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Closing the Loop: Incorporating Program Evaluation Into an Elementary School Career Day

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Abstract

Initiating career education in elementary school is developmentally appropriate (Magnuson & Starr, 2000; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000) and states with comprehensive guidance programs mandate elementary career development in some form (Gysbers, 2005). School counselors play an integral role in coordinating comprehensive career development programming (ASCA, 2012). Program evaluation conducted in conjunction with an elementary school Career Day indicated positive improvements in students' understanding of "career" and is used to illustrate school counselor accountability approaches. Implications and recommendations are presented.

The American workforce increasingly requires specialized education, knowledge, and skills for employment (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2002). In order to meet these requirements, schools must imbue students with knowledge about careers, the skills necessary for employment success, and the education required for various career pathways. Varied state and local standards suggest career development competencies for students at all levels and states which have comprehensive guidance programs all include career development in some format (Gysbers, 2005). Professional standards for school counselors also recommend career development. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Standard C recognizes that "students must understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training and the world of work" (ASCA, 2004), while the National Career Development Association (NCDA) National Career Development Guidelines Framework goal ED1 is to help students "attain educational achievement and performance levels needed to reach (their) personal and career goals" (NCDA, 2007). Consequently, career development has become more

central to educational practice (Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000), and school counselors are working to integrate career development into their comprehensive developmental programs.

It is particularly important to provide early elementary access to career development programming for groups at risk due to socioeconomic factors. Low socioeconomic status is correlated with a significant reduction in students' career exploration activities and lower career self-efficacy (Kolodinsky, Schroder, Montopoli, McLean, Mangan, & Pederson, 2006; O'Brien, Dukstein, Jackson, Tomlinson, & Kamatuka, 1999; Wood & Kaszubowski, 2008). O'Brien et al. (1999), reporting on a career development program for an at-risk low socioeconomic status population of 7th graders recommended "intervening with this population during elementary school" (p. 226). This suggestion points to the importance of an early start that may counteract other factors which undermine career development success for some students. Palladino Schultheiss (2005) noted that by the time high school students receive career interventions, many low socioeconomic status youth have long since compromised their ability to make a wide range of career choices. This finding bolsters the case for providing programs like Career Day earlier in students' academic careers, especially for those students who are at risk due to socioeconomic factors.

This focus on career development is within the purview of the school counselor. Vocational development has been a primary strand of guidance work since its early inception (Gysbers, 2005; Kuranz, 2002; Pope, 2000). Presently, career development is one of the three domains within the National Model for School Counseling (ASCA, 2012). Current research and best practice guidelines for school counseling programs include career education as a crucial focus for school counselors (ASCA, 2012) and career education in some format is a part of all comprehensive guidance programs (Gysbers, 2005). As a core member of the school leadership team, the school counselor helps implement these career development goals (Drier, 2000; Kuranz, 2002).

School counseling professionals must also evaluate the impacts of their programming efforts. Rather than assuming a program or intervention is effective, ethical practice directs school counselors to evaluate the impacts of their programs. Such accountability and evaluation is particularly paramount for monitoring achievement and working to close education and attainment gaps among different student groups (ASCA, 2010, Ethical Standards, A.9.g).

Thus, the purpose of the current project was to develop, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of a Career Day intervention in a school with a significant population of low socioeconomic status students. This project demonstrates the importance of accountability efforts and illustrates the ways that program evaluation can be used to measure current impacts and guide future programming.

Career Development Patterns Among School-Age Children

Career development is an integral part of childhood. Super (1990) outlined particular career development tasks for children in the growth stage (from birth to 14 years). Some of those career development tasks at the elementary level are curiosity and exploration which leads to knowledge of self, orientation to the work arena, and concept mastery of the meaning of work. Although the pattern of career development for

elementary students is primarily focused on the exploration of personal interests and skills along with growing awareness of career paths, research indicates that children in elementary school have already begun thinking about their careers (Auger, Blackhurst, & Wahl, 2005; Beale, 2003; Helwig, 2004; Nazli, 2007). This vocational development trajectory continues throughout life (Snyder & Jackson, 2006; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). Some students remain relatively stable in their career interests from elementary school on; however, interests typically are not cemented this early and can, in fact, vary dramatically over time with increased awareness of various career options (Tracey & Sodano, 2008; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000). To illustrate, 60% of students had contradictory career types at different points during a ten-year longitudinal study of individual's Holland vocational types (Helwig, 2003). Auger et al. (2005) cited evidence that career development shown by exploration at the elementary level is characteristically less realistic and more driven by fantasy (e.g., children stating that they would like to be professional athletes). This is both developmentally appropriate and consistent with the fantasy sub-stage of career development presented by Super (1990). Certainly at the elementary level a wide range of career possibilities should be offered for student exploration. Ideally, exposure to the myriad of possibilities can help students understand the crucial connection between their academic work in school and possible future vocations (Magnusson & Starr, 2000).

Nature and Purpose of Elementary Career Development Education

Career development education as part of a coordinated guidance curriculum should begin in the elementary school (Gysbers, 2005; McMahon, Gillies & Carroll, 2000; Snyder & Jackson, 2006) and follow student developmental patterns described above by encouraging self-knowledge and providing career information and opportunities for exploration of the world of work. Though career development is a standard domain of any comprehensive guidance program, it may be less prioritized than other aspects of the school counseling program at all levels, including elementary school (Osborn & Baggerly, 2004). Nonetheless, career development is a vital learning component for the elementary school student (Auger et al., 2005; Beale & Williams, 2000; Drier, 2000; Helwig, 2004; Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1999; Magnusson & Starr, 2000; Palladino Schultheiss, 2005) and should be a significant focus of an elementary level comprehensive school counseling program (Beale & Williams, 2000; Nazli, 2007; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000; Wood & Kaszubowski, 2008).

Elementary career development education has several purposes. The goals of an elementary career development program should be to develop student self-knowledge (ASCA, 2004, Standard C:A1.3), to expand and supplement students' knowledge of occupational paths (ASCA, 2004, Standards C:A1.1 and C:A1.2; Hoerner, 1994; Snyder & Jackson, 2006), and to help students explore possibilities and develop options for their future, rather than encouraging them to make specific career decisions which would be more appropriate for middle to high school and college-age students (Auger et al., 2005). Furthermore, elementary career development education should build connections between learning and work, teach students how to make decisions, and impart information about different occupational paths (ASCA, 2004, Standards C:A1.5, C:B2.1, C:C1.1, C:C1.2; Murrow-Taylor, McDonald-Foltz, Ellis & Culbertson, 1999).

Elementary school career development programs should also be linked to the community and broadly based to reach all students (ASCA, 2012). Incorporation of such programming into a comprehensive, school-wide guidance curriculum may be the most effective practice (Whiston, Tai, Rahardja, & Eder 2011). Career development interventions oriented to the whole school are especially recommended, since later career and vocational programs in secondary school typically only reach some students, not all (Akos, Charles, Orthner, & Cooley, 2011; McMahon et al., 2000). Finally, career development activities should be sequential and structured, beginning in elementary school and building over the students' school career (Drier, 2000). A broad elementary career development program following these purposes and designed to reach all students provides a base for future career development successes.

Purpose of the Current Intervention

The present Career Day was intended to: 1) facilitate elementary school students' natural developmental interests in career exploration; 2) utilize community resources to engage with students; 3) counteract some of the career challenges faced by low socioeconomic status students at risk in this district; 4) and assist all students in examining the interrelationship between current academic work and future career possibilities. Collaborating with the community to develop this event, a school counselor volunteer and a team of Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members worked with multiple stakeholder groups to provide an event that was accessible to all students in this community. The program was developed to work within existing school curriculum and to set students on a trajectory towards future vocational success.

Project Overview

Population

This project was conducted in a public elementary school located in the northeast United States. The school is comprised of almost 1,000 K-6 students. The school district encompasses both rural mountainous areas as well as a small but more densely populated city center. It is a Title I school and state classification placed this school in the category of "high district need relative to low district resources." Economically disadvantaged students comprise 66% of the student body and the population is 76% Caucasian, 12% African American, 10% Latino or Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 1% Native American. The 5-year graduation rate in this district's high school is 73%, short of the state standard of 80% at the time of the project, though ahead of the district's progress goal of 72% and thus meeting AYP. Only 35% of students with disabilities and 57% of economically disadvantaged students graduate from the district high school. The graduation rate for economically disadvantaged students does not meet AYP. According to Provasnik, Kewal Ramani, Coleman, Gilbertson, Herring, and Xie (2007), this poor rural student population could be considered at risk for career development challenges such as lack of employment, underemployment, and lower wages.

Description of the Program

Career Day is a short term, whole-school intervention. Based in an elementary school in which a single school counselor serves almost 1,000 students in a high-need Title I district, career development can only be addressed tangentially by the curriculum

due to inadequate staffing. The program was a local PTA initiative chaired by a state-certified school counselor who was a PTA member though not an employee of the particular school. A proposal for Career Day from the volunteer and the PTA was presented to the school faculty, including the school counselor, and approved by the school principal. Assured that participant privacy would be protected, the principal and the assistant superintendent both granted permission after the event for the program evaluation results to be disseminated in a professional journal

Career presenters were recruited from the local community. Letters asking for volunteers were sent home to all students' parents and guardians. Additionally, school staff and parents recommended local professionals, and the PTA requested volunteers from local businesses, professional organizations and public offices. As indicated in Table 1, a wide variety of 35 careers requiring education levels ranging from a GED. to an MD were represented.

Table 1

Careers Represented at Career Day

Architect	Firefighter	Public Health Educator
Artist	Hairdresser	Real Estate Agent
Asst. Director for Vocational Svcs	Lawyer	Registered Dietician
Baker	Licensed Practical Nurse (L.P.N.)	Registered Nurse (R.N.)
Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.)	National Park Ranger	Restaurant Manager
Chiropractor	Nursing Instructor (M.S.N.)	Sanitation Worker
City Judge	Orthopedic Surgeon	Social Worker
Cosmetologist	Plastic Recycling Plant Manager	Speech Therapist
Detective	Police Chief	Teacher
Director of Public Works	Police Officer	Veterinarian
E.M.T.	Principal	Veterinary Technician
Entrepreneur	Prof. of Chiropractic Medicine	

The purposes of Career Day were shared with all career presenters when they were recruited. Career presenters were coached to bring whatever they could to engage students in hands-on ways. Students attempted decorating techniques on cookies with the assistance of a baker and her cooking tools, and examined a skeleton and authentic hip replacement prosthetics with an orthopedic surgeon. An architect brought a computer with design software along with a model of a house. A lawyer created a simple card game, challenging students to guess which of several statements presented actual laws. Many career presenters also brought career vehicles such as police cars, sanitation trucks,

ambulances, rescue boats, and canoes. A number of career presenters brought handouts, free gifts, and games or activities to share with the students. Each career station included a poster outlining the presenter's career title, organization, and the education needed for this career.

Students in 4th through 6th grade attended the fair in 30 minute rotations. Students were instructed to move freely to as few or as many tables as they desired during their time at Career Day, staying as long as they were interested in a particular station. An incentive program to keep students focused and well-behaved was also implemented: if they wished, students could turn in short questionnaires describing careers they learned about for a chance at a small raffle prize at the end of their Career Day rotation. The questionnaires included three short sentence completion questions, keyed to help students explore a career, learn about the connection between school and future work, and imagine themselves in that career: "One career I learned about was..." "The education needed for this career is..." and "One thing I would enjoy about having this career is..." At the end of each half hour, several questionnaires were pulled from the raffle box and winning students were awarded small prizes. The class with the highest participation as measured by completed questionnaires also earned a reward for their classroom.

Program Evaluation Elements

Student questionnaires. Career Day pre- and post-test perception data questionnaires were administered in order to measure the impacts of the program on student knowledge of career and knowledge of the connection between academics and career. The school counselor volunteer developed the questionnaires according to ASCA accountability standards. Students were asked to respond to four pre-test questions. In question 1, students were asked to respond to the following fill in the blank question: "A 'career' means..." Answers indicating anything about a job, work, or occupation were counted as knowledge of the definition of "career." Each additional question utilized a 4-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree). Students rated themselves on the following: 1) "My school work is important for the work I want to do in the future;" 2) "I have thought about what work I want to do as a grownup;" and 3) "I know what education I need for a job I would like to have when I grow up."

The four questions above plus two subsequent questions were included on the student post-test. Students rated their overall enjoyment of Career Day ("I liked going to Career Day") on the same four-point scale, and were also invited to offer feedback on Career Day with a free response prompt: "One thing that would make Career Day better is..."

Teacher questionnaires. In order to collect teacher perception data, a survey was given to all 4th through 6th grade teachers at the conclusion of Career Day. Specific feedback about potential scheduling and logistical changes for the next year's event was requested in free response format, and then teachers were asked to respond to three additional questions. Using a 4-point Likert-scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree), teachers responded to the following statements: 1) "Career Day was valuable to my students;" 2) "Career Day was well-organized;" and 3) "Career Day represented a wide enough variety of careers."

Data collection. Before Career Day, student pre- and post-tests were delivered to all 4th through 6th grade classrooms ($n=18$). Teachers were asked to administer student pre-tests before to Career Day. Student respondents were asked, but not required, to complete both the pre- and post-test forms. The window for administration of the student pre-test was within the 3 days preceding Career Day. All student post-tests were completed 1 day after the event. Forms were returned to the school counselor volunteer, who collated student responses and compiled the data for those students who completed both the pre- and post-test assessments. Personally identifiable student information was omitted during analysis and results were aggregated in order to generate appropriate outcome reports. All fully completed sets of returned student pre-and post-tests were used for analysis ($n=117$). Frequency responses in each category for the post-test question about student's enjoyment of Career Day were tabulated and free responses were noted.

Following Career Day, the teacher survey was distributed to the mailboxes of all 4th through 6th grade classroom teachers ($n = 23$). Teachers were informed that this information would be used to assess the effectiveness of Career Day and to plan future Career Day events. Respondents were asked to return the surveys anonymously within 3 days, but participation was not required. Written comments were noted and the number of responses in each category to questions on the effectiveness and organization of Career Day were tabulated.

Accountability Report

Knowledge of "Career"

Students gained basic knowledge about the concept of a career as one's occupation or job path. Before Career Day, 23% of participants ($n = 27$) could not define "career" as a person's occupation, work, or job. This percentage decreased to 7% ($n = 8$) immediately following Career Day.

Table 2

Means for Student Responses to Pre- and Post-Test Career Questions

Student Questionnaire	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Difference	t	Sign
1) "My school work is important for the work I want to do in the future."	3.43 (<i>sd</i> =0.723)	3.62 (<i>sd</i> =0.728)	+0.19	3.161*	$p \leq 0.002$
2) "I have thought about what kind of work I want to do as a grownup."	3.05 (<i>sd</i> =0.802)	3.47 (<i>sd</i> =0.701)	+0.42	4.967*	$p \leq 0.0001$
3) "I know what education I need for a job I would like to have when I grow up."	3.30 (<i>sd</i> =0.955)	3.46 (<i>sd</i> =0.638)	+0.16	1.973	$p \leq 0.051$

* denotes t is significant at ≤ 0.02

Connection Between Academics and Future Career

Students' belief that academic work was connected to future employment possibilities increased following Career Day attendance. As noted in Table 2, students'

agreement with the statement, “my school work is important to the work I want to do in the future” increased after interaction with the Career Day professionals (Pre-Career Day $M = 3.43$, $sd = 0.723$; Post-Career Day $M = 3.62$, $sd = 0.728$). Students also more strongly agreed with the statement “I know what education I need for a job I would like to have when I grow up” after attending Career Day. The difference in student responses for this statement was also notable (Pre-Career Day $M = 3.05$, $sd = 0.955$; Post-Career Day $M = 3.47$, $sd = 0.638$). Though not as great a change, the statement “I have thought about what work I might want to do as a grownup” also trended in the positive direction between pre- and post-test (Pre-Career Day $M = 3.30$, $sd = 0.802$; Post-Career Day $M = 3.46$, $sd = 0.701$). Figure 1 provides a graphical illustration of the mean changes for the students on each of the questions.

Student Enjoyment of Career Program

In addition to successfully meeting the objectives of student exploration, enhancing understanding of career paths, and the relationship between academics and work, Career Day was an enjoyable activity for students. Student respondents reported that they enjoyed Career Day, with 97% indicating “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to the statement “I liked going to Career Day” ($n = 114$).

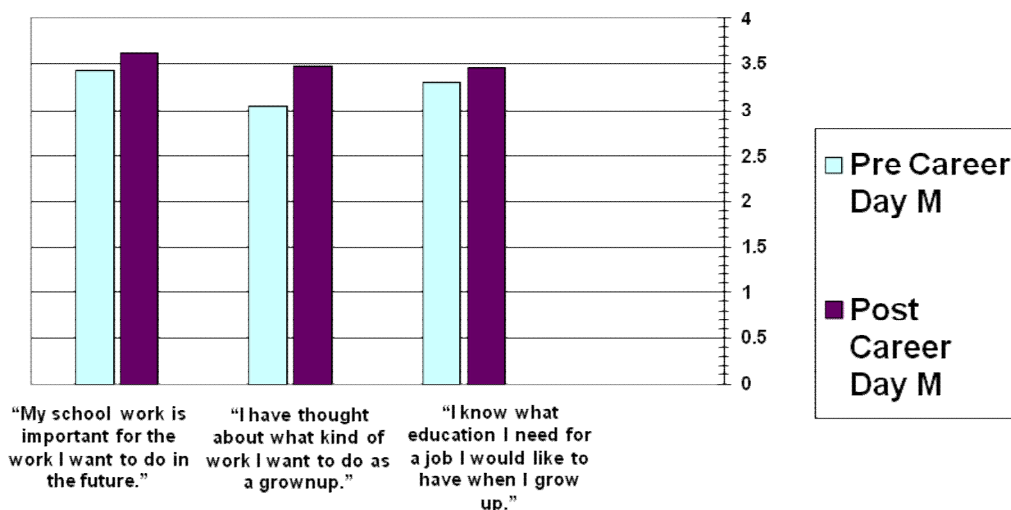


Figure 1. Pre- and Post-test Student Mean Responses on Career Day Instrument.

Among the numerous free response suggestions offered by students about what would make Career Day better, many asked for more time to see everything, or said they could not suggest improvements because they already enjoyed the program. The event was held on one of the hotter days of the school year, and many students asked for a free frozen treat as an improvement. A few students wanted the event to be less crowded and some requested more individual help. Others suggested including additional careers not represented at this event such as dentist and donut maker, and/or asked for a parent or grandparent to serve as a career presenter. There were multiple requests for less probable careers such as professional athletes, designers, and rock stars, all of which is in keeping with the fantasy nature of the elementary school student’s growth stage of career development (Super, 1990).

Teacher Feedback

Teachers who responded were universally positive about the Career Day effects on students. Twenty-three anonymous surveys were distributed, one to each classroom teacher in grades 4, 5, and 6. Eight surveys were returned (34.8% response rate). Though anecdotally teachers had expressed doubts about the value of the Career Day program for elementary students prior to the event, teachers who returned the surveys following the event were without exception positive, all indicating “Agree” ($n=2$) or “Strongly Agree” ($n=6$) to the statement: “Career Day was valuable for my students.” Feedback by teachers on how to improve Career Day included a few logistical changes such as lengthening the time for students in the fair and providing a floor plan of career stations to help students looking for a specific career. A number of suggestions for additional careers to be represented in future years were offered, such as plumber, carpenter, pediatrician, manicurist, food service worker, and dental hygienist. The remaining comments were simply affirmations of the event: “it was really great the way it was put together!” “it was awesome!” and “super job, kids loved it and learned a lot!”

Discussion

Career Day was a single-day intervention designed to increase student awareness of careers as well as student understanding of the connections between academics and vocation. The program was designed to engage each student in developmentally appropriate ways to think about the world of work and its connection to education. This was achieved in a community school with many potentially at-risk low socioeconomic status students who, as previously noted, are more susceptible to decreased career aspirations and achievement. Increased mean scores for students on the post-tests illustrated positive advances in student understanding about the relationship between academic work and future careers. Accountability and evaluation measures documented the value of the program and provided valuable feedback that could be used to support and guide future implementation.

Implications for Elementary School Career Development Programming

A number of points can be made based on the accountability results. First, the National Standards for School Counseling require that students “understand the relationship between educational achievement and career success” (ASCA, 2004, Standard C:C1.1). Work on this and similar career development standards must begin at the elementary level when students are developmentally ready to begin exploring their own interests and skills and can start imagining their own future careers. The positive student response to Career Day suggests that exposure to careers and early career development can be engaging and valuable to elementary students.

Second, students were able to shift from station to station based on personal interest or even random exploration due to the structure of Career Day as a fair. As noted above, students of this age are still developing self-awareness of their career interests and may not know what a career is or what they want to do when they grow up. Utilizing the natural exploratory tendencies of elementary school students and allowing them to explore at their own pace appears to have made this open, semi-structured event more

meaningful and engaging as indicated by reported interest, enjoyment, and increased knowledge of careers. The open format which provided greater latitude for students to explore previously unknown or unexpected careers for themselves may have opened some students up to previously unconsidered possibilities.

Third, as noted in the literature, community and family involvement is correlated with increased student achievement. In the domain of career development, multicultural career role models who reflect the socio-cultural diversity of students can be especially influential in developing students' career self-efficacy (Murrow-Taylor et al., 1999). The use of so many community volunteers as presenters for the Career Day intervention leveraged the powerful credibility of local role models to increase elementary student engagement. These local professionals may have conveyed the importance and value of education while providing an exciting, hands-on way to explore possible careers.

Finally, the involvement of community stakeholders in comprehensive school counseling programs is critical (ASCA, 2012) both because they add value to school counseling efforts and because they can act as advocates for school counseling programs once they understand the impacts of these types of interventions. This was definitely true in this instance. The notably strong ties within rural communities and rural community members' greater willingness to volunteer in community activities (Bauch, 2001) enhanced this event. Career presenters were extremely excited about the opportunities to interact with young students and many left Career Day describing their plans for a bigger, better career station "next year." This type of enthusiasm could be helpful for organizing future events as past presenters engage others working in related fields to participate (e.g., a chiropractor may recruit a physical therapist). These enthusiastic career presenters, who were alumni of the school district, relatives of students in the school district, and/or members of the immediate business community, also reviewed the results of their efforts in the accountability report during a subsequent PTA meeting and could see the value of the program. Overall, high levels of volunteer participation in an event of this nature could significantly strengthen parent and community stakeholder investment and involvement in the school, thus benefiting student career development and the school itself.

Implications for Evaluation

The ASCA National Model emphasizes accountability and the importance of data collection and analysis to evaluate program effectiveness and to establish credibility among stakeholders (ASCA, 2012). Community stakeholders involved with the Career Day program were able to understand the immediate impact of their volunteer time in the accountability report summarizing their efforts. This sort of "real time" analysis can be used to build support for future programs and initiatives. Results reporting was also shared with teachers whose initial resistance or hesitation towards the Career Day program was eventually turned around by running a well-organized and diverse program. Anecdotally, one teacher's frustration with "all the paperwork" (e.g., pre- and post-test documents) diminished as data was analyzed and released to the staff showing the positive results of the Career Day. As additional comprehensive school counseling programs are developed, data collection, analysis, and reporting of this kind can be used to garner support for such efforts among stakeholders within the community and the school.

Future Directions for Further Career Day Interventions

There are potential limitations with the single day Career Day event. Career Day interventions ideally should be placed within the context of a comprehensive program designed to move students from the elementary level through middle and high school with increasing awareness of the world of work and of the career opportunities available to them. In this case, Career Day was entirely a PTA-sponsored event and was designed to fit into a single day within the existing school curriculum while making few demands on existing staff infrastructure and the single school counselor. This one-day event was a good starting point given this particular school district's limited resources, but more could be done. Career Day could be enhanced if it were held at the conclusion of a multi-session elementary classroom guidance unit. Using the time prior to Career Day to help students develop a personalized understanding of their particular gifts and skills and possible related career areas (ASCA, 2004, Standards C.B1.2, C.C1.3) could better equip the students to explore different careers at the event. Follow up to Career Day might provide additional guidance to students about how to consider their own interests and skills in order to begin matching those to possible career paths and to the educational requirements of each potential pathway. A personal career portfolio (Hoerner, 1994; Wahl & Blackhurst, 2000) initiated in elementary school and carried through middle and high school could contain information about which careers were interesting to a student at Career Day and could help the student and school counseling team track the student's progress over time. Additional program evaluation and accountability reports examining the outcomes of more integrated programs would be encouraged.

Despite the drawback of the single-day intervention, the program did provide complete freedom to students to explore career possibilities, unconstrained by their own or others' beliefs about what careers were appropriate for them. Therefore, others who wish to implement a Career Day program within a larger career development program may want to be cautious about over-regulating the exploratory nature of the fair which, by echoing the students' own career development needs, seemed to make the Career Day event very meaningful and enjoyable.

Another improvement would be to further elaborate the Career Day program by providing more accommodations for students with special needs. The atmosphere of the fair, which was loud and had many stations competing for students' attention, potentially could have been overwhelming to students with certain learning challenges. Future renditions of Career Day might include trained parent volunteers who could serve as "guides" for individuals or pairs of students with special needs, helping them to focus in an environment with numerous distractions. Alternate scheduling so that students with particular special needs could participate at different times when Career Day is not so busy might also be effective. The ASCA National Model requires that all students have access to the tools necessary for educational success (ASCA, 2012), and appropriate adaptations of this sort would comply more closely with these guidelines. In this manner, diverse student needs could be accommodated with more individual attention from the career presenters.

Finally, the ASCA National Model encourages school counselors to work as collaborators with community, school, and parent stakeholders to build comprehensive, data-driven programs (ASCA, 2012). This Career Day was conceived by a school

counselor serving as a volunteer in a local school. However, a Career Day led by a school counselor and coordinated by the PTA would be an excellent model of school counselor collaboration with stakeholders. Using this collaborative model, a school counselor could implement a series of classroom career guidance lessons while enlisting a parent group to coordinate the Career Day event. PTA volunteers could gain knowledge of the purpose and value of a comprehensive guidance program through such collaboration, especially since the school counselor generated accountability reports showing the effects of the intervention. Such collaborative efforts could potentially create more advocates and resources for comprehensive developmental guidance approaches.

Conclusion

Public education must prepare students for employment in an increasingly complex and challenging workplace. Consequently, school curriculum and programs should be geared towards enhancing students' career exploration and development during the elementary years. In this case, accountability results indicate that Career Day was a program that helped to develop elementary students' knowledge of career paths and influence their understanding about the connection between the world of school and the world of work. Interventions of this type could fit naturally within a comprehensive developmental guidance program and capitalize on collaborative relationship-building opportunities with stakeholders to maximize student learning and attitudes. Using ASCA National Model guidelines in collecting, analyzing, and reporting the results of the intervention could be used to guide future improvements to the overall program. Others may want to consider the utility of such data-driven, accountable interventions within their own comprehensive school counseling programs.

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