Career Development Services for Canadian Youth: Access, Adequacy and Accountability

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Pathways to the Labour Market
Series – No|1

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Foreword

In November 2005, participants in CPRN's dialogue with young Canadians told us that they want a society that offers many different learning options before and during their careers. Some form of post-secondary education should be available to all, and it might be university, college, trades programs, or experiential learning. There should be a variety of well-supported learning opportunities.

In the spring of 2006, CPRN launched a two-year project that aims to understand better the paths that young people take from high school through to regular participation in the labour market; to identify institutional and policy structures that appear to support or hinder people's ability to find pathways that lead to sustained employment in good jobs; to examine attitudes and underlying values about the different pathways that are, or could be available; and to develop policy options to improve the ability of young people to identify, select, and navigate pathways that lead to 'success.'

This report, published in partnership with the Canadian Career Development Foundation, is the first in our series on *Pathways for Youth to the Labour Market.* It provides a Canada-wide view of the scope of career-development services for youth. Summaries of available evidence on the effectiveness and impact of career programs are included, as well as a description of some promising approaches. Career-development services can play an important role in helping people plan for, and implement, successful learning and career strategies.

Access to quality career-development services in Canada is not adequate according to the authors of the report, Donnalee Bell and Lynne Bezanson, although progress is being made in some provinces and territories. There are promising practices that respond to a variety of youth needs, but a system of coherent and comprehensive services does not exist. The report recommends a number of steps to move us towards the kind of career planning system that would better serve young Canadians.

I would like to thank Donnalee Bell and Lynne Bezanson for their helpful overview of the state of career-planning services in Canada, and their analysis of needed improvements. I would also like to thank the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Alberta Education for their financial support for this research.

Sharon Manson Singer, Ph.D.
July 2006

Executive Summary

Career development is gaining increased attention world wide since the seminal report from the OECD, *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* (2004), which made the link between comprehensive, coherent career-development systems and advancement of a country's labour market, social equity and learning goals. Canada has contributed to this and other multinational reports on career-development policies, and has been a leader in the international movement to bring career-development practitioners and policy-makers together to discuss the contributions of career services to lifelong learning and workforce development goals. Despite this leadership, within Canada there is limited awareness of the benefits of career development, and no national career-development strategy or standards for service quality or provision.

This paper focuses on career-development services available for youth and young adults in-school and out-of school. It examines how career development contributes to accessing successful pathways to the labour market and to what extent the current model for service is meeting the needs of youth. We find that:

- Relatively little is known about which populations of youth access career services.

- Career-development services for youth are highly decentralized. They are neither coherent nor comprehensive in scope. Services for youth are offered in schools (primarily), public youth employment centres and non-profit youth employment centres. Decisions about the extent of and access to career services are often made at the school board or institution levels and are vulnerable to shifts in government policy and funding allocation.

- Service provision is primarily career information and support with immediate education and training decisions rather than career planning and preparation.

- Career management skills are essential skills in this labour market.

- School leavers and those making school-to-work transitions have significantly less access to services than in-school youth.

- Students listen to non-professionals (parents, those in the community they admire, friends) when exploring different careers, but they want professional knowledge and advice (e.g., guidance counsellors) on education and work decisions.

- Despite nation-wide social marketing campaigns, there is inadequate support for students wanting to pursue apprenticeships. Youth attitudes about trade careers may be shifting positively, but accessing apprenticeship programs remains daunting for most students who must secure a willing employer before being able to pursue this learning path.

In terms of the impact of these services on youth, this report suggests that career-development programs and interventions can:

- increase motivation to continue learning after high school;

- reduce the number of school leavers in either high school or post secondary;

- increase career certainty and academic success;

- build work readiness;

- support the integration of labour market information;

- change attitudes that decrease career choice (e.g., support young women's entry to science, technology and engineering careers)

- reduce poverty and unemployment by getting youth to stay in school longer; and,

- increase focus on a career path when work experience is attached to some form of career-development reflection.

There are numerous promising practices provincially/territorially and internationally; a few of these are profiled in the paper. Despite these "pockets" of innovation, it is evident from the research that there is not an adequate and accessible delivery system for youth and young adults across the country. There is a positive trend in some provinces and territories which are beginning to develop career-development service policies from K-Adult or at least K-12. These policies may help to move career development from a fringe to a mainstream service and from a service which focuses on a single decision to one which supports individuals in planning for ongoing career and learning decisions throughout their lives. It is also clear from the report that more evidence is needed on the impact of these services. A stronger evidence base will support more coherent service models. More investment in career development is needed to make this happen.

It is the opinion of the authors of this report that the following are critical to strengthening career-development policy and services for youth in Canada:

- legislate student entitlement to career-development services;

- map the career-development field in Canada so that there is a "known" foundation to build on;

- require that teacher education include a minimum of one course on career development;

- begin career development earlier (at least by grade six);

- teach intensive career-development courses to support student reflection on their career plans;

- implement an accountability framework and use learning outcome-based models, such as the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs;

- conduct evaluations (such as on-line surveys for parents, students, teachers, counsellors, community providers) regarding provision, content, quantity and quality of services and outcomes being achieved and publish results nationally;

- raise the profile of career development as an agenda issue for both Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) and Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM); and,

- build a cohesive, pan-Canadian approach by adopting and implementing current best/promising practices.

Career-development Services for Canadian Youth:
Access, Adequacy and Accountability

Introduction

This study is part of a larger project of Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN), Pathways for Youth to the Labour Market. The purposes of this project include:

- To better understand the paths that young people take from secondary school to the labour market and the outcomes (employment, earnings, job satisfaction) associated with different paths;

- To identify institutional and policy structures that appear to support or hinder the ability to find successful pathways.

The overall goal is to ensure that more young people are able to find pathways that lead to sustained employment with decent pay, good working conditions and career potential.

Career-development services (information, programs and resources) can play an important role in facilitating successful pathways. As part of the research for the Pathways project, CPRN asked the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) to provide a pan-Canadian overview of the scope of career-development services for youth.

Background

What are Career-development Services?

Career development is the overarching term used to describe information, programs and services that help people to manage learning, work and transitions and to acquire the skills and attitudes to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future.

Career development assists individuals and groups to:

1. Know *where* – understand labour markets, skill requirements and locations of these markets;

2. Know when – understand "timing" issues such as labour market surpluses and shortages, current and future career opportunities and how to take advantage of them;

3. Know why – understand their own interests, values and motivations to help set a meaningful career direction;

4. Know how – acquire the knowledge, skills and experiences required to manage work and learning decisions and transitions; and,

5. Know whom – make the most of contacts and networks to help improve chances of success (Hughes, 2004, 12).

A key role of career-development services is to make career opportunities more rather than less equal for individuals. This means supporting each individual to achieve a "quality" career which has at least the following characteristics:

- The opportunity to do tasks that are fulfilling and meaningful;

- A decent standard of living, including a sense of economic security;

- A healthy and safe work environment; and,

- Opportunities to use and further develop skills, knowledge and abilities in the course of doing one's job (Lowe, 2000).

Much of the research on the Millennial generation (youth born between 1980 and 2000) indicates that young Canadians are looking for careers that have at minimum the above characteristics (Howe and Strauss, 2000; Sobon, 2003; Saxena, 2005; Canadian Youth, n.d; Barnard et al., 2003; Lancaster and Stillman, 2002). Sonia Sobon's research found that this age group will use six critical factors when choosing an employer: 1) compensation (monetary and non-monetary), 2) challenging and meaningful work, 3) good relationships, 4) lifelong learning opportunities, 5) a respectful working environment, and 6) the [organization's] citizenship policies and track record (2003).

Labour market trends consistently suggest that millennial youth will not be making one career choice, but many over their working lives. Therefore, the need for youth to be able to self-manage learning and work transitions and their own career development is critical. Career-management skills are no longer optional but are recognized as essential skills for youth today.

The State of Career-development Policy and Practice

In the past five years, international organizations and governments in many countries have demonstrated a strong and unprecedented interest in career-development policy and practice as strategic tools in workforce development and in achieving employability goals. In 2002, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) initiated a review of career guidance policies in 14 countries, of which Canada was one (federally and four provinces). Published in 2004, *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* was the resulting report. The OECD review expanded into similar spin-off reviews and to date, 37 countries have participated, including all countries in the European Union, several countries acceding to the EU and a number of developing countries. As a result, a very substantial global database on career-development practices, policies, issues, accomplishments and challenges now exist.

In Canada, a pan-Canadian Symposium on Career Development, Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development was convened by the Canadian Career Development Foundation in the fall, 2003. The Symposium proceedings, *Working Connections*, include pre-Symposium papers developed by each province and territory describing and outlining issues related to service provision (to youth and adults). The work of the OECD as reported in the Canada Country Note and the Canada Symposium proceedings provide an overview and the beginnings of a database on the issues and challenges facing the field of career development in Canada.

The evidence base for the outcomes of career-development practice was identified in all forums as insufficiently robust. As a follow-up to the Canadian Symposium, the Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development (CRWG) was formed to begin to address this gap in the field. The CRWG recently completed a study on the state of practice in Canada regarding how the processes, outcomes and impacts of career services are measured, evaluated and reported.

While there is more data than ever before on career-development services throughout the lifespan, the national database remains weak. There is no comprehensive national picture of career-development services in the K-12 or post-secondary education (PSE) sectors. For out-of-school youth, the career-development service picture is largely unknown. A snapshot of career services provided by youth-serving agencies in 1999 was conducted in nine provinces/territories (Career Circuit, 1999) but represented only approximately 3 percent (n=150) of these organizations.

To date, the career-development picture for youth in Canada has not been synthesized into a coherent and current report. This paper is an overview and synthesis of these data with reference to the services available to youth and their known impacts.

Objectives

Given that career development is a contributor to helping youth decide on the next steps in their pathways to the labour market, the objectives of this report are to:

- Synthesize and update what is known about career-development services for in-school and out-of-school Canadian youth (to age 24);

- Summarize the evidence base which is available on the effectiveness and impacts of career interventions for youth; and

- Highlight some innovative and promising approaches to service provision in Canada and internationally.

Methodology

The paper has been developed using select resources and with content validation from career-development practitioners across the country involved with youth career services at the K-12, PSE and government levels.

The first step in this report's development was to develop a list of content reviewers. These content reviewers were identified from a list of participants who attended the pan-Canadian Symposium on Career Development, Lifelong-Learning and Workforce Development (2003). If they were unable to participate in this project, they were invited to suggest an alternate who was then contacted by CCDF. The reviewers work in a range of settings in the career-development field: government, education (secondary and post-secondary), private practice and community-based agencies. Twenty-three of 44 contacts agreed to participate in the review.

The reviewers were asked to review a synopsis of the career-development services for youth in their province and territory. Synopses were prepared using existing resources, including the provincial/territorial papers submitted by the pan-Canadian Symposium teams, *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* (2004), *The OECD Canada Country Note on Career Guidance Policies* (2002), and *The State of Practice in Canada in Measuring Career Service Impact* (CRWG, 2005). In addition to these sources, an Internet search was conducted for more current information. Details pertaining to youth services were extrapolated; missing details were pointed out and requested. These synopses were then sent to all volunteer reviewers. For the initial synthesis document, 15 submitted feedback and all but two provinces/territories (Yukon and Prince Edward Island) had at least one reviewer. Feedback was incorporated and an overview document was sent to the reviewers for their final review and comments.

The report organizes information from these sources on what is known about the following:

1. the scope of career-development information, programs and resources (services) available to in-school and out-of-school youth and young adults;

2. who accesses career-development services;

3. who provides career-development services, their numbers and qualifications;

4. the prevailing attitudes to different post-secondary pathways to the labour market;

5. the evidence base for career development with respect to learning goals, labour market goals and social equity goals; and,

6. a select number of promising approaches within Canada and internationally.

It must be emphasized that this review was a volunteer task and the feedback provided cannot be considered a complete picture. It is a snapshot of existing sources of information. Feedback has been integrated into the narrative of this report. Appendix A lists specific information points submitted by the reviewers and provides another useful perspective on what is available.

1. Scope of Career-development Services for In-school and Out-of-school Youth/Young Adults (to age 24)

The OECD, in its review of the career-development system in Canada, found it to be multi-faceted and highly decentralized (2002), given the division of responsibilities between federal, provincial/territorial and municipal governments in the areas of education, training and labour. This more current review of the scope of career-development services found that little has changed from 2002 and there still remains very little consistency in policy and service across Canada (see Appendix A for a sampling of specific career-development policies and services for youth across the country). As the OECD found in their review "many decisions related to career-development services are made at the school board or institution level" (2002). With the advent of Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs), the federal government has devolved funding and responsibilities further to the provincial governments with the exception of legislated federal youth employment programs. While federal and provincial co-ordination in relation to labour-market matters is promoted through the Forum of Labour Market Ministers

(FLMM), there are no nationally established, implemented standards of service quality or service provision.

The OECD Canada Country Note pointed out the need for all provinces to develop a coherent strategy for career-development services indicating how the variety of institutions and agencies involved could work together to provide a continuum of services. The pan-Canadian Symposium further endorsed this position. In a coherent strategy for youth services, career education complements or is built in conjunction with the guidance program. Career programs, information and other services reach out beyond the school boundaries and involve employers, parents, community groups and other career practitioners outside the school system. Attention is paid to special needs populations. Supports are available for alternative pathways to learning and skill development such as co-op and pre-apprenticeship programs. There is a focus on transition points including transition to PSE as well as transition to work.

From the data gathered from each province, there appears to be a positive trend towards building such coherent career-development service policies from either K-Adult or K-12. One province and one territory have a K-Adult career-development policy, and one province is advocating for the development of such a policy. Three provinces have developed a career-development framework for a coherent delivery system for career-development programs and services for youth (one in all areas of education and youth service; one in schools only; one framework is in the process of being developed).

There remains however, no consistent access to career-development services for youth from province to province or from school board to school board. A number of provinces reported a reduction in service. Non-profit services, which have had a history of being the main service points for out-of-school youth and young adults, are closely tied to government policy and funding which can leave them vulnerable to shifts in government practices. One province reported that a combination of performance-based contracting, "micro-management" by Service Canada, along with the elimination of youth-specific employment programs at the provincial level, have led to the closing of successful at-risk youth career-development programs.

School leavers and those making school-to-work transitions seem to have significantly less access to services than in-school youth. Access to and support for apprenticeship training is moderately supported for high-school students but support for out-of-school youth is minimal. Many provinces reported a need for better service provision to rural and remote youth who have difficulty accessing information and in-person counselling after they leave school. The federal government offers two work experience programs: *Skills Link* for those who are out-of-school and face significant barriers to employment and *Career Focus* which is a transitional work experience program for youth who have graduated from PSE institutions. These are operated under Service Canada's mandate and are located at Service Canada sites. No formative or anecdotal evidence was found on these programs.

Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap studied 14 OECD countries, including Canada, and found that career services are offered mainly in schools and in public employment services and, further, that "information provision and support with immediate decisions have predominated over the development of career-management skills" (OECD, 2004, 25). This

continues to be the case in Canada. Two provinces have some provision to assist students in understanding labour market information. There is limited provision for post-secondary students to support school-to-work transitions. No province or territory reported on services for employed young adults other than Québec whose current government requires employers to allocate one percent of its payroll to training initiatives which can include career planning. The impact of this policy on youth is not known.

2. Where Do Youth Go for Career Advice and What Services do they Access?

Overall, the research is quite limited on what percentage of youth actually access career planning resources and services, what interventions, programs and specific resources youth use and which ones are effective. There is more data on access by students, namely secondary school students, than out-of-school youth or PSE students. There is some research available on who students go to for career advice (e.g., parents, friends, teachers, guidance counsellors) and student satisfaction with specific career resources which have been targeted for evaluation.

This study found the following:

Classroom – Data from the Youth in Transition Survey[1] indicate that about two-thirds of 18-20-year-olds no longer in high school as of December, 1999, had taken a course in career planning while in high school. Not surprisingly, in provinces and territories that had mandatory career education programs in 1999, students reported a greater participation rate. The study found that those least likely to have participated in a career-planning course were high-school dropouts; just over half had taken such a course.

Work Experience and Apprenticeship Programs – In the same survey, participation in job skills/work experience courses was much lower than the participation rate in career-planning courses (30 percent) (Statistics Canada, 2002). This may be attributed to the fact that work experience is generally not mandatory. The highest percentage of take-up of these courses was by youth who were not in PSE at the time of the survey.

Reviewers in three provinces/territories reported that apprenticeship program participation was quite low. One province mentioned that student take-up was growing. However, no statistics were provided. Anecdotally, this province reported that increased social marketing, the involvement of parents and the availability of scholarships might be the reason for the increased take-up.

Volunteering – Forty-five percent of Canadian high-school students in 1999 reported that they had volunteered. Eleven percent reported that volunteering was a requirement for graduation. Almost 60 percent of youth who had volunteered thought that it had helped them obtain skills that they could apply to a job or business, and 33 percent believed that volunteering helped them get a job (Statistics Canada, 2002).

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[1]   The Youth in Transition Survey is a longitudinal survey developed through a partnership between Human Resources and Social Development Canada and Statistics Canada to collect information on the education and labour market experiences of youth.

Career Events – Two provinces reported having a province-wide career symposium, one of which attracts 20,000 student participants annually.

Access to Career Counselling in Schools – Data on the number of students who access career counselling is limited to one provincial survey which reported that one-third of secondary school students access career counselling. Those who do access this counselling are mostly PSE-bound.

The limited number of students who report having had career counselling could be attributed to the fact that guidance counsellors, who are chiefly responsible for career counselling, have limited opportunity to deliver these services to students. Sixty-one percent of guidance counsellors said that one of the five most time-consuming tasks is personal crisis counselling. Tasks of career planning and educational planning, selected by 32 percent and 25 percent of guidance counsellors respectively, were significantly lower in terms of the top five time-consuming tasks (CLFDB, 1993).[2] Students, on the other hand, reported wanting more time from guidance specialists and particularly wanted more individualized support in career and educational planning (CCDF, 2003). In terms of the guidance services offered at the secondary school level, students report being frustrated with:

- The lack of connection between courses of study and career paths; and,

- The narrow focus on university as the preferred learning option (CCDF, 2003).

Youth Employment Service Access – Most provinces/territories have youth employment centres. The Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres reported that their centres see 97,000 youth annually. Of these youth, 69 percent gained employment and 10-15 percent returned to school after using the service.

Access and Satisfaction with Career Information – A 1999 study of adolescent Canadian students' access to career information found that while 89.4 percent knew where to get information about continuing their education, significantly fewer (62.1 percent) knew how to get skills in job searching and even fewer (43 percent) knew where to get information about financial assistance. In the same study, almost 60 percent of respondents reported finding it difficult to find out everything they needed to make a career decision (Centre for the Study of Living Standard for Industry Canada, 2005). In Saskatchewan, a 2004 survey of high-school students showed that only 21 percent recalled receiving labour market information and 14 percent indicated that they received instruction on the management of the information (Department of Learning, 2005). Not surprisingly then, the Marine Careers Secretariat's study of high-school students, parents and teachers found that students "are overwhelmed by the vast array of [career] choices available and tend to be navigating in the dark with no real focus or purpose for the most part" (2004).

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[2] There has been no national study since 1993. Therefore, there is no reliable data on whether there have been changes in guidance counsellor perceptions about their most time-consuming tasks. There is anecdotal evidence suggesting that secondary schools are becoming increasingly flexible and are providing opportunities for non-certified teachers (e.g., employment counsellors, youth workers) to deliver parts of career guidance services. A comprehensive survey would be needed to indicate the extent to which this flexibility is province-wide versus a specific school or school board.

Students, generally, express little awareness of or satisfaction with career resources. In one study, the top six things senior high-school students report they need in their career planning include resources, activities and networks that help them:

- pursue their passion (84 percent);

- understand interests/abilities (82 percent);

- acquire post-secondary information (76 percent);

- obtain financial information (73 percent);

- help with planning process (72 percent); and

- support career plans (71 percent) (Magnusson and Bernes, 2001).

Research shows that high-school students are more influenced by direct visits or exposure to the "real" thing (either the work environment or the person doing the work) than other forms of career information. Youth indicate they want career information that:

- demonstrates clear paths for career development in an industry;

- is honest, balanced and provides full disclosure on occupations and the industry – pros and cons and room for improvement (Canadian Youth);

- includes PSE information that is accurate, timely and appropriate; and

- talks about careers other than those accessed by university training (only 25 percent of youth say that they are aware of all the career options available in skilled trades) (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2004; CPRN March 2006).

To Whom Youth Turn for Career Advice/Information – Several research studies that examine the career influencers of youth show that:

- Parents are the number one influence on career choice (Looker and Lowe, 2001; CCDF, 2003; Marine Careers Secretariat, 2004; Magnusson and Bernes, 2001);

- Friends are the second most influential (Looker and Lowe, 2001; CCDF, 2003, Marine Careers Secretariat 2004; Magnusson and Bernes, 2001);

- Only 12 percent of the junior high-school (grade 7-9) students and 36 percent of the senior high-school (grades 10-12) students listed counsellors in their "top three" list of people they would approach for career help (Magnusson and Bernes, 2001);

- At the same time, a 2003 research report for the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation found that students seek guidance counsellors as among the first and most reliable sources of expert information on post-secondary education opportunities, financial support and assistance with decision-making. While these results appear to contradict the previous study, the results may suggest that students want to explore

careers with non-professionals but want professional knowledge and advice on education decisions;

- With respect to "testing out career options," students consistently cited someone in that specific career field as the most reliable source of information;

- With respect to learning about their personal strengths and interests, students reported learning this mainly in the classroom with classroom teachers (CCDF, 2003);

- Parents are key, but often do not have the career information needed to support their role. "Parents…[are willing] to become more involved in the guidance program if they had the information and coaching to do it well, but they tend to rely on guidance counsellors to support their children's career decision-making (CCDF, 2003).

There needs to be more research on youth access to career services. Little is known about which populations of youth access career services and what the impact is for those who do and for those who do not. Information on the specific needs of those that do seek support is also not well known.

3. Providers of Career-development Services (numbers, training and professional associations)

The providers of career-development services are very diverse and work in a wide range of settings. Provision of career services is often a component of work duties rather than the main duty. The example given earlier of the dual guidance counsellor role of crisis and career counselling is a case in point. In addition, the field of career development has not been comprehensively mapped in Canada – that is: who; how many; in what settings, etc. Only Québec, because it has regulated the career counselling profession, knows where these professionals work (33 percent in K-12; 14 percent in PSE; 20 percent in employment services; 15 percent in private practices and 4 percent in public service). A pan-Canadian view of the services and settings of career practitioners is not available.

The range of services mentioned by reviewers of the provincial/territorial syntheses included:

- needs, skill and work preference assessment;

- counselling;

- career and labour market information access, support and interpretation;

- work search;

- career action planning and referral;

- transition support;

- employment and volunteer placement;

- facilitating work experience;

- educational upgrading;

- financial management;

- technical skills development;

- prior learning assessment;

- classroom teaching;

- work readiness skill development, and;

- employability skills training.

The following workplace settings were mentioned by the reviewers:

- career centres;

- colleges;

- community learning centres;

- Aboriginal Human Resource Offices;

- public sector;

- schools;

- private sector, and;

- non-governmental agencies.

There are more services and settings than were mentioned including the community-based training sector, youth-serving agencies and the volunteer sector.

In terms of training requirements, Québec is the only province that regulates the profession: "conseiller d'orientation."[3]   This profession's competencies are well-articulated. Conseillers d'orientation must have a master's degree in career counselling in order to use the professional title. In all other provinces, the practice of career development is unregulated.

However, there have been a number of initiatives undertaken to articulate the competencies (core and specialized) required by career practitioners regardless of their academic preparation. The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S&Gs) have been developed and are currently used by the profession in a voluntary manner. One province has integrated them into their employment services training for counsellors. The S&G initiative has led to the development of a number of practitioner training programs, some competency-based, others at the post-graduate certificate and graduate program level. One province has used the S&Gs to develop a Career Development Professional designation which is currently a voluntary

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[3]   This title is loosely translated as "guidance counsellor" in English, but it has much more focus on career counselling than the professional term means in English Canada.

certification. Similar developments are underway in other provinces. There is a growing movement to bring professional standards to career-development practice.

In schools, guidance counsellors are regulated by their province/territory mandates. In most provinces/territories, guidance counsellors in schools need to be qualified teachers and then take additional qualification courses which may or may not include career counselling. In Québec, guidance counsellors in schools are registered with a Counsellor Association and hold a minimum of a master's degree in counselling or are registered psychologists.

The career-development field has become somewhat more organized in the past 10 years. There are several provincial/territorial practitioner/professional associations or networks. Practitioner competencies have been articulated. The S&Gs have been endorsed by several provincial associations as well as the Canadian Counselling Association. The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs, which is a taxonomy of career-development learning outcomes, has been adopted by several Ministries of Education. The need for a comprehensive mapping of the field has been recognized in the career-development community for many years and was again strongly endorsed by the community in January, 2006 at the National Consultation on Career Development (NATCON). Funding support to complete this nationally has not been secured, but Saskatchewan has undertaken this task provincially.

The 2005 report of the CRWG, *The State of Practice in Canada in Measuring Career Service Impact,* reported that the vast majority of career practitioners and service agencies recognize the importance of outcome assessment and reporting, but lack the appropriate data-gathering tools and training to do so. The CRWG is working on the development of an evaluation framework and over time, will try to address the void in data-gathering tools.

4. Prevailing Youth Attitudes Toward Different Pathways to the Labour Market

Youth attitudes toward different pathways to the labour market can be a significant barrier for them in accessing labour market opportunities. Many youth attitudes and perceptions, which can limit career choice, are the result of systemic factors and limited knowledge.

Youth Attitudes Towards and Barriers to Post-secondary Education (PSE)

While PSE participation has grown exponentially in Canada, there are many youth who do not pursue PSE. Factors that influence university and college attendance for youth in Canada include:

- the economic status of parents;

- the educational attainment of parents;

- the level of parental awareness of PSE options;

- over-estimation of the cost of PSE education; (Canadian Youth, 2005; Looker and Lowe, 2001; CCDF, 2003; de Broucker, 2005) and,

- the lack of significant vocational options in high school (de Broucker, 2005).

Young women and immigrants tend to have higher academic aspirations than other youth, yet face many systemic, cultural and social barriers which prevent them from succeeding. (Looker and Lowe, 2001; Learning Policy Directorate, 2004). Young immigrants, in particular, face barriers such as lack of information, discrimination and non-eligibility for scholarships and awards (Looker and Lowe, 2001). A 2004 Marine Careers Secretariat (MCS) study found that for youth who did not want to go on to PSE, the top reason for males was: undecided as to a career option (62 percent). For female respondents, low grades and affordability were the two main reasons (MCS, 2004). Rural youth report that geographical distance to education is a barrier and are more likely to have parents who lack knowledge about local educational opportunities (Looker and Lowe, 2001).

Youth perceptions about specific careers impact on their choices. Perceptions are often framed by gender, race, ethnicity and class. For example, science and technology careers are often seen by youth from a limited and/or erroneous viewpoint:

- "…students generally see scientists through a narrow lens. They associate science with chemistry and biology and almost 40 percent of them associate science occupations with doing research in a laboratory" (Hypatia Project, 2002);

- Boys who take science were described as 'geeks' and 'nerdy'; girls who chose science were described as 'brave' or 'driven' (and, by extension, 'different') (Griffin, n.d.);

- More than two-thirds of the students, both male and female, associate technology simply with computers (Hypatia Project, 2002);

- Women underestimate their own abilities in science and math (Manicom, Armour and Parsons, 2004).

Youth Attitudes Toward and Barriers to Participation in Trades

The main barriers to participation in the trades appear to be the perception of trade careers and limited knowledge of apprenticeship as a learning and career option. The following are summative points found in the research:

- Thirty-two percent of youth surveyed in a 2005 IPSOS-Reid Report for the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum said they would likely consider a career in skilled trades. Fifty-eight percent of youth said university is their first choice over college or apprenticeships in skilled trades;

- Few youth surveyed believed that skilled trades offered a viable, challenging or fun career choice (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2004);

- Interviewees and focus group participants in the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum's study *Accessing and Completing Apprenticeship Training in Canada: Perceptions of Barriers*, felt that "the attitude of many guidance counsellors towards apprenticeship is often very negative, reflecting a lack of knowledge of the complexity of the work" (CAF, 2004, p.19);

- University education and, to a lesser extent, college education have a status among youth that is valued above other forms of PSE education. Less than one in 10 Canadian 15-year-olds say they want to pursue an apprenticeship or attend a post-secondary trade or vocational school (Learning Policy Directorate, 2004);

- Students in the Hypatia project study thought that careers in trades meant stocks or professional sport trades. "The students in the focus groups who had the most knowledge of trades were those who had a family member or family friend who worked in the trades" (Hypatia Project, 2002);

- It is simply not on the career options radar: in one study of junior high-school students in Alberta, females listed trades the lowest among career options (Lupart and Cannon, 2000); and,

- In a consultation report done by the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum with Aboriginal people and visible minorities, they found that both groups lacked information about trade-related jobs and held negative attitudes and a poor image of trades (CAF, 2004).

5. Evidence-base for Career-development Interventions

The research base on the impact of career interventions internationally is weak. In fact, the number of outcome studies in Canada has actually decreased in the last twenty years (Magnusson and Roest, 2004, 3). Much of the evidence about the effectiveness of career-development interventions has been from research conducted in the UK and the US. As a result of "convenience sampling," most of the Canadian studies have been with high-school and university students (Magnusson and Roest, 2004). In a review of this data, Magnusson and Roest found that 34 of the 41 studies were done with mostly Caucasian students, 20 studies were done with university or college students, nine with high-school students and five with middle school students (2004). Studies with young adults and out-of-school youth and socio-cultural differences based on gender, race, ethnicity and class are significant research gaps. There are also gaps in the attention paid to: the role of engagement in career planning, how the development of prerequisite and planning skills is needed to actualize a decision, and the impact of the development of systems of social support and/or feedback when implementing career decisions (Magnusson and Roest, 2004). Most research has been short-term and focussed on immediate results. Longitudinal research, which can better examine the learning outcomes, social impacts and economic benefits, is needed.

What is Known?

Learning Outcomes – In terms of existing evidence which supports learning outcomes of youth and young adults, Canadian and international research indicates that career development:

- Supports increased motivation to continue learning after high school (Aborelius & Bremberg, 1988; Defriese, Crossland, MacPhail-Wilcox & Sowers, 1990; Evans & Burck, 1992; Gerler, 1990; Lapan, Gysbers and Sun, 1997). There is evidence that suggests that schools with career-development programs and activities that extend to the community result in increased aspirations for PSE. Youth who attended such schools reported that their schooling was more relevant and better prepared them for the future

(CCDF, 2003, 7). This is a significant result when compared to recent research (mostly from the US) that notes increasing levels of student disengagement with the school system. In the US, it was found that only 28 percent of grade 12 students said school was "often or always meaningful" compared with 40 percent in 1983 and 36 percent in 1990 (OSCA, 2005). There is a well-established connection between the level of disengagement and the drop-out rate;

- Reduces numbers of dropouts (both at the secondary and post-secondary level). Career-development services assist youth in seeing the relevancy of their learning as it is tied to pathways to the labour market. "Some concrete examples exist in the US where dropout rates have been reduced as a result of providing career services" (Hiebert and Bezanson, 1999, 296);

- Reduces numbers of "trial and error" learners (which can reduce student debt and frustration). The number one reason for dropping out of PSE programs was "lack of fit" (OSCA, 2005);

- Increases career maturity and career certainty (Dykeman et al, 2003). This is particularly important for adolescent females, who while demonstrating more career maturity than males, have the greatest risk of entering occupations incongruent with their interests. Females who have more opportunities to access career education and career services have significantly increased their career certainty and their career congruence has increased (Patton and Creed, 2001); and

- Is important for increased academic success (CCDF, 2003, 7).

Labour Market Goals – In terms of labour market goals, Canadian research indicates that:

- Counselling supports the integration of labour market information (LMI) into career decision-making. A literature review of the impact of LMI on the career decision-making process found that career-development interventions (including the dissemination of LMI) which included counselling support had a positive impact on career decision-making while unsupported LMI had limited impact (Université de Sherbrooke, 2005, 15). The above research points to the need for youth to have access to professionals who help them access and understand labour market information. The need to assist youth in understanding LMI was recognized by the members of the Expert Panel on Skills who recommended in their report that counsellors have "standardized professional certification procedures for guidance and career counselling that are based, in part, on the ability to interpret and use labour market information" (2000, 44; CSLS, 2005);

- Employers indicate that high-school students are not work ready (Environics West, 1997). Youth also say that they feel that they do not have adequate workplace skills. While youth are becoming more active in PSE, they are not necessarily gaining the essential and employability skills required for the workplace. Some research at the University of Lethbridge suggests that only 24 percent of students in their graduating year in Arts and Sciences report feeling ready to enter the workforce. Sixty-six percent of employers report having difficulty filling positions with qualified workers (Manpower

Inc., 2006). They also report that new recruits lack the essential skills needed for entry-level (Expert Panel on Skills, 2000, 54);

- Work experience that includes a reflective component has a positive impact on youth career development. Some provinces have implemented mandatory volunteer programs. Recent research into these programs shows that youth, while initially reluctant, become engaged by the experience. Eighty-three percent of youth surveyed in a Ryerson University study were satisfied with their volunteer service and almost two-thirds felt they learned a skill that will be useful to them in the future (Meinhard and Foster, 1999). "However, only 23 percent felt their service helped them think about the kind of job they might want, and only 21 percent felt their service helped them learn more about a career in which they thought they might be interested" (Meinhard and Foster, 1999, 8). This might be attributed to the lack of orientation and follow-up in the program. Eighty percent of students report no opportunity to discuss the experience in class, and only 12 percent were required to keep a diary (Meinhard and Foster, 1999, 8). The Expert Panel on Skills recommended in its report the need for more opportunities for students to learn about the world of work by making these opportunities a core part of elementary and secondary curricula. They stated, "Most high-school students study social, health and family life issues to prepare them to become responsible citizens. Oddly, however, only a fortunate few learn directly about the forces … that will shape their ability to earn a living." The Canada Country Note by the OECD endorsed this recommendation with one caveat "that the remit should be extended to cover not just work studies but career education as a whole" (OECD, 2002, 15).

Social Equity Goals – There is research to suggest that career-development interventions support the equalizing of opportunities for disadvantaged youth by:

- Reducing the dropout rate both from secondary and post-secondary education: An anti-poverty/career-development intervention, *Career Trek*, works with youth (starting at age 10) to help them understand the connection between school and future career opportunities. Forty percent of the participants are Aboriginal and all are deemed at-risk of dropping out and not continuing on to PSE because of personal circumstances (e.g., family's economic status). Participants take age-specific courses at three different PSE institutions and are exposed to 80 different careers in 17 different fields. Eighty-five percent of Aboriginal participants complete the *Career Trek* program. Teachers report that participants are more confident, more school-focussed, more involved in school activities. The number of *Career Trek* participants attending PSE is above the provincial average;

- Changing attitudinal barriers that decrease career choice: In Canada, there is a plethora of programs to support young women's entry into science, technology and engineering careers which have been and continue to be traditional, male domains. Many of these programs use career exploration, information and planning to support attitudinal shifts around gendered career choice expectations. Evaluation of programs that support holistic career-development interventions (experiential learning, role models, career and labour market information, work experience, parents, schools, community and employers) report extremely positive results (Frize et. al., 1998; Comeau, 2005);

- Reducing poverty and unemployment by getting youth to stay in school longer and enhancing the opportunity for youth to earn more and be unemployed less: One year of additional secondary schooling leads to an increase of 12.3 percent high annual income, an increased likelihood of working full-time, decreased likelihood of being unemployed and earning below the low income cut-off (Oreopoulos, 2005).

The data on the social impact of career-development interventions is not well developed. It is an area of evaluation that practitioners want evaluated because although these outcomes are being achieved, they do not have the tools and are not required to report on these kinds of "soft" outcomes. Most often they are required to report on placements and reduced time on benefits (CRWG, 2005).

6. Promising/Innovative Approaches

The promising practices listed below emerged from the research and input on the provincial and territorial syntheses as well as from the OECD database and International Symposia proceedings. The first set of practices is Canadian, followed by notable international examples.

Canadian Highlights

This list is not exhaustive; it is a sampling of some of the programs and practices that address key issues surrounding career-development services for youth. These promising practices address many but not all of the recommendations and issues raised in the OECD review and the pan-Canadian Symposium (see OECD, 2002, 30-3 for their recommendations and CCDF, 2004,147) for the key issues raised at the Symposium. References are in the bibliography).

Recommendations for which promising practices were found:

1. A comprehensive vision for coherent delivery systems;

2. Consistent and better access to career-development services for all Canadians;

3. Career-development programs that are part of the curriculum;

4. A complete profile of service provision and service providers in all provinces/territories so that users know where they can access services;

5. A concerted strategy for incorporating work studies and experience-with-work programs as core elements in elementary or secondary school;

6. Stronger evidence base for career-development interventions;

7. Involvement of all community stakeholders (education, business, parents, community groups) in career development for youth;

8. Enhanced attention to career-development needs of under-represented youth populations.

It is important to note that several of the promising practices could fit into more than one recommendation.

Sample Promising Practices

1. Coherent Delivery Systems

   - In the Northwest Territories, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has developed and implemented a Directive for Career Development across the Lifespan. It is a framework for a comprehensive, coherent and accessible system of career-development programs, services, information and supports. It is currently being reviewed after five years of implementation.

   - Alberta has explicitly adopted an approach to help all ages access career-development services in metropolitan, rural and remote communities. The Career Development Strategy, Learner Pathways, is being led by three distinct ministries, Human Resources and Employment, Advanced Education and Education. The goals of this strategy are to:

     · create the environment and culture for Albertans to acquire career management skills and to maximize individual potential;

     · set the strategic direction and policy for career development; and

     · define the roles and responsibilities of each ministry.

   A companion Labour Force Development Strategy is co-led by Human Resources and Employment and Advanced Education. Its focus is on addressing Alberta's current labour force pressures, which include severe skill shortages, as well as building capacity to respond to future learning needs.

   These two strategies are cross-government initiatives that are engaging business and industry and other community stakeholders.

   (See link to the public consultation on Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce http://www3.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi/consultation/ .)

   - Saskatchewan Learning and Advanced Education and Employment are two provincial departments that are focussing on how best to deliver career-development services in the K-12 school system; in post-secondary education and training, apprenticeship, pubic library systems, public career/employment services; and to new immigrants. There is an emphasis on approaching this challenge in a holistic and comprehensive manner and considerable work has already been done to build a strong base of knowledge for ongoing dialogue with many stakeholders. Several foundation pieces have been implemented to create a coherent delivery system including: adopting the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs as a framework for K-12 career-development curriculum; adopting the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners for use by practitioners in Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services Centres; and approving the Recognition of Prior Learning provincial framework. Further work is planned in strengthening accountability and developing a continuous improvement framework.

   - In Manitoba, the Departments of Advanced Education and Training (AET) and Education, Citizenship and Youth (ECY) have developed a Framework and Action Plan

to reflect a comprehensive vision for a coherent delivery system of career-development programs and services. A joint-departmental Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee on Career Development was established to direct this activity, and it receives advice from a Career Development Stakeholder Advisory Committee.

The career-development goals for ECY and AET are:

· Career development is recognized as essential to the social and economic well-being of Manitobans;

· Manitobans have the knowledge and the abilities to set and achieve career goals;

· Manitobans have access to quality resources required to make informed education, training and employment choices on an ongoing basis;

· Manitobans have the employability skills and attitudes to work and adapt effectively to the needs of the workplace, and

· Stakeholders in career development have a forum to exchange information and work cooperatively.

Specific actions for implementation have been identified that include integrating the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs and Essential Skills, and encouraging employers to incorporate career management within the workplace.

2. Consistent and Enhanced Access to Service

- Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres (OAYEC) has a new website with an "Ask an Employment Counsellor" feature that allows remote youth from anywhere in the province to email their closest youth employment centre to receive youth employment counselling. OAYEC is working with the province on measuring the impact/eligibility of such on-line sessions in the current funding regime. There are currently 50 youth employment centres contributing to the operation of this feature. The site and feature will be launched in April 2006.

- Newfoundland and Labrador and Alberta have well-established and well-used career and labour market hotlines.

3. Programs that are Part of the Curriculum

- In Québec, the Guidance-Oriented Approach to Learning (l'école orientante) is a whole school approach to career development that is part of the current educational reform in the province. Personal and career planning is defined as one of the broad areas of learning. The curriculum framework begins in elementary school with "identity" development and guidance, and career planning throughout secondary school. In this program, there is active involvement of all stakeholders through partnerships (career counsellors, parents and employers). As part of the education reform, students can choose from three different work-focussed/academic education paths. The paths have differing levels of work-experience integrated in the program. All paths are evaluated

from the same competencies but the method of course delivery changes depending on the path chosen.

The Guidance-Oriented Approach focusses on teachers supporting students' learning and career exploration and journeys with support from the guidance counsellor. There is no particular targetted student population. The idea is that even the most academically inclined student may choose a more experiential path. Students can go on to either vocational training or pre- university/college programs from any path they choose.

4. Profile of Service and Practitioners

- Saskatchewan Career Practitioners Sector Study: A provincial mapping of the career-development sector is underway including assessment of the need for a provincial body to advance career-development professionalism and address human resource and delivery issues.

- Québec is the only province that regulates professions associated with the career-development field. There are well-organized networks of services delivery centres that provide professional development support to local centres and practitioners.

5. Infusing Work Studies or Work Experiences into the Curriculum

- In New Brunswick, the Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) is a two-year, two-phase program that students may access upon the completion of either grade 10 or grade 11. Co-operating employers provide school district Youth Apprenticeship Coordinators with workplace job descriptions that are posted in area high schools in the late spring. Students, in either grade 10 or grade 11, interested in YAP have access to the job postings and make application by providing a cover letter and resumé for the intended position. Employers receive the resumés of those interested in the position being offered, review, short-list as required, interview and select a youth apprentice employee.

The employer is expected to provide employment for two consecutive summer work terms (180 hours minimum each) and is responsible for employee remuneration and benefits as prescribed under the Labour Standards Act. The summer work term begins upon the completion of school in June and ends prior to the start of school in September. The student may work at other times during the school year, if so desired, provided such work does not interfere with school attendance.
Youth Apprentices attend skill development workshops as part of the program including a pre-employment workshop that occurs in June prior to the start of their first work term. Over the duration of the program, students engage in an outcomes-based curriculum that targets skills development in the areas of teamwork, leadership, workplace health and safety, labour market research, employer expectations, NB labour standards, human rights and other key areas.

YAP completion provides students with guaranteed access to a program of study related to their youth apprentice experience at any of the NB Community College campuses or preferred admission status to a related program at the University of New Brunswick, Atlantic Baptist University or Université de Moncton.

- In Alberta, the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) enables high-school students to become employed apprentices while completing high school. Scholarships and the involvement of parents have helped not only in supporting students in making informed career decisions, but have also been key in changing negative attitudes toward trade careers. Ninety-four percent of RAP students say the program made them more interested in completing high school (Parent brochure).

- In Alberta, Job Shadowing Plus (JSP) has been developed by Elk Island Public Schools and is considered the standard of practice for job shadowing in Alberta and British Columbia. JSP is a self-guided software program that guides students, employers and educators through all aspects of arranging and participating in successful career investigations.

- In Ontario, the Toronto District School Board has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alliance of Sector Councils whereby pilot projects directly related to both increasing school graduation rates and responding to critical skill shortages will be undertaken culminating in the development of a national model which may be replicated in other boards, provinces and territorial jurisdictions. A new Specialist-High-Skills major is being added to the Ontario graduation requirements that will allow students to complete a "bundle" of courses in specific high-skill areas of concentration that lead to employment, apprenticeships and PSE destinations. "Bundles" will be arranged according to specific sectors including business, arts, manufacturing, health care, construction, hospitality, information technology and mathematics. Students will have more opportunity to participate in experiential learning and to earn industry-recognized certifications. This initiative is considered to be one which is both transforming and modernizing secondary schools. The three-year pilot began in 2006 and will focus on career education for students and parents, embedding essential skills across the curriculum and new program development that leverages learning through education/sector council partnerships.

- The Centre for Career Development at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The student employment programs offered by the Centre for Career Development (CCD) have been restructured to incorporate formal experiential learning. This means students work with their employer at the beginning of the placement to identify specific skills that will be enhanced or developed during the placement, based on the job description and their current skill set. From these discussions, both student and employer complete a Reflection Agreement identifying activities pursued throughout the placement to record the extent of the learning. At the end of the placement, student and employer will revisit the Reflection Agreement to recognize achievements. Overall, this will enable the student to experience learning situations in a work environment that can be transferred to other work and life situations.

6. Evidence-Base for career-development interventions

- Manitoba and New Brunswick are participating in the *Future to Discover Project*. In partnership with the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. The project aims to understand whether better career information, career-development interventions and/or

financial incentives can encourage students who would not normally pursue post-secondary education to successfully do so. The project is targeting students from low-income families with limited or no post-secondary education history.

- Newfoundland has developed the Human Resources Data Collection and Strategy Development Initiative, which began in 2004, to provide data around the role of career education and labour-market needs in career choice. Surveys were conducted in local high schools and post-secondary institutions, and with adult basic education students and expatriate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Partner agencies have continued to integrate findings into related human resource initiatives and on-going planning.

- As mentioned previously in this paper, the Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice (CRWG) and the FLMM LMI Working Group are also contributing to the evidence base. See Section 5.

7. Involvement of Community Stakeholders

- The Ontario Learning Partnership Group acts as the coordinator of the community-based Industry Education Councils or Business Education councils. These councils are instrumental in their intention to support and supplement the programs and services already available in schools. The councils conduct research and facilitate programs in career education, such as expanding career awareness, co-ordinating symposia on career development; they also create and maintain career-oriented databases, such as www.apprenticesearch.com which was created by the Halton Industry Education Council. Currently, apprenticeship search is only available in two school districts in Ontario.

8. Enhanced attention to career-development needs of under-represented youth populations

- In Nova Scotia, Techsploration is a highly successful female career-development role model program that is attempting to enhance female enrollment in science, technology, technical and math courses.

- In the same province, the Department of Community Services youth summer initiative provides learning and work experiences to youth who are recipients or dependents of recipients of income assistance. Likewise, in Manitoba, *Youth N.O.W* funds twelve projects in Winnipeg for youth on social assistance.

- The British Columbia Chamber of Commerce has an Employer – Aboriginal/Immigrant/At-Risk Partnership Research Project. The research has compiled innovative programs and partnerships with under-represented groups in the labour market. In addition to this project, the BC Chamber also has hosted a Career Development and Employer Partnership Roundtable (2004) which was a forum for career-development practitioners, employers and industry representatives to discuss partnership opportunities and actions supportive of workforce development. The BC Chamber Career Development Committee has published a research report titled: *Promising Practices Exemplifying Career Development and Workforce Development for At-Risk Youth and Adults in Transition*.

International Examples

With the data collected by the efforts of the OECD, other multi-national organizations and the International Symposia movement, there is now a collection of many promising practices from which to draw new learning about career-development resources and services which benefit and support youth career pathways.

The following are six promising career guidance practices. They are highlighted here as examples of coherent career services which have youth as a main client-group. These examples include:

1. A community-based effort;

2. A Canadian-born initiative which has now been adopted in several countries;

3. An initiative to reframe guidance services in schools by splitting the roles and responsibilities of the guidance and career guidance counsellors;

4. A holistic career resource and service model at the post-secondary school level;

5. An all-age approach to career services; and

6. A research and development centre for lifelong guidance.

1. Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENS) and Local Community Partnerships, Victoria State, Australia

This project has brought together key stakeholders – education providers, employers, community-based agencies, individuals and governments to improve employment outcomes for youth. The chief aim of LLENS, beyond building sustainable relationships and partnership with all stakeholders, is to broker initiatives between local education providers, industry and community to improve the education, training and employment outcomes of young people with a focus on those 15-to-19-year-olds at risk of leaving school or who have already left.

All stakeholders are brought together to develop local strategies to improve the links between local education and training and local employment and skill needs. While the LLENS project has taken some time to have local impact, employers are becoming very active supporters of the project. The state government commissioned an early evaluation of the project in late 2002.[4] They concluded from this evaluation that while LLENS needed time to develop, it had had progressive and positive results.

The Australian government is very interested in building and adapting the LLENS model for implementation at community, state and national levels.

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[4] See "Evaluation of the Local Learning and Employment Networks," December 2002, VLESC, Melbourne, www.llen.vic.gov.au, accessed May 29, 2006.

2. The Real Game

   The Real Game is a made-in-Canada career-development program that involves role playing and simulation where students can learn about adult life and work roles and engage in career and educational planning. It contains defined learning objectives and performance indicators that are cross-referenced with the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs. The game takes 18-23 hours of class time to complete and can be delivered to students in an intensive period or extended over the full school term.

   The original game, entitled *The Real Game*, was created in 1996 for students in grades 7-8.[5] Since its launch, it has been adapted and implemented by 11 countries. The United States is currently conducting a two-year review for the program which ended in spring 2006. The results have yet to be published. The United Kingdom conducted an evaluation of their national pilot of The Real Game between 1997 and 1999. The results of this evaluation were favourable in terms of helping youth acquire key learning objectives. Most schools participating in the program, however, had not been able to implement the full program due to time-constraints.

3. In Norway, they have tested and are moving towards a full adoption of new regulations for career guidance services that see career guidance as part of each school's overriding plan, so that the whole school is responsible for the career development of students. "In addition to the information and (work) experience (initiatives), each pupil will be offered individual guidance and receive assistance in drawing up a career plan" (Norway Country Paper, International Symposium, 2006, 115).

   The process begins in late elementary school to support the transition from junior high school to secondary school. These regulations also speak to the need to professionalize the career guidance field. The role between the guidance counsellor and the career guidance counsellor will be split. The guidance counsellor's focus will be on personal counselling and the career guidance counsellor will be responsible for career counselling, work experience programs in the schools and the development of students' career management skills.

   The proposal for new regulations was forwarded to Ministry of Education in March, 2006.

4. The Finnish Häme Polytechnic has adopted a seven-dimensional model to assist in the planning of guidance services in a post-secondary institution. The aim of this model is to maximize the use of existing resources and meet the demands and needs of diverse client groups during different phases of students' learning programs. The dimensions include:

   - Time: Setting up services at different check-in points during a student's learning program: pre-entry, entry, on-program, exit and follow-up;

   - Content: The focus of the service at each check-in point (e.g., enrollment, orientation, placement);

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[5] There are other games for grades 3-4, 5-6, 9-10, 11-12 and adults.

- Area: The role of staff members in each type of service (e.g., placement officer, career counselling, educational counselling);

- Location: The division of responsibilities and locales to best meet student needs;

- Methodology: The methods used to meet the needs of different clients (e.g., face-to-face services, self-help, group counselling);

- Systemic: The policies, curricula and facilitation factors that are needed to support career guidance; and

- Context: How national policies, legislation and curriculum guidelines impact service (OECD, 2004, 141).

5. Careers Scotland is probably the largest publicly-funded organization in the world dedicated to career planning and support. Careers Scotland is an all-age delivery model. This means that career services are offered at this one source rather than career guidance services being split between education, government and community services. Its aim is to "equip individuals with the skills to make well-informed realistic career decisions throughout their working lives" (Watts, 2005, 7). Career planning in this context is linked to economic inclusion, enterprise and employability and on making "Scotland a career-resilient society" (Watts, 2005, 7).

In terms of youth, historically, Careers Scotland has focused on out-of-school and unemployed youth. In recent years, they have broadened their scope to work with all young people in relation to their employability and career planning. The widening of services has not meant that at-risk youth are not having their specific needs addressed. 'Key workers' in the organization are trained to support at-risk youth with a range of career and personal counselling and to refer to partner agencies for further support for this client group.

The OECD in *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* highlighted Careers Scotland and other all-age approaches for consideration. The OECD did not reach any definitive conclusions about the relative merits of either age-specific or all-ages models. It did state that all-age services have a number of organizational and resource-use advantages. "In particular they allow a diverse range of services to be provided throughout the lifespan within one organizational framework" which allows them to be more cost-effective and avoid duplication of resources (Watts, 2005, 9).

6. The Research and Development Centre for Lifelong Guidance in Jyväskylä University, Denmark, was created to research and develop training that focuses on improving: career resources and services for young people and adults; access to resources and service; and, systems that support career development. The centre has a mandate from 2006 to 2011.

The centre is an innovative network which is comprised of university faculties and centres and regional institutes. The centre focuses on the challenges identified in the resolution of lifelong guidance adopted by the EU ministers of education in 2004 and also national educational and labour market policies.

The initiatives currently being worked on to support both comprehensive and secondary school career-development services are:

- National guidelines for guidance provision and career education, such as:
  - a strategic and operational plan for guidance provision;
  - regular evaluation of produced services;
  - a holistic approach;
  - student counsellor and every teacher and principal delivering counselling services (responsibilities); and,
  - multi-professional co-operation – expert groups (pastoral care, etc.).

- New curriculum goals including:
  - support for personal growth and development;
  - promotion of the development of study skills and help in learning difficulties; and,
  - counselling and guidance for students in both academic and vocational streams.

- National development program of student counselling
  - 48 regional projects – interim report published 2006

- National Web-based support for institutional evaluation

- Training and mentoring of regional consultants
  - 120 trained regional consultants

- In-service training for principals, teachers, guidance practitioners in career development

- National 3-level training program in ICT skills for career practitioners (Vuorinen, 2006).

Conclusion

The research available on the impacts of career-development services for youth indicates that career-development programs and services support youth pathways to the labour market. Career-development services can broaden worldviews, increase knowledge of work and occupational options, help to build important workplace and decision-making skills and support transition planning. The OECD in *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* argued that OECD countries need to establish lifelong guidance systems as part of their lifelong learning and active labour market policies. Such systems would have the following features:

- transparency and ease of access over the lifespan, including a capacity to meet the needs of a diverse range of clients;

- particular attention to key transition points over the lifespan;

- flexibility and innovation in service delivery to reflect the differing needs and circumstances of diverse client groups;

- processes to stimulate regular review and service planning;

- access to individual guidance by appropriately qualified practitioners for those who need such help, at times when they need it;

- programs to develop career-management skills;

- opportunities to investigate and experience learning and work options before choosing them;

- assured access to service delivery that is independent of the interests of particular institutions or enterprises;

- access to comprehensive and integrated educational, occupational and labour market information; and

- involvement of relevant stakeholders (OECD, 2004).

In the specific case of youth, services need to be available to support:

- different pathways (e.g., university, college, apprenticeship, vocational, work);

- movement of underemployed, unemployed and marginalized back into learning and upskilling; and

- specific services for youth with specialized needs.

The extent to which youth have access to and actually access career-development services in Canada is unclear, but from the research available, it is evident that access is not adequate across the country. There are "pockets" of promising practices that respond to a variety of youth needs,

but a system of coherent and comprehensive services for youth and young adults, whether in or out-of-school, does not exist.

It is the opinion of the authors of this report that the following are critical to strengthening career-development policy and services for youth in Canada:

- legislate a student entitlement to career-development programs and services from K-12;

- map the career-development field nationally so that there is a "known" foundation from which to build;

- require that teacher education at all levels include a minimum of one course on career development which supports infusing career and work relevant information into subject matter;

- introduce a paradigm shift in curriculum that places the focus on prevention rather than remediation by beginning career development earlier (at least by grade 6);

- teach career development intensively so that students have devoted times throughout their education to reflect on and develop career plans;

- implement an accountability framework and use a learning outcome-based taxonomy, such as the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs;

- conduct evaluations (such as on-line surveys for parents, students, teachers, counsellors, community providers) regarding provision, content, quantity and quality of services and outcomes being achieved. Results should be published nationally along with an action plan;

- support career development as an agenda issue for both Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, and Forum of Labour Market Ministers to be championed by Ministers across the country;

- using the 10 OECD recommendations, decide how to adopt, implement and build on current best/promising practices in a cohesive, pan-Canadian approach.

One of the most positive trends in career development is that Canadian provinces and territories are beginning to develop comprehensive career-development service policies from K-Adult or at least K-12. These policies may help to move career development from a frill to a central priority. Expanding the evidence base of the field will also support this trend. However, more investment in career development is needed to build upon these encouraging initiatives. This scan of the career-development services for youth points to the actual and potential contributions of career-development services in supporting learner pathways in the labour market as well as to identifying gaps in current career-development provision.

Appendix A

Below is a sampling of the career development and career education policies and services implemented and/or under consideration across Canada. The number reference indicates how many provinces/territories mentioned having similar policies or services in their review of the syntheses. In some points, the number of provinces with this service or policy may be larger than what was referenced by the reviewers.

Career-development Policies
- A comprehensive career-development service policy:
    - K-Adult (3: 1 advocates it but has no policy in place);
    - K-12 (3; 2 in process);
- A legislative requirement for the provision of guidance services in schools and a comprehensive guidance service program (1);
- The profession of career counsellor is regulated by the province/territory (1);
- Specific connection made between policies for the education of under-represented group (Aboriginal youth, at-risk youth, youth with disabilities) to career-development learning outcomes (1);
- School Boards are accountable to Ministries of Education and must report on key career-development outcomes (2);
- School districts have the flexibility to design their own career-development programs(2);
- Principals are responsible for developing a career-development program in their schools (2).

Career Education Policies
- Career-development framework built by using or infusing skills and learning outcome taxonomies (e.g., Essential Skills; Blueprint for Life/Work Designs6) (1);
- Career-development goals are explicitly referenced in the curriculum/learning outcomes set by the province/territory (2).

Resource Allocation to Career-development Services
- Federal, provincial/territorial, municipal and private agencies provide some degree of services to youth (all);
- Funding can range from $10-80 per student from grade 5 to 12 (2);
- School Boards are given block funding for career-development services, but it is up to individual Boards how they use the money (2);
- Reduction in number of counsellors (3);
- Employers must commit one percent of their payroll to training (1);
- Some career resources and information are distributed free-of-charge to youth (2).

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[6] The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs is a conceptual framework to guide the acquisitions of career-related information, skills and knowledge using a developmental process. It is used across Canada to guide curriculum and program development.

K-12 Services
In the Classroom
- Compulsory:
    - A requisite number of hours from K-7 which are often encompassed in health, life skill and career planning subjects (5);
    - Secondary school courses range from .5 credits to 4 courses which are offered in Grades 9 to 12 (6; 2 proposed);
    - Career Portfolios are used to record skill development and learning (5: the earliest integration begins in Grade 6; most are used in secondary school);
    - Compulsory career education is taught by teachers with little or no training in career development (4);
- Elective:
    - career and work exploration courses (2);
    - career and technology courses (3).

School-wide Services
- One province has developed a holistic career-development model that includes career-development learning outcomes in every class across the curriculum and works with students, teachers, community groups and employers to create a career-development culture for youth. The implementation of this program is optional for School Boards;
- Integration of workplace skill development:
    - Essential Skills (1 in the core curriculum; 1 in at-risk program stream);
    - Employability skills (1 in at-risk program stream);
- Alternate learner pathways tailored to student learning needs or for students who want work-oriented and/or experiential learning paths (3 but not in all schools; 1 in the pilot phase);
- Community employers part of the career-development programs in the school (2).

Career Counselling and Planning
- Student to guidance counsellor ratio:
    - Ranges from 1:385 to 1:1000 for secondary school students. The secondary school average across eight reporting provinces is 1:590;
    - Most School Boards are virtually eliminating elementary school guidance;
    - Many provinces/territories reported that guidance counsellor provision to schools is declining;
- Career counsellors and career information specialists are available to students (1);
- Teachers assume guidance responsibility in schools in remote areas (1);
- Outside employment counsellors/career-development officers brought into schools to support the career guidance program (3);
- Schools work with outside career centres for support services (workshops, information sessions, stay-in-school activities) (2);
- Career Centres are available in schools (1).

Work Experience Programs
- Compulsory:
  - Applied Arts courses which include work skills development and work experience components are required for graduation (1);
  - Volunteer/community service (4; hours required range from 25 to 40 hours);
- Elective:
  - Co-operative education course available (all);
  - Replacement of local school co-op programs with province-wide course (1);
  - Special project credit for out-of-school initiatives (1);
  - Courses that contain work experience components (1);
  - Some work experience programs available (2);
  - Internships for specific under-represented populations (1: Aboriginal and visible minority youth).
- Work experience guidelines available for schools (1)

Apprenticeship Programs
- High-school students can access a program for early apprenticeship where they earn high-school credits toward their apprenticeship. (8) For the most part, students are responsible for approaching an employer to take them on as an apprentice in order to qualify for the program. There were three provinces who reported having a career liaison person support this process. One province distributes a guide on apprenticeship and skilled trades to students and teachers.

Career Resources and Information
- Extensive range of career and labour market information provided to students both in hard-copy and via the Internet (4; 1 has a Department of Education approved list of career resources for use in schools);
- The Department of Education sends hard copy career resources to students free-of-charge (2);
- The Real Game7 (used to some degree in all provinces and territories);
- Information for students is primarily available on-line (1);
- Information provided to parents by the schools (2).

Career Events Supported by Schools
- All provinces/territories report having career events for students (e.g., career/job fairs).

Post-Secondary Education
University/College
- Institution-Wide Policies that Support Career Development of Students:
  - Mandatory career education course for Arts graduates (1 in the proposal phase).

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7   The Real Game is a classroom-based experiential learning career development program for Grade 3 to Adult. It is available in most provinces and territories.

- Career Centre Services:
  - Personal and academic counselling, career and employment services are available in PSE institutions and are set up and regulated by each individual college/university (9);
  - Career-development workshops available for free or for fee (2) ;
  - Prior learning assessment (PLA) is available for potential and current students (1);
  - Alumni access (1).

- Transition Programs:
  - Graduate employment assistance/transition programs available (4);
  - There is a liaison between the career centre in PSE institutions and high schools to support new students in learning and career planning (1).

- Work Experience Programs:
  - Work experience opportunities (co-ops, internships) (3);
  - Portfolio or preparation of a career-development plan (1: one college offers this service);
  - Summer student employment programs specific to students in PSE (1);
  - Work experience/internship programs specific to fields of study (2);
  - Career advisors for specific populations: disability, Aboriginal youth and young adults (1).

Apprenticeship
- No specific post-high-school program (4)
- Entry Level Trades Training program for students who have finished high school (1)
- Apprenticeship promotion to out-of-school students (1)

Services for Out-of-School Youth and Young Adults

Career Centre Service
- Career and Employment Centres available to all citizens with variances in programming (e.g., bridging to employment; employability assistance for people with disabilities) (3);
- Labour Market Information Centres (1);
- Youth-specific employment centres (5);
- Specific youth employment programs for those out-of-school (1);
- Career-development officers/liaison provide services to equity groups as part of their services to all clients (1);
- Employment/career services provide PLA support (1);
- Transitions programs for school-to-work youth offered in community employment/career centres (1).

Other Services Available
- Mobile career service units to support rural youth (1);
- Career hotline access (not specific to youth) (2).

Career Information and Resources
- Career and labour market information: Public libraries provide career and labour market information (1);
- Information specific to at-risk populations at employment centres (1).

Work Experience and Workplace Skill Programs
- Employability, essential or other skill enhancement programs are available to out-of-school youth (1);
- Entrepreneurship program for out-of-school youth (1);
- Exchange (national and international) programs to support out-of-school youth skill enhancement (3);
- Skill development programs that provide tuition and living expense funding for low-income or social assistance recipients to gain pre-requisites to employment and further training (1);
- Work experience programs for youth on social assistance or support programs for low-income youth (4).

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