.

Holland, J.L. Promoting vocational exploration and decision-making among high school and college students. *The School Guidance Worker,* 1978, *33*, 4, 21-31.

Hoppock, R. *Occupational information: where to get it and how to use it in counselling and in teaching.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Krumboltz, J.D. & Baker, R.D. Behavioral counselling for vocational decisions. In Henry Borrow (Ed.), *Career guidance for a new age.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973.

Laramore, D. Jobs of film. *The Vocational Guidance Quarterly.* 1968, *17*, 2, 87-89.

London, H.H. *Principles and techniques of vocational guidance.* Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1973.

Loughary, J.W. *Systems and simulation in counsellor education.* Chicago: Paper presented at convention of the Amer. Res. Assoc., 1968.

Martin, A.M. *The theory/practice of communicating educational and vocational information.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

Mathews, E. Girls, counsellors and careers: an action plan for vocational development. *The School Guidance Worker,* 1976, *31*, 5, 15-21.

O'Hara, R.P. A theoretical foundation for the use of occupational information in guidance. *Personnel and Guidance Journal,* 1968, *46*, 7, 636-640.

O'Hara, R.P. & Tiedeman, D.V. Vocational self concept in adolescents. *Journal of Counselling Psychology,* 1959, *6*, 292-301.

Pawlovich, W.E. Vocational Readiness Program for Young Males. The University of Saskatchewan, 1978.

Schultz, W.E. Vocational exploration groups (VEG): structured small group counselling. *The School Guidance Worker,* 1974, *30*, 2, 19-26.

Scott, J. & Rabin, M. Y.W.C.A. vocational readiness package. Y.W.C.A. Los Angeles, California, 1971.

Speers, E. & Tkach, W. Youth career counselling centre. *The School Guidance Worker,* 1976, *31*, 5, 43-46.

Stammer, D. Effect of a Simulation Game on Vocational Maturity. (Unpublished Master's Thesis.) The University of Alberta, 1977.

Super, D.E. *The psychology of careers.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957.

Tiedeman, D. Structuring personal integration into career education. *Personnel and Guidance Journal,* 1975, *53*, 706-711.

Varenhorst, B. Game theory, simulations, and group counselling. *Educational Technology,* 1973, *13*, 40-43.

Zaccaria, J. *Theories of occupational and vocational development.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

APPENDIX A

Vocational Readiness

The concept of 'vocational readiness' implies a preparation for receiving information, making decisions and implementing them. Super (1977), Shields (1974), Ewing (1974), and Matthews (1976) contend that traditional methods (lectures, speakers, pamphlets, films, career nights) for making adolescents aware of career opportunities and the importance of career choice are not effective. Because traditional methods of career education are described by adolescents as 'boring' and 'irrelevant' it is necessary that adolescents undergo a readiness program (Ewing, 1974, p. 35). Through a vocational readiness program adolescents are allowed to evaluate themselves and their lives in a nonthreatening atmosphere. Simulation, role playing and group discussion are the techniques used for allowing adolescents to become aware of their own identity, identify with adults in the work world, and internalize career values.

The Vocational Readiness Program for Males

Description and Objectives

The Vocational Readiness Program has been designed to increase awareness in adolescents of the future realities of careers and marriage. It is a five session program which uses a non-threatening simulation game format to provoke thought and interest in planning one's future. This program has been adapted to the Canadian situation. The circumstances presented in the program regarding careers and marriage are based on the following Canadian and Saskatchewan 1977 statistics: men on the average will live to be 70 years old; seven out of ten will marry; eight out of the ten that marry will rear children; one out of ten will be widowed; three out of ten will be divorced; seven out of ten will go beyond high school education; only five out of ten will complete post-secondary programs; eight of ten married men will be the financial head of the family; one in ten will work at minimum wage for most or all his life; five percent of all working men will earn over 30,000; nine out of ten working men will work at least 30 years before retiring.

The major purpose of the Vocational Readiness Program is to make young men aware of the traditional attitudes toward marriage and careers, and to make them aware of the realistic possibilities in planning their personal lives. The program is intended to be colourful, dramatic and fast paced and is designed to promote small group interaction. A leader in each group acts as a facilitator and information resource. During the five sessions the boys plan the lives of actual men, play the "Wheel of Fortune" game to find out what chance happening occurred to their boy and to formulate solutions to the problems their character is encountering. In the process of life planning for someone else, the participants are exposed to career information and the hazards of job search, the harsh realities of the ups and downs of married life.

During Day I of the program the boys work in pairs. Each pair is given a card stating three facts about a fictitious boy. The facts include how long he will live, what type of education he will obtain, and how many years he will work. The boys are invited to plan the rest of the fictitious character's life. After fantasizing an ideal life, the boys share their ideal plans with the other group members. Next, the pair must draw a "choice card" which will contain unexpected events which affect their boy's life. It is now up to the group to help the boys deal with their character's difficulties. Once the group has effectively coped with the first boy's problems, they repeat the procedure with the next pair's character.

Day II begins with the leader's description of seven real boys as they existed ten years ago. Their personalities and relationships are told in detail. Working with the same partner as last day, the participating boys choose one of the boy characters they have been told about and proceed to plan his life. The participants try to 'get inside the boy' by answering a career readiness checklist as he might have done.

On Day III of the program the boys use the information thay have been compiling about their boy to choose three possible careers for him. Vocational information books are required so the participating boys can look up career information such as: training required, qualifications, advancement, earnings. Once the boys know this information, they choose the desired career and proceed to fill out a job application form.

Day IV of the program involves playing the 'Wheel of Fortune' game to see if the boy gets the job that has been planned for him by the participating boys. If he doesn't get the desired job, the participants must prepare his living budget based on minimum-wage employment. The 'Wheel of Fortune' is spun again to find out if the boy marries and at what age, what his wife does occupationally and what unexpected events occur in his personal and vocational life.

The last session of the program involves role playing the boys whose lives the participating boys have been planning. This follows the format of a "T.V. Talk Show". Seven participants role play the boys whose lives have been planned by the participants. The host of the talk show (a leader) questions the actors about what really

happened to them during the last ten years. The boys answer the questions on the basis of the provided information. In conclusion all participants are encouraged to ask the actors any questions concerning the events of their character's lives.

Utilization of the Program

The program was designed as a teaching/counselling tool for teachers and counsellors to utilize in appropriate classes. Teachers and counsellors may find it convenient to conduct the program together as co-leaders in classes like Family Life, Guidance, Home Economics and Vocational Education. (The writer has a similar program available for females.) It has been found that 12-18 year age groups respond most favourably to the program. The program is designed for groups of up to 30 and not less than 15 boys; because it is a simulation game, it is necessary for group interaction.

Leadership

More than one leader may be required to work with the class. The chief characteristics of a good leader, in addition to leadership ability, is that he or she be non-judgmental and non-dominating of the group. In addition to counsellors and teachers, youth workers, social workers, parents and high school seniors may wish to work with the program. (It is possible that teachers could train students from their own classes or recruit volunteers from the community at large.)

Leadership Training

We have found that the best method of training is to have the leaders attend a one day workshop given by skilled trainers. This enhances success in the use of the program.

The main role of the leader is to act as a facilitator in the group, providing relevant information when needed and asking questions to stimulate the boys' participation. Since the leader is not an authority figure, he or she is not expected to know everything, so the leader can easily admit it when he/she doesn't know the answer to some question. In some instances the leader or another member of the group may research the questions and bring back the information to the group.

Leaders should be sensitive to the quieter members of the group and should make efforts to draw them out . . . but without being insistent or pushy.

Setting

An informal setting is suggested, hopefully a pleasant room with chairs that can be grouped in circles (it is very hard to work with desks). The less "school-like" the atmosphere, the better. Participants should never feel they are being graded for their performance. Part of the success of this program is that the participants are talking and working informally with a leader who is non-threatening and non-coercive.

Administer During Prime Time

It is suggested that the program be utilized during prime school time just the same way as all important subjects are given during prime time. If the program is given prior to school commencement or during recess, break time or after school hours, it will likely be a failure. If the program is regarded as low priority by the school personnel, it will be given low priority by the participants as well.

Who Benefits from the Program

Young males from various ethnic, economic, academic and social backgrounds are likely to benefit from this program. Even those considered to be extremely disadvantaged and troublesome could benefit as well.

The writer's experience has indicated that usually:

(a) Very bright and ambitious groups get the most out of the program in terms of vocational information and career planning.

(b) Males with average aspirations gain some vocational information and usually achieve some attitudinal change concerning marriage and careers.

(c) Males with very low expectations profit least in terms of applying vocational information to themselves, but usually profit most by becoming aware of other alternatives foreign to their experience. Obviously, the lower the expectation level, the more need there is for motivation and intensive follow-up. This group requires more instructions, more stimulation and more tolerance.

Program Procedures

Timing. The program works best when done in five *consecutive* days for one hour each day. Some impact is lost if there are interruptions; for example, a holiday in the middle of the week.

Completion of Workbook. It is not necessary that everyone complete the entire workbook. It is sometimes better to sacrifice parts of the workbook to be sure the program is completed in the five consecutive days.

If a participant objects to doing a page, it is not necessary for him to do it. The leader may point out how it may affect the outcome of his plans and then let him decide. Some of the

poorer readers and slower participants may get frustrated and impatient; in such cases it is better to let them skip parts of the workbook. It may be desirable to allow the participants to do something creative or innovative in regard to their character instead. Remember if you have to plead with the participants, they probably don't want to do the program, in which case they aren't likely to benefit.

Interest. For most participants interest is maintained for the entire week; for others it is not maintained. One of the reasons for a fresh introduction each day is to sustain interest. There may not be the same pitch of involvement all week . . . one day may bog down. This should not be discouraging because it is the week's experience that matters.

How To Order the Program

The program kit comes boxed and contains enough materials for 30 students. There are individual workbooks, a colour-coded instruction manual, packs of game cards and three large wheels of fortune complete with spinner. All are done in psychedelic colours—magenta, orange, yellow and blues—designed to make it a fun learning experience. The cost of the program is $90.00 per kit prepaid. The price is subject to change, depending on the production costs.

Order from:

Psi Can Consulting Ltd.
8910 - 117 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 1R7
Phone (403) 433-0037