Multicultural Career Counseling with Children

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Why do we need Multicultural Career Counseling?

- Increasing number of children from diverse backgrounds entering the US school system.
- It is estimated that in 2020 the majority of school-age children in the United States will be from racial/ethnic minority groups.

(McCoy, 2004)
Before a school counselor can complete career counseling with diverse populations, they must have an understanding of how to operate in a school with both racial and linguistic diversity, as well as how to guide students in choosing careers.

After a school counselor becomes multiculturally competent they can integrate these skills into career counseling that does not exclude any race or background.
Multicultural Counseling: The Problem

- Being multiculturally competent is a vital part of school counseling and career development for students.
- There are few programs developed which guide school counselors on how to work with diverse students. This is due to:
  - Counselors having different views on how to effectively help diverse populations so a “standard” way of helping students is difficult to achieve.
  - Counselors having different ideas of what kinds of training they need to help diverse students (based off their specific school population and their experience).
  - Counselors having different levels of understanding multiculturalism.

Factors of Multicultural Counseling

- How effective a school counselor is in helping diverse populations is also related to their confidence in working with the populations.

- There are five underlying factors that influence school counselors' perceptions of themselves as being multiculturally competent in their work:
  1. Their understanding of racial identity development
  2. Their competence of multicultural terminology
  3. Their multicultural awareness
  4. Their multicultural knowledge
  5. Their multicultural skills

Problems? Solutions!

- Research has shown that most schools set aside special days to expose students to various cultures, but there are not many ongoing programs to promote multicultural awareness.

- School counselors should complete ongoing school-wide programs that promote acceptance and multicultural knowledge for students, faculty, and parents
  - “Family Nights” at the school
  - Sending home informational packets, activities for the family to complete together
  - In-service for faculty at the beginning of each school year
  - Psychoeducational

Possible Issues & Solutions

- Different cultures see the role of school differently, and as a counselor it is important to know these possible variations.

- Each culture has a view of work and careers and what impacts a child’s career choice, it is important to not overstep boundaries.

- Schools have a culture, it is important to make it welcoming to multicultural students.

- Language barriers can create problems; bringing in a translator can be beneficial.

Elementary School Career Counseling: Research

- A study was done comparing career aspirations and expectations of 1st, 3rd, and 5th graders
  - Aspirations: what they want to be
  - Expectations: what they actually think they will become

- Results: the older children desired careers that were more socially prestigious and less sex-typed compared to those of the younger children.

- Results: the older elementary-aged children were no more specific or realistic than the younger children

Importance of Career Counseling in Elementary Schools

- There is increasing evidence that career development is a lifelong process that begins in childhood.

- One study found that half of a group of children aged 9 and 10 believed they already made decisions on their future careers.

- Another study found that a good amount of adults aged 40-55 made decisions about their current professions when they were children.

- Children have both ideal and realistic career choices already made by 5th grade.
  - The most common ideal career is to be a professional athlete (only one female student had this ideal career).

Ginzberg’s Theory of Career Development

- Children younger than 11 base their career choices on fantasy, and around age 11 they begin a transition to viewing career choices more realistically.

- If a student has not thought about their future career, it is a school counselor’s duty to aid them in the process.
  - ASCA National Model specifically includes career development as part of a school counselor’s role.

Gottfredson’s Theory of Career Development

- Children will express fantasy career aspirations no later than age five.
- Gottfredson believes that around five, children’s career ideals are starting to be shaped by social influences such as gender expectations, social prestige, and the perceived difficulty of the career.
- As a school counselor it is important to decide which theory, if either, is aligned with your personal view of career development.

Impact on Career Choices

GENDER

- Younger elementary students see the world in black and white terms so it is more common for them to view careers as being connected with one gender only
  - As children develop, they see exceptions to these general rules, for example a male can be a nurse and a female can be a cop
  - It is important to discuss gender not being a limitation to career choice, and people they know (of) who break career barriers

PARENT OCCUPATION

- Elementary students of all ages see their parents’ jobs as either desirable or not, and depending on which it is, they most likely will aspire at some point to have the same occupation or not

Multicultural Career Counseling in Elementary Schools

- Once counselors have developed an atmosphere that embraces diversity, multicultural career counseling should be easier to complete.

- Career development should explore not only what children say they want to become but also what they say they do NOT want to become.

- Career development should:
  - Enhance students' knowledge of all career choices available to them.
  - Encourage students to not prematurely eliminate careers because of their race, gender, or their parents’ occupations.

Why Choose Multicultural Career Counseling?

- “Youth in low-income, culturally diverse, inner-city schools are at risk for low educational attainment, limited future career options, and severely reduced earnings potential. (Jackson, et al., 2006, pg. 204)”
- These students often believe that they have less chance to strive than others, which leads them to have lower aspirations
- They internalize barriers to their career and education
- (Jackson, et al., 2006)
Why Choose Multicultural Career Counseling? Continued..

- Due to racism, cultural discrimination, economic deprivation, and inadequate schooling diverse students do not see higher level careers as attainable (Jackson, et al., 2006)
  - Leads to less academic achievement
  - Feel that career workshops focusing on contextual supports (family support) and personal resources (one’s own psychological assets)
What This Means

- Students who are not getting the career education they need/want can use many outside resources to get help.

- These resources could include:
  - outside counseling at private practices
  - family counseling
  - workshops at different centers around their home
Super’s Life Stages & Substages

- Elementary students are at the beginning part of the Growth Stage
- Developing their self-concept, attitudes, needs, and general ideas about the world of work
- Children start with **CURIOSITY**: basic of all needs or drives; desire for knowledge or for something new or unusual
Centers in Muncie that Support Multicultural Career Counseling

- Roy C. Buley Community Center
  - Non-profit organization that works with children and adults with cultural, educational, and recreational programs.
  - *After School Program*: Children from grades 1st-5th come to the center for a nutritional snack, homework tutoring, and educational and recreational enrichment activities.
  - [https://sites.google.com/site/roycbuleycenter/](https://sites.google.com/site/roycbuleycenter/)
Centers in Muncie that Support Multicultural Career Counseling

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Delaware County
  - Helps young children, usually from single parent families, to become successful adults
  - Includes social, emotional, career, and character development
  - Mentors work together with the family and other organizations to give the young student the best shot to succeed
  - [http://www.bbbsmuncie.org/](http://www.bbbsmuncie.org/)
Centers in Muncie that Support Multicultural Career Counseling

- Boys & Girls Club of Muncie
  - The center has after-school programs three days a week that help students with their homework & teach them lessons about career development. This includes multiculturalism because they look at one’s culture, family, & other influences then select jobs that may interest students in these areas.
  - [http://www.bgcmuncie.org/Welcome.html](http://www.bgcmuncie.org/Welcome.html)
Difference Between Elementary & Middle School Career Counseling

- During elementary school, school counselors focus on multicultural career awareness, whereas during middle school students should be engaging in multicultural career exploration (Arrington, 2000).

  - Career Awareness - lays the foundation for career development

  - Career Exploration - provides students with more specific and detailed information (and experiences) that is used by them (and others like counselors)
Developmental Characteristics

- During early adolescence, boy and girls develop their sense of self-esteem, cultural identities, and form opinions of other individuals and cultural groups.
- They experience age- and culture- related problems
- Special concerns from their unique cultural backgrounds

(Baruth & Manning, 2000)
Issues

- Student face diverse challenges because of cultural differences:
  - Language barriers
  - Value systems related to family
  - Traditional roles models
  - Career choices

- Feel confused, anxious, stressed, and/or depressed in the dominant school culture.

- Students may take a passive attitude in their career development process.

(Coleman & Yeh, 2008)
School Counselor

- Must be culturally responsive to students’ unique needs.
  - Recommendations:
    - Professional Researches
    - Assessment tools
    - Activities, programs, and resources related to multicultural career issues

(Coleman & Yeh, 2008)
• Address the potential conflict that may arise between
  • wanting to succeed academically and vocationally
  • feeling of loyalty to their family and community.

• It is critical for counselors to differentiate between normative career development and those that are of more critical psychological concerns.

(Coleman & Yeh, 2008)
Individual Counseling

- Culturally Appropriate Career Counseling Model.
  - Seven-Step Model considers and attends to a wide array of important cultural variables in the career counseling process.
  - Cultural Variables include, racial identity development, discrimination, family and gender-role expectations, and various world view dimensions.

(Pedersen & Carey 2003)
Seven-Step Model

1. Establish a Culturally Appropriate Relationship
   - Be flexible and adjust style to connect with student

2. Identify Career Issues
   - What the student defines as a “career issue”
   - Help student define any external barriers to their career choice and development

3. Assess the Effects of Cultural Variables
   - Clear understanding of how cultural variables influence the students choices.
     - Family-based norms and structural factors

(Pedersen & Carey 2003)
4. Set Counseling Goals
   • Goals consistent with the student's view, cultural value orientation, and cultural practices.

5. Design Culturally Appropriate Counseling Interventions
   • Ex: group intervention

6. Make a Decision
   • Ready to make a career-related decision.
   • May revisit earlier steps

7. Implement and Follow Up
   • Student implements decisions and plans toward attaining goal.
   • Remind student returning is normal

(Pedersen & Carey 2003)
Small Group Counseling

- Counseling groups in schools may be racially or ethnically homogeneous or heterogeneous.
  - Homogeneous groups consist of similar ethnic or racial backgrounds
    - Example: group of African American girls or a group for Latino Boys
  - Heterogeneous groups consist of members who represent within homogenous group.
    - Latino girls could be diverse in terms of socioeconomic background and ethnic designation (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban)

(Coleman & Yeh, 2008)
Relevant Information

Multicultural counseling:

- A specialized type of treatment that consists of understanding human behavior through the perspective of culture and human diversity (Anderson, 2007)

Career counseling:

- Children at the middle school age may have trouble with the concept of a career, and their focus may be more on work.
  - Work: “A purposeful activity to earn money or other reward and possibly to produce a product or service to other” (Sharf, 2010, pp. 3).
Why Multicultural Career Counseling?

- The path of the opportunity gap is seen in the discrepancy of school completion rates. This leads to disparities in occupation, career, and general life pathways for students of different ethnic or racial groups (Park Taylor & Vargas 2012).

- Statistics support the link seen between education and income:
  - Individuals without a diploma from high school will earn $7,500 less than those with a high school diploma.
  - Individuals with a bachelors degree will earn $20,000 more per year than those individuals with a high school diploma (U.S. Census Bureau 2009)
Why Multicultural Career Counseling?

- Being able to identify vocational interests early may help adolescents make connections between unequal phases of their work lives, especially for minority youth living in poverty (Park-Taylor & Vargas 2012).
Multicultural Career Counseling Can:

- Address this opportunity gap directly with children.
- Discuss career-related maturity and career decisiveness, knowledge of the world of work, and occupational satisfaction with children (Park-Taylor & Vargas 2012).
- Talk about certain environmental barriers that may block certain career goals children may have:
  - Labor market discrimination
  - Racism
  - Reduced teacher expectations, etc.
Super’s Life Stages & Substages

- Adolescents are generally in the growth stage of Super’s Life Stages.
  - Specifically, during this stage adolescents will develop their system of values.
  - The substages experienced by middle school adolescents are the development of interests and the development of capacities.
Super’s Life Stages & Substages

- Development of Interests:
  - Adolescents in this substage may take interest in occupations they see on TV, their parent’s occupations, or childhood jobs.
    - They may ask themselves this question:
      - Is this something I would like to do?

- Development of Capacities:
  - This period covers the ages of 11 to 14.
  - When talking with a counselor the individuals in this stage are more capable of discussing their own abilities.
  - The process of education become extremely important in this substage.
Super’s Life Stages & Substages

- Development of Capacities:
  - Any career choices seen at this point in adolescents is generally based off of their own interests or their parents.
  
- While at this point in adolescents lives it is hard for counselors to do the same type of career counseling used with adults, if a counselor is familiar with Super’s Life Stages & Substages they can help foster adolescents development of the necessary components needed for future occupations.
Outside Influences

- Parental expectations and role models play an important role in adolescents' school performance and career aspirations.
  - This could mean that occupational aspirations may form early on in a child’s life (Gibson 2005).

- When adolescents seek outside multicultural career counseling, it would be beneficial for the counselor to include parents and teachers in the career counseling process.
References


References Cont.


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