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A model for integrating a career development course program into a college curriculum

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A MODEL FOR INTEGRATING A CAREER DEVELOPMENT COURSE PROGRAM

INTO A COLLEGE CURRICULUM

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

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by

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This dissertation, written by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

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"Career Development Coursework as Part of the General College Curriculum"
73rd Annual Convention of the Association for Business Communication, 2008

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National Association of Women MBAs, 2008

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31st Annual Conference of the Society of Educators and Scholars, 2008
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation has been to address the need to practicalize higher education by expanding career coursework into an ongoing career curriculum, beginning in a student's freshman year of college. Career development needs to serve as a finishing school for a college degree, the place where all a student has learned is combined into an awareness of the talents and skills they have developed, and can now be marketed to potential employers. The working world has become a volatile environment, and we do our students a disservice if we do not properly prepare them for the reality of the workplace of the 21st century by helping them monetize what they've learned.

Unlike previous generations in which people often worked for one company during their entire career, corporate loyalty and job security are now a thing of the past. "In the postmodern world, changes in the social context and global perspectives have changed the properties of career to one that is described as mobile, self-determined, employer independent, and free of hierarchy" (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994, p. 309).

Unlike their parents, college students today will probably never work for just one employer and then retire. For them, work will mean freelancing. A freelancer is defined as "a person who sells services to employers without a long-term commitment to any of them" (Freelance, n.d.).

Chapter One of this paper sets forth a brief background on the issue, the problem and why it is important, and the purpose and significance of the study. Chapter Two is the literature review, and includes an historical overview of career development in the United States, best practice career development courses in higher education, and a

discussion of the theoretical model. Chapter Three deals with the methodology,

including the research questions, the subjects to be interviewed, and how the data will be

collected. Chapter Four provides the results of the research survey. Chapter Five

summarizes the findings, discusses their implications, and presents suggestions and a new

model based on those findings.

Chapter One – Overview

The working world has been changing radically in the last few years.

> Obstacles inherent in navigating the world of work have increased because of the accelerated rate and unpredictable nature of change. . . for more than a decade, there have been calls for new counseling models to help people deal with the personal, workplace, and career changes they now encounter . . . . (Maglio, Butterfield, & Borgen, 2005, p. 76)

After teaching career development courses and coaching hundreds of college and graduate students for many years, the author advocates an overhaul of the manner in which career development is delivered. Rather than simple occasional one-on-one coaching sessions with a career counselor or a semester-long career development course near the end of college (or graduate school), students need to be trained over time to package and market themselves. While there are useful career courses offered at the college level, including the Boston University School of Management's *Charting Your Career Path,* and *The MBA Career Course* (2009) at University of the Pacific, these are insufficient to the challenges facing college graduates in the 21st Century.

In present day corporate America, the employment landscape includes layoffs, downsizing, offshoring, outsourcing, mergers, etc. Early retirement is increasingly being offered. With these prospects on the horizon, a college graduate has little alternative but to freelance. "[C]areer uncertainty is a fundamental experience that affects people's vocational behaviors, attitudes, and emotions . . . people experience uncertainty because of the changed nature and structure of the world of work" (Trevor-Roberts, 2006, p. 108).

Given the new reality of the working world, our role as educators is to properly prepare our students to navigate it. We need to "teach them what they have learned,"

build their self-confidence about who they have become "a career course can change students' negative thinking" (Osborn, Howard, & Leierer, 2007, p. 364), help them define and market the specific skills they can now offer, and prepare them to be of service to employers.

The Problem and Why the Issue is Important

There is a gap in higher education between how students are prepared to enter the workforce and what employers require in new employees. Students complain about not being properly taught how to find work, and employers complain that students do not have a firm sense of what it is they offer and how they can positively impact the needs of a business.

It is the author's belief that because the traditional ways of preparing our students to enter the workforce are insufficient to the freelance workplace of the new century, as educators (and career counselors), our mission must be to modernize – and expand – the manner in which we deliver career training.

With shareholders demanding increased profits every quarter, there is enormous pressure on companies to continually lower expenses. Corporate executives are increasingly being forced to reduce the size of their workforce and instead hire people on an as needed basis, thus removing the expense of paying employee benefits. Job insecurity is becoming the norm, so our task as educators is to provide relevant training for our students, the freelancers of the future.

Concurrent with this trend is the massive retirement of baby boomers. Seventy-six million Americans were born during what is known as the baby boom (1946 – 1964). Using 62 (the early retirement age for Social Security) as a guide, millions of boomers began retiring in 2008, when those born in 1946 reached 62. Millions more will do so every year until 2025 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010).

Though many will continue in their current jobs, and others will find new careers and work past the age of 62, millions will permanently retire from the workforce. When they do so, this will have a major impact on the economy, creating a need for younger workers to fill their jobs.

In addition, in order for the United States to remain competitive, we will have to prepare our workforce for the unique challenges and opportunities of the global economy. Career training has traditionally focused on helping people acquire marketable skills. However, as companies recruit, train, and promote from a worldwide labor pool, in addition to their skill set, American workers will need to develop a "global mindset" (Rhinesmith, 1992), equipped with an understanding of how the new labor market works.

Those with a global mindset are able to look at issues contextually, embrace ambiguity, trust process over structure, perceive change as possibility, value diversity, while striving for continuous self-improvement. This creates the opportunity for institutions of higher education to transcend traditional forms of content delivery by preparing students for a world that requires both technical (the hard) and communication (the soft) skills (Carnevale, 1991). Career educators must ready students for the global marketplace, and career coursework must integrate vocational training into a traditional

academic education. "The best liberal education may come to be seen as career education; the best career education may be seen to be liberal education" (Zwerling 1992, p. 108).

According to Kanter (1991), employment security is becoming "employability security" (p. 9), knowing that one possesses the skills required to find work and the flexibility to expand and adjust them to changing requirements. Just as any business owner is responsible for the growth of his or her company and its ability to adjust and flourish in a changing marketplace, students must be taught to take responsibility for the growth and development of their own careers.

Given all these radical changes in the workplace, more needs to be offered to college students than a single career course or an optional hour-long meeting with a career counselor. Training students how to market themselves is a process that can only be learned over time.

The first step is understanding the employer's perspective. Employers today are faced with a number of pressing issues, including those presented in the following sections.

No time. Technology, specifically laptops and cell phones, have turned workers into their own secretaries and assistants. Workers in today's labor market are doing the work that in years past was performed by at least two people. Given their increased workload, employers and hiring managers do not have the time to conduct thorough searches of candidates to fill a particular job opening.

Too many resumes. Companies typically receive hundreds of resumes in response to any job posting, and no longer have the time to read through all of them. They resort to their "informal network" of friends and colleagues to find appropriate candidates for any job opening. Nobel laureate Herbert Simon (1957) coined the term "satisficing," meaning that it is human nature to settle for the first solution or alternative that meets our minimum requirements. This is a necessary and pragmatic approach, especially whenever we face many choices. Thus the best candidates for a position are often never interviewed, and the person ultimately hired is someone referred by a trusted colleague, and simply "good enough" to do the job.

Need to minimize risk. Given they generally no longer have the time to properly conduct due diligence on the people they interview, it is more prudent for employers to rely on their own network of contacts. Job candidates referred by the people in this network will have been pre-screened: the contact knows the candidate, having either been a friend or co-worker, or known someone who is, or was.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

This situation necessitates that jobseekers – our students and graduates – create a new strategy for finding work. The strategies that were successful in the 20th century no longer apply, and we must adapt our teaching to this new environment. Career courses have proven effective: "Students who completed a career course showed increased career decision-making self-efficacy overall, specifically in the areas of obtaining occupational information, setting career goals, and career planning. The career course appeared to lower perceived career decision difficulties as well" (Reese & Miller, 2006, p. 264).

However, rather than one career development course or one coaching sessions with a career counselor, students will be learning new habits and will need to complete a *series* of courses in order to develop them.

After teaching career development courses and coaching hundreds of college (and graduate) students for many years, it is the author's belief that career development must become a mandatory part of the curriculum, where (a) everything a student has learned is synthesized into an awareness of the talents and skills they have developed, and (b) the student is then trained in how to sell that skill set to potential employers. It is proposed that this career curriculum be integrated into the general curriculum beginning during a student's freshman year of college, tying together all the other courses they have taken, replacing the traditional (and now obsolete) concepts of career preparation, which were appropriate to the past.

In the 20th century, higher education consisted of a series of seemingly unconnected courses leading to a degree, producing graduates who (a) had no idea what kind of work they wanted to do, and/or (b) no idea how to find work post-graduation. Finding a job meant preparing and sending a resume and appropriate cover letter in response to a job opening, and awaiting an invitation to interview. Career counseling consisted of an hour with a counselor, polishing a resume, and receiving job leads. Career counseling must be perceived and treated as more than a resume writing service or a job placement office in order impact our students' future success in the workplace.

The career development course program being proposed will address these problems, and the survey of professionals in the field in this study has underscored the

need for such a program. What this paper proposes is that we teach students the skills

they must have in order to continue to find work for the rest of their lives. This process

consists of three elements:

1. Making students aware of and able to *define* their personal brand and how the
   uniqueness of their skill set compares with other people competing for the same
   position.

2. Training them to *articulate* specifically what they have to sell to prospective
   employers or clients.

3. Strategizing with them how to *sell* their brand, and how to find the people who
   can refer or hire them.

Another way to view the process is: What am I selling, who do I know, and how

can I help them? We need to train our students how to sell themselves, a necessary skill

learned experientially and over time. "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then,

is not an act, but a habit" (Aristotle, as cited by Brainy Quote, n. d., para. 1).

We need to teach our students coping skills for the modern working world, but

this effort will meet with resistance. Few students are aware of, or prepared to meet the

challenges of a freelance marketplace where they will always need to be selling

themselves. In changing their outlook, we need to dispel certain beliefs. Though their

parents may have worked for one company until retirement, our students can expect: (a)

to work for many companies – and have multiple careers, and (b) that they may never be

able to afford to retire. Their degree has become a commodity and will not guarantee

them a job (according to the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of

Business, the accrediting body for schools of business in the U.S., there were 151,000

students attending MBA programs in this country during the 2008 – 2009 school year).

They must also understand the breakdown of the traditional process of finding

work. Technology has obviated the need for secretaries and assistants, and busy

employers no longer have the time to review all the resumes they receive. They often

will not even make a job opening public, and will instead find candidates in the same way

as does Lawrence W. Kellner, Chairman and Chief Executive of Continental Airlines:

". . . step one is . . . have I worked with somebody who could fill this job who's really

good? . . . my success rate is dramatically higher going that route. If not, the second step

is to widen the net to people who I trust, and look for people they've worked with . . ."

(Bryant, 2009a, para. 5).

Students must also be taught to realize that employers may not necessarily hire

the best person for the job, but rather the one who is a good fit to the team. Richard

Anderson, CEO of Delta Air Lines, said, "You spend more of your waking time with

your colleagues at the office than you do with your family and when you bring someone

into that family, you need to make sure that they're a fit to the culture" (Bryant, 2009b,

para. 1).

Students will also need to understand that employers are interested primarily in

what the student has done that will make (or save) the money for the employer, and the

students' marketing efforts must be focused on that simple need.

Next, students need to discover their *monetizeable* passion, meaning finding

something they love for which companies or clients are willing to pay. For example, the

American poet Wallace Stevens sold insurance, as did Charles Ives, the American composer. One may love to do something, but unless one can make a living at it, it needs to be classified as a hobby. For example, someone who likes to paint may do so in the evenings and on weekends, but how they earn a *living* may be as a graphic artist.

Students are often anxious because they have trouble discovering exactly what their passion is. The career development program for which the author advocates will help minimize this anxiety. Students will learn that it may take them years to discover their true passion, and meanwhile the program will help them find a vocation that interests them - and for which they will be compensated. They also will come to realize that everything they do in their life and career will make them better prepared for what they subsequently do. This is what is known as "the cumulative positive."

Next, students need to understand that they are a brand, and that they will always be selling that brand. Today's students today are under enormous pressure from parents and peers to decide what it is they want to do after they graduate. As educators, our job is to remind them that they may not have the answer by then – and that this is not necessarily a problem. When they eventually find their life's passion, they will be armed with the tools to find the work they want to do.

With an understanding of their uniqueness in the marketplace and having been trained how to articulate it, students are now ready to pursue the process of networking. This entails reaching out to the people in their lives with whom they have something in common, be it family, friends, or affinity groups. These people can and will make introductions for the student/graduate/jobseeker to those in their chosen field who may be

in a position to either refer them or offer employment. Students in the program will be advised to never decline a meeting, as it is impossible to know in advance who may be able to help them to advance their careers.

The great dichotomy in the jobseeking process in the 21st century is that one needs a flawless resume, an excellent cover letter, and a degree – yet none of those (nor all of them *together*) even ensures an interview. Contrary to its importance in the last century, the resume is simply a marketing document, a script for one's sales pitch. Cover letters are not necessarily read, and a degree has less value than it once did. Finding a job has become the same process as getting a date; one needs to develop a sense of relatedness, mutual interest, trust, and opportunity before either one will happen. This is why networking skills are the foundation of the entire process.

The career course program emphasizes social skills. According to Linda Hudson (as cited in Bryant, 2009), President and CEO, BAE Systems, Inc.,

> Business school graduates come with a great theoretical knowledge about business. But . . . they have almost no people skills . . . We give them all the book smarts, but we don't tend to give them the other skills that go along with business. (para. 17-19)

This is true for all students, particularly the Millennial generation, which fairly or not, has a reputation for not being effective at communicating, either orally or in writing.

Additional training for students includes having them learn the language of the industry in which they choose to work. Given employers hire people with whom they are comfortable and can trust, it is essential that students are perceived as being part of that culture.

Lastly, students are advised to prepare themselves for incremental career growth. With family pressure to decide on a career (and quickly repay educational loans), it is critical that as educators, we direct our students to find how they can be of service to employers in *some* capacity, trusting that with hard work, time, and the appropriate alliances, they can *eventually* realize their career dreams.

Research Questions

The details of the way in which the study was administered are found in Chapter Three, but briefly, the target group consisted of 10 people each from three groups: (a) college graduates who earned their degrees within the last 2 years, took a career course and/or met with a career counselor prior to graduation, (b) career counselors in higher education, and (c) executives with hiring authority.

The author chose the subjects, set a deadline for their responses, and correlated the data received. Once a subject agreed to participate, they were directed to the survey at www.SurveyMonkey.com.

The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. According to experts in higher education job preparation, are university students prepared for the workforce?

2. What specific recommendations are made that would improve students' readiness for the workforce, according to higher education employment experts?

3. As a result of the study, what is the model for integrating career development coursework into a college curriculum?

Summary

This study advocates for a new paradigm for career development in higher education. The subjects of the study represent those most affected by the status quo: students who, as predicted, reported that they were not sufficiently prepared during their college years for the working world; employers who frequently complain to the author that graduates either (a) do not know what type of work they want to do, and/or (b) have little idea what skills they offer; and career counselors who lack the power to initiate systemic change, and are often blamed for students' lack of career preparedness.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

This chapter includes a brief history of career development in the United States, an overview of studies on the efficacy of career development courses in higher education since the late 1970s, current best practices in university career development courses including a list of the results common to those courses, and a discussion of the theoretical model that provides the framework for this paper.

Historical Overview of Career Development in the United States

The terms vocational guidance, career development, and career counseling all have meanings endemic to their times. Vocational guidance was the original term. Career counseling and career development came into usage in the 1950s, and were institutionalized when the National Vocational Guidance Association, founded in 1913, was renamed the National Career Development Association in 1984. We can identify six stages in the development of this field:

Stage 1: 1890 – 1919. Vocational guidance developed in the late 1800s as a response to cultural upheaval characterized by: a loss of jobs in agriculture, increased demand for a work force for heavy industry, fewer jobs on family farms due to new technologies including tractors, and an increase in urbanization. These created a need for services that could both meet this migration and retrain workers for the industrial economy. Additionally, veterans returning from World War One - and the workers displaced by that return - boosted the importance of vocational guidance.

The initial focus was job placement. Frank Parsons is often cited as the father of vocational guidance. Parsons' model did not include a theoretical foundation at this point

in its development. Instead it was grounded in "simple logic and common sense and [it]

relied predominantly on observational and data gathering skills" (Aubrey, 1977, p. 290).

Parsons (1909) said that there are three factors to consider when one chooses a career: (a)

self-awareness, (b) understanding what is defined as success in different fields, and (c)

appreciating the relationship between the two. Psychological testing, which included

self-assessment, was an important to establishing both the credibility and relevance of

vocational guidance at this point (Whiteley, 1984).

The United States Department of Labor (DOL) was founded in 1913, and the

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), formerly under the jurisdiction of the Department of

the Interior, came under DOL jurisdiction (Pope, 2000). Legislation was passed that

advocated for vocational guidance, including the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which

instituted vocational training in the secondary school system.

Stage 2: 1920 – 1939. A boom in the birth rate at the end of World War One

resulted in a big increase in enrollment in elementary and secondary schools. In order to

be prepared for industrialization, these students needed to both become literate and be

given vocational guidance, and the latter increasingly became embedded into the

educational system (Schwebel, 1984).

After the Great Depression, a good percentage of the legislation passed during

President Roosevelt's New Deal was an acknowledgment of both massive unemployment

and the growing power of labor unions. In 1933, The Civilian Conservation Corps

(CCC) was founded to train unemployed young people, and then find jobs for them. The

CCC's educational services were administered by the United States Department of

Education. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was established in 1935 as an

employment resource for the millions of people who were without work (Borow, 1974).

Stage 3: 1940 – 1959. As a result of the social changes caused by the Second

World War, career counseling's focus shifted to higher education, and counselor training.

President Harry Truman's Fair Deal was designed to respond to the dislocation of

millions of wage earners by returning war veterans.

The USSR's successful launch of Sputnik in 1957 caused yet another upheaval.

The United States believed it was technologically and scientifically superior to all other

nations, so when the Soviet Union beat it into space, congress was forced to address the

country's perceived insufficiencies in education in the sciences and mathematics. The

National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was passed in 1957 in response to this

situation. It included the establishment of the Counseling and Guidance Training

Institutes, chartered to improve the training of counselors charged to identify, and then to

encourage college students majoring in math and science. This was a fertile era in career

counselor training, and nearly 14,000 people were trained by the NDEA Institutes

(Borow, 1974).

Stage 4: 1960 – 1979. The 1960s were the era of idealism. John F. Kennedy's

presidency, the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson, the struggle for civil rights, the War in

Vietnam, and a booming economy helped focus a youthful generation on the possibilities

– as well as the illusions - of American exceptionalism (Sale, 1973). The idea of

meaningful work became a defining goal, and career development became a distinct

subject to be studied.

Young people sought meaningful jobs through which they could improve the world. Borow (1974) stated,

> The mass of young Americans do not disdain the idea of work as a necessary and at least potentially meaningful and rewarding life activity. Their attack is upon the character of available jobs and the overly conforming and depersonalizing conditions under which most individuals must labor. (p. 14)

Federal legislation passed during this time mirrored these hopes. At the beginning of the 1960s, the rate of unemployment was 8.1%; it had not been at that level since the 1930s (Pope, 2000). John Kennedy began his presidency in 1961, and one of his first acts was to appoint a vocational education panel. In 1962, this panel published a report. According to Pope (2000), it said that school counselors were required to understand the working world in all of its complexity, and that this called for people who combined the ability to provide vocational guidance counseling with a background in student personnel services. These recommendations were included in 1963's Vocational Education Act (amended in 1968, and again in 1976).

Additional legislation during this period included: 1961's Area Redevelopment Act, which was designed to encourage new job sources for areas considered economically depressed; 1962's Manpower Development and Training Act, providing help to those who were dislocated due to automation; and 1964's Economic Opportunity Act, which created VISTA, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and the Job Corps (Ehrle, 1969). CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) in 1977 prolonged the lives of the CETA programs, which were begun in order to create jobs.

All this legislation caused career counseling to grow in the non-profit sector, in business, and in government. Government agencies including Lawrence Livermore Labs and the Office of Management and Budget now had big career development departments and sizeable staff, and companies including Pacific Bell and IBM built large career service centers.

Stage 5: 1980 -1989. The 1980s were notable for transitioning from an industrial economy to what became known as "the information age," as well as the growth of outplacement counseling, and independent career guidance.

The late 1970s were a time of economic decline. Transition to the information age created many problems: fewer jobs in heavy industry, expanded need by employers for a technologically skilled workforce, permanent jobs replaced by contract workers, lowered job security, and labor unions becoming marginalized.

The Workforce Report of 2000, which was actually published in 1987, was the policy foundation of career development for George Bush, and then Bill Clinton. The report was important because it asserted that the U.S. workforce would in the future consist largely of racial and ethnic minorities (Johnson & Packer, 1987). This was to be proven correct.

The 1980s were noted for increasing acceptance of an independent career counselor as a person who provided critical services to those in career transition, and counselors began to be credentialed. Outplacement counseling also became popular at this time. Outplacement is utilized when companies are experiencing financial setbacks and need to downsize staff to lower costs and thus increase their profit margins. These

companies contract with outplacement counselors to help their now ex-employees to find other work.

This increasing reliance on technology contributed to the passage of two new laws: 1988's Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act, targeted at helping those who were focused on finding employment in the high-tech sector. Included in this legislation were: skills training, the transition from school to the workforce, and collaborations between businesses and educational institutions. Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act in 1984 improved programs that were aimed at populations that had previously been underserved. These were defined as,

> disadvantaged individuals, handicapped individuals, adults requiring training/retraining, Indians, limited English-proficient students, participants in programs to eliminate sex bias in vocational education, native Hawaiians, single parents/homemakers, criminal offenders, and unemployed or workers threatened by unemployment. (Appling & Irwin, 1988, p. 9)

Stage 6: 1990 – present. This period has been noted for the ubiquitousness of technology in both business and education, career counseling that has been increasingly focused on multiculturalism, and a greater emphasis on the transition from school to the working world.

Starting in the latter part of the 1980s, career counseling expanded in a number of directions. These included: more emphasis on the outplacement of executives over the age of 40; career services targeted at the poor, and homeless; and via federal legislation, services provided directly to agencies and schools.

Senior executives had seldom utilized outplacement in the past, but they were now being downsized and seeking employment at a point in their careers

when they had expected (Pope, 2000). Homeless and poor people were now forced to secure employment due to new laws which included: 1997's WtW (Welfare to Work), 1998's Workforce Initiative Act, Job Training Partnership Act, and Greater Avenues to Independence. WtW proscribed a limit of 5 years for anyone who was a welfare recipient via the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (which had supplanted Aid to Families with Dependent Children). According to Pope (2000), those who were considered "welfare dependent" were required to find employment *before* they were permitted to begin work training. This was known as "work first."

During the next two decades, WtW created a great many employment opportunities for career counselors. However, there was a downside in that no provision was made to have training and assessment serve as a requirement to finding employment. A worker who is better trained is more likely to retain his or her job, so this created problems for career counselors as well as welfare recipients. Lastly, 1993's School to Work Opportunities Act shifted the emphasis of the entire process by concentrating on the transition people need to make when moving from student to worker (Hoyt & Lester, 1994).

The demographics of the American workforce have dramatically altered during the last two decades (Johnson & Packer, 1987), and this has caused career counselors to become more skilled at working with a multicultural workforce (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). The increasing use of technology has expanded counseling services to the Internet and mobile phones, so counseling can now be conducted virtually - and worldwide.

Studies on the Efficacy of Career Development Courses in Higher Education

Career development courses have positively impacted all genders and ethnicities of students. Schmidt (1999) studied a course in career development. It covered: the understanding of human nature, educational process, the process of searching for a job, and the process of searching for a career. Working with Cal State University in Long Beach, California, Schmidt conducted a follow-up study of students enrolled in courses in the fall of 1989, the spring 1990, and the fall of 1990. The research, done in 1993, compared retention rates between those who had – and had not - completed the course. The results were that course participants had a retention rate that was 7.7% higher than non-participants. The disparity was 22.1% for African American students, and 14.1% for those students whose major was undeclared (Schmidt, 1999).

Career courses improve retention rates overall. Folsom and Reardon (2001) examined outcomes for the 544 students who were enrolled in career courses at Florida State University from 1989 to 1990 and 1993 to 1994. Participants' graduation rate was 81% (versus 69% for the general student population), and they graduated with an average of 110 credit hours (versus 132 for the overall student population). Schmidt's (1999) conclusion was that improved rates of graduation and fewer credit hours would have positive implications in regard to overall objectives of the school with regard to retention and the efficiency of credit hours.

In a follow up analysis done a year later, Folsom and Reardon (2001) confined the effects of the career course at Florida State on the outcome variables by both minority and gender. Female participants who had taken the course graduated in 50 months on

average, while non-participants took 61 months on average. Minority participants needed

104 credit hours on average to reach graduation, whereas non-participants required 115

hours. The study shows that a career course can positively impact both gender and

minority groups, supporting a university's objective of having students use their time

efficiently to complete their baccalaureate degrees.

The result of these career courses included: improved GPA, less time needed to

choose a major, and to reach graduation; greater satisfaction in courses taken, and

improved job satisfaction, post-graduation. Of the following studies, 87% of students

reported increased in outcome variables.

In 1979, Gillingham and Lounsbury evaluated a career course, *Humanities 397*, at

Central Michigan University, using an evaluation form that 104 students completed. The

course was developed in response to an on-campus survey in which 33% of students

indicted that they needed help with planning their lives. Eighty-one percent of them

stated that the course either "helped" them or "helped [them] some" in making career

decisions, and 70% said they were now closer to choosing a career.

In 1982, Goodson reported the results of decade long follow up study of

undecided students who had been undecided and then took a career orientation course in

the fall of 1966.   The comparison group consisted of a random sampling of students who

were undecided and did not participate in the class. The results showed that those who

took the course earned their college degrees within 10 years at a significantly higher rate

than those students who did not take the course.   And in 1996, Dodson, Chastain, and

Landrum reported that psychology majors altered the level of postgraduate educational

goals after participating in the course, and became more "planful" regarding graduate school.

The positive effect of career courses is both extensive and incontrovertible, as Folsom and Reardon pointed out in their exhaustive 2001 study, *The Effects of College Career Courses on Learner Outputs and Outcomes.* It discussed 46 reports on the effectiveness of career courses involving over 16,320 students offered at colleges and universities in the U.S. Ninety percent of courses examined reported gains in output variables. Following is a review of the breadth of success of such courses over time.

Haney and Howland in 1978 stressed the significance of having career courses provide academic credit because of the perceived respect and value attributed to such courses. In 1995, Brooks described two career courses offered in the business area at North Carolina State University. She reported that after taking the course, participants: (a) tended to start career planning sooner; (b) had increased self-awareness about their employability; (c) understood the reality of the employment marketplace more quickly; and (d) were evaluated more positively by employers than those who had failed to take the course.

Evidence has shown that while individual counseling is useful, career courses are far more effective in preparing students to enter the workforce. Oliver and Spokane (1988) stated that class or group interventions proved more efficacious than one-to-one counseling. Oliver and Spokane learned that career classes yielded the greatest effect size in relation to client gains that resulted from an various other interventions. Hardesty (1991) administer a meta-analysis of 12 studies evaluating career courses that were

offered for credit.   The results confirmed prior studies regarding positive outcomes of

career classes for undergraduates: 48% of students reported an increase in career

decidedness, and 40% said they were now more capable of making realistic career

decisions. This confirms Babcock and Hoffman's 1976 study, which found that students

in a career class had increased career planning and self-knowledge versus students who

did not participate, as well as Touchton, Werthmeir, Cornfeld, and Harrison's 1977

results: they learned that the career course they studied increased students' ability to deal

with cognitive complexity.

Brown and Krane (2000), in their review of a series of meta-analyses, found

effective career courses have five elements in common. They (a) allow participants to

define in writing both career and life goals; (b) provide them with customized

interpretation and feedback; (c) dispense up to date information about both the rewards

and risks various career fields and vocations; (d) embed interaction with mentors and

models who are able to exhibit career appropriate behavior; and (e) assist in helping to

create networks of career support.

Gimmestad said in 1984 that career courses provide for the efficient utilization of

staff, and the delivery of services.   And when the courses offer credit, the institution

invariably benefits because the formulae for funding based on generating credit hours are

in common usage.

Lent, Larkin, and Hasegawa (1986) stated that efficient delivery of services to a

large number of students is one great advantage of these types of courses.   Additionally,

the increased interest in career development coursework has gone global: Open

University introduced an optional university-wide career development for-credit module. In 1996, Peng described the positive impact on career decision-making of a career course for business students in Taiwan (Folsom & Reardon, 2001).

Results of a study of women students performed by Babcock and Kaufman in 1976 showed a career course to be more useful in facilitating vocational development among students than was individual counseling. Two years later, Evans and Rector (1978) conducted a similar study that was not gender-specific, and they also found that the career course they studied proved effective in impacting "vocational decidedness" of students who completed it.

Also in 1978, Ganster and Lovell found that a career development seminar they studied increased the "career maturity" of the students who participated in it. That same year, Bartsch and Hackett (1978) studied college students who took a two-credit course entitled *Effective Personal and Career Decision Making*. A primary finding of the study was these students "altered their locus-of-control beliefs toward greater internality" (Bartsch & Hackett, 1978, p. 234). It is believed that this leads to greater responsibility with regard to making career decisions. Finally, a study conducted by Williamson in 1979 discovered that those who completed a career class demonstrated increased levels of decision-making in choosing a future occupation, than those who did not (as cited in Folsom & Reardon, 2001).

The efficacy of career courses has been proven in a variety of academic disciplines. In 1985, Ware conducted a study of a career class for psychology majors. Results showed that the class was apparently effective in increasing self knowledge and

career maturity among the participants. Barker (1981) conducted another study that same year, evaluating the effectiveness of a career decision-making course developed by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory's Division of Career Guidance. Results showed that in comparison to the control groups, the course positively impacted the experimental groups in terms of improved ability to both select a major, to make career decisions, and the overall efficacy of the class.

Also in 1981, Johnson, Smither, and Holland studied two career classes at Johns Hopkins in order to determine the most effective types of intervention. They learned that the classes strongly improved the "vocational identity" of those students who participated. Two years later, Stonewater and Daniels (1983) described *Guidance 100*, a class at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. This class had been created for the purpose of to empowering students in planning their careers, and the authors learned that these students greatly improved their cognitive development as a result of their participation in the class.

In 1983, Rayman, Bernard, Holland, and Barnett reported on the impact of a career class on college students who were undecided about their career choice. Findings showed that participation in this course improved the students' "vocational identity." One year later, Remer, O'Neill, and Gohs (1984) studied the results of a career class. Those students who participated became more definite about their "vocational identity" and choice of career choices, and showed an improvement in their overall ability to make decisions about their careers. In 1985, Carver and Smart discussed students in a career class, and reported that the class their level of indecision about their careers. Ware also

conducted a study in 1985. It measured the results of a career course on upper level psychology majors. Findings indicated that the course was improving their "vocational identity" while addressing students' need for information about career options. That same year, Lent, Schmidt, and Larkin (1985) described the effects science and technology career class designed for returning adult learners at the University of Minnesota.   Their findings indicated that the class positively impacted students in the following areas: seeking information about career options during non-class times, general knowledge about careers, and an improvement in their ability to make choices about their career. The study recommended that these types of courses would be relevant in other disciplines, including: business, the arts, and social services.

A year later, Broley (1986, as cited in Folsom & Reardon, 2001) evaluated the impact that a career class had on female undergraduates' locus of control. Twenty-two students in the career class were studied, and their results were compared with another 22 women who took a psychology class that did not include any career content. Findings showed that the women who participated in the career class had measurably greater improvement in their locus of control versus those who took the psychology class.

Also in 1986, Davis and Horne conducted a study and found that that though career classes can have virtually the same impact as small group counseling on students' ability to make career decisions, the classes were more cost effective. That same year, Lent et al. (1986) conducted a study of engineering and science students, and found that those who had participated in a career class had lowered indecision with regard to career than those in a control group.

In 1987, Bash tested a group of students in a career class in order to gauge what affect it had on their vocational identities (as cited in Folsom & Reardon, 2001). Results post-test showed that students' vocational identity improved, and that both satisfaction and decidedness about career choices showed the greatest increase among those who had the poorest vocational identity during pretest. It was recommended that a career class would have the greatest impact on this group of students.

In 1988, Montolio reported that students who took a career class had a markedly improved score when "vocational identity" was measured, and that their ability to adjust to college was also improved (as cited in Folsom & Reardon, 2001). The following year, in 1989, Quinn and Lewis described efforts to embed career training into a course in organizational behavior and personnel for upper division students in business. Results showed an improvement in career decidedness among the participants, and recommended that career counselors consult with faculty to integrate career training into the traditional curriculum.

Moving into the 1990s, Garis and Niles (1990) studied 112 students at the University of Virginia and Penn State who were enrolled in career classes. Participants produced better results at both schools, compared to students in a control group, which led the authors to conclude that career classes proved very effective in impacting measures of career output.

Lisansky's study that same year in 1990 evaluated the impact of a career planning class on undecided college freshmen, in terms of both their career decidedness and the style of their cognitive decision making (as cited in Folsom & Reardon, 2001).

Participants had a less dependent/more rational style of decision making, and improved

decidedness in regard to career choices.

In 1991, Oreshnick described the findings of a career class study (as cited in

Folsom & Reardon, 2001). Participants tested for improved decision making with respect

to their career choices (Folsom & Reardon, 2001). In 1993, Johnson and Smouse's study

controlled for: GPA, gender, college class, age, and ethnicity. Participating students

enjoyed a marked improvement in clarity and decidedness with respect to career versus

the control group.   Also in 1993, Henry studied the impact of vocational identity on 64

students, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, of three courses offered for credit

in a preparatory dental/medical program. Results indicated both a marked increase in

vocational identity, fewer barriers to career plans, and a reduced need for career

information among the participants.

A study by Robinson in 1995 addressed the impact of a career class on

undergraduate career maturity (as cited in Folsom & Reardon, 2001). Results showed

that the participants had a more positive attitude towards their careers. A year later,

Peng's 1996 study affirmed that students who participated in a career class exhibited

diminished career indecision/increased career certainty (Folsom & Reardon, 2001).

Halasz and Kempton in 2000 compared *Exploring Careers*, a career course, to

two related psychology and communication courses. Career course participants had both

greater certainty with regard to their choice of career, and were more comfortable with

making decisions about their career. The following year, Reed, Reardon, Lenz, and

Leierer (2001) reported their findings on the effect of a career class on thinking about

career that could be considered dysfunctional or negative, including anxiety about

committing to a career choice and confusion regarding decision making. Results showed

that participants reduced their negative thinking with regard to planning for their careers,

and the researchers said that this would lead them to more efficacious problem solving

and decision making in the future.

Best Practice Career Development Courses in Higher Education

The author has found numerous career development courses and course tracks

currently being offered at institutions of higher learning. Following are three programs

notable for offering students broad and in-depth preparation for the working world. The

course descriptions are taken directly from their respective university websites:

1. The Career Center at the University of Notre Dame offers several Career

   Development courses through their Department of Chemical and Biomolecular

   Engineering, College of Arts and Letters, and College of Business. Each is

   custom-designed for the students in their respective schools, and some are

   specific to their year of study (sophomore, junior, etc.):

   Career Choices for Engineers: This seminar series features selected speakers,
   with B.S. degrees in Chemical Engineering, employed in positions having varied
   responsibilities in business enterprises of national and global involvement. The
   presentations and open symposium format facilitate participation and dialogue
   while emphasizing a wide variety of career opportunities for chemical engineering
   graduates. Additionally, the course includes an overview of resume and cover
   letter writing, networking, interviewing, and internship search techniques. This is
   a one credit, satisfactory/unsatisfactory course offered through the Department of
   Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
        Career Development Seminar: This introductory and experiential seminar
   is designed to meet the career development needs of first-year, sophomore, and
   junior students interested in self-assessment, career exploration, career decision-
   making, and conducting an effective internship search. This is a half-semester,

one-credit, satisfactory/unsatisfactory course, offered through the College of Arts and Letters.

Career Planning Strategies and Tactics: This course is designed to provide students with the tools to manage their career throughout their lifetime. It begins with self-assessment and clarifying career goals, continues with implementing job search strategies and tactics, and finally, outlines the transition from student to young professional. This course is designed not only to address the planning process necessary to start the job search, but also incorporates specific assistance in such areas as resume writing, interview preparation, interview skills, and other tactics. This is a one credit, satisfactory/unsatisfactory course offered through the Mendoza College of Business. (University of Notre Dame, 2009, para. 1-3)

2. Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio emphasizes self-knowledge and self-reflection, and treats Career Development as a natural outgrowth of this process. Their courses are a collaboration between the Department of Economics, Accounting and Business Administration, and the Office of Career Development. They were awarded the National Association of Colleges and Employers *2005 Award of Excellence for Educational Programming.* The courses offered are as follows:

Integrating College and Life Options - Know Yourself: Intended to generate an enhanced level of self-awareness related to integrating college and life choices: choosing a major and career path. Students will be challenged to identify their personal skills, goals and objectives and relate them to curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities and possible professional/career alternatives. A review of current economic, professional and societal trends/opportunities will help students become aware of diverse career alternatives. The course will include comprehensive career assessments, corporate research, informational interviewing, resume introduction, life-stages and career cycles, matching careers to majors, goal setting and entrepreneurship.

Exploring and Evaluating Life Options - Know the "World" and Build Your Personal "Brand" and Plan: Designed to help the student reflect upon and refine their professional and personal objectives while gaining vital skills and knowledge that will help them successfully plan for and achieve those objectives upon graduation and throughout their lives. Students will engage in activities and personally relevant research designed to expand their knowledge of available

opportunities and personal/professional success factors for those opportunities, while continuing to relate them to curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities. They will also develop a better awareness of their personal strengths and weaknesses as they relate to their desired futures and refine or develop plans for pursuing their desired careers and/or courses of graduate study. The course will include refining resume portfolios, examining corporate culture, career planning and alternatives, career field analysis, personal SWOT and gap analysis, personal "brand" and marketing, and identifying transferable skills.

      Pursuing Personal Life/Career Plans - Sell Your Brand and Execute Your Plan: Created to help students prepare for and accomplish a successful transition from college to graduate study or a professional career. Students will be challenged to understand various elements of successful pursuit of an ultimate career, including interviewing, career-related communication and professional presence. Workshops and lectures led by recruiting professionals will provide important applied techniques and theories. Students will integrate those theories and techniques into their own skill/knowledge base and use them to map out strategies for achieving their professional and personal objectives to maximize opportunities and outcomes for their education. The course will include completion of the professional resume portfolio, practice job fair/evaluation, job search strategies, corporate communications, salary/benefit negotiations, etiquette luncheon. (Mount Union College, 2009, para. 1-3)

3. Cosumnes River College in Sacramento, California offers an extensive

    curriculum of for-credit classes that fall under the category of Human/Career

    Development, and are notable because the career life planning begins when

    their students *begin* college:

Building Foundations for Success: Provides success strategies and support services to entry-level students. The strategies and support services are threaded through three critical areas that enhance student success: academic skills, personal life management, and educational navigation. (Cosumnes River College, 2009, para. 3)

Individualized Career Development: Provides an opportunity for those who seek individualized career exploration and decision-making assistance. Students will meet with a counselor to plan a 16-hour combination of lecture/lab activities that may include the following: assessment of skills, interests and values; utilization of Career Center resources; participation in appropriate workshops; connection to community resource network; follow-up meetings with the counselor to develop a career goal and plan. (Cosumnes River College, 2009, para. 6)

Career Exploration: The purpose of this course is to help the entry-level college student gain insight into the career planning process. Topics covered include self assessment of values, skills, and personality factors relevant to life planning. Students will learn how to balance career and personal life when making career decisions, become skilled in the use of career information resources, understand the nature of the changing labor market, and when appropriate, acquire job hunting skills. (Cosumnes River College, 2009, para. 7)

Career Re-Alignment: This is a course in advanced career planning for students who are re-careering, re-engineering, or are in career transition. Building on the concepts of career exploration, students will survey and analyze labor market trends and transition situations, and establish successful strategies for conducting job searches in a rapidly evolving employment scene. Students will learn the concept of career resiliency. (Cosumnes River College, 2009, para. 12)

Job Search Portfolio Development: Designed to assist students to develop successful job search strategies. Students in this course will develop a job search/career portfolio. This will include formulating job task samples, resume and cover letter construction, letters of recommendation, and employment applications. Exposure to competitive techniques will include individual interviews on video tape. (Cosumnes River College, 2009, para. 14)

Managing Your Internship: Designed to provide students with effective internship development skills that will assist in obtaining and keeping an internship in the student's major area. Course content will include understanding the application of education to the workforce, the responsibilities of an internship, construction of an internship, evaluating an internship site, marketing skills and maximizing the internship experience. (Cosumnes River College, 2009, para. 15)

Career and Workforce Skills: Provides students with opportunities to develop or add marketable skills in preparation for employment, and assists students in learning about the world of work. Course content will include understanding the application of education to the workforce and developing workplace (soft) skills identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Competencies as well as by local employers. (Cosumnes River College, 2009, para. 16)

Work/Life Management: Explores planning for personal work/life management. Includes training in life problem-solving with relationship to personal, educational, and workplace productivity. Topics include: exploration of one's own values, interests and abilities; stress reduction, wellness, and leisure; building family and social support; and educational and career management. The course

will provide activities which will assist students with decision-making, goal setting, and learning to use tools for dealing with change. (Cosumnes River College, 2009, para. 19)

Results Common to Successful Career Development Courses

 Following is a list of the outcomes of career programs:

1. Positively impacted all genders and ethnicities of students;

2. Increased retention rates;

3. Increased credit hour efficiency;

4. Greater job satisfaction;

5. Improved chances for selecting a major;

6. Greater course satisfaction;

7. Decreased time to graduation;

8. Improved GPAs;

9. Helped in making decisions about graduate schools and careers;

10. Students began career planning earlier, increased employability self-awareness and career maturity, understood realities of the job market more quickly, evaluated more positively by employers;

11. More effective and more cost effective than individual counseling in preparing students for the workforce;

12. Provided current information on the risks and rewards of career fields;

13. Provided mentors;

14. Helped develop support networks;

15. Increased levels of vocational identity; and

16. Improved adjustment to college.

The Theoretical Model

The relevant theory providing the framework of this study is experiential learning, the process of creating meaning from direct experience and reflection on *doing*, as opposed to rote (or didactic) learning. In didactic learning, the educator's role is to give information to the student; the transmission of information is the goal.

Experiential learning, on the other hand, has been defined as "education that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life" (Houle, 1980, as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 221). It focuses on making discoveries with firsthand knowledge, instead of hearing or reading about the experiences of others.

David A. Kolb helped popularize experiential learning. He said that knowledge is gained through both personal and environmental experience, and that in order to absorb knowledge from an experience, the student must: be willing to be actively involved in the experience, be able to reflect on the experience, possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize the experience, and possess decision-making and problem-solving skills in order to be able to use the ideas gained from the experience (Kolb, as cited in Smith, 2001). Experience, then, becomes the "living textbook" to which the student can refer and draw on throughout his or her life.

Experiential learning is about creating experiences where learning can be facilitated. The role of the experiential educator/facilitator is to organize experiences for the student that lead to meaningful and *long-lasting* learning, and the key to success lies

in how this learning process is facilitated. An effective experiential facilitator is able to immerse participants in the learning environment, stimulating their imagination and allowing students to gain new knowledge from both their peers and the environment.

Kolb (as cited in Smith, 2001) also cautioned that experiential learning can be problematic, as meanings may be misapplied. Without continuity and interaction, experience may actually distort educational growth and disable an otherwise capable learner. To mitigate for this, the author of this paper advocates for career development coursework to be integrated throughout the *entirety* of a student's higher education, reinforcing what is being learned and creating *practices* that can alter perception and behavior, and then utilized for the rest of one's life.

Experiential learning requires self-initiative and self-evaluation on the part of the learner. To be truly effective, it should employ the whole learning wheel, from goal setting, to experimenting and observing, to reviewing, and finally to action planning. This complete process allows the student to learn new skills, new attitudes, and even entirely new ways of thinking.

Carl Rogers (1969; Rogers & Freiberg, 1994) distinguished cognitive learning from experiential learning. He felt the former corresponds to academic knowledge, like learning multiplication tables. Experiential learning, on the other hand, refers to applied knowledge that addresses the needs and wants of the learner. Rogers listed the qualities of experiential learning as: personal involvement, self-initiated, evaluated by, and having pervasive effects on the learner.

Rogers' theory of learning evolved as part of the humanistic education movement (Patterson, 1973; Valett, 1977). To him, experiential learning was equivalent to personal growth. He felt that all human beings have a natural propensity to learn, and that the role of the teacher is to facilitate that learning. For example, someone who realized they were interested in a career in finance (as are many of the author's students) - and encouraged in that direction - might seek out books, classes and/or mentors on economics, investments, great financiers, banking, etc. This student would learn and perceive any information provided on the subject in a very different fashion than someone who was assigned required reading. He believed that significant learning takes place when the subject matter is relevant to the personal interests of the student, and that experiential learning is the most lasting and pervasive type of learning. Career development coursework is enormously relevant to the needs of students, and in the author's model, it is taught experientially.

Summary

There is overwhelming evidence that career courses have a positive impact on the cognitive functioning of students. These courses also have a positive impact on student outcomes, including satisfaction with career courses, and increased retention in college. Career development courses positively affect desired career development objectives. In addition, comprehensive career courses offered for academic credit represent a cost-effective intervention. Career courses can be a unique intervention in that participants actually *pay* for the service *before* receiving it. Assuming a fee of $100 per credit hour, a 3-hour course enrolling 30 students would generate $9,000 in tuition. The amount of

money generated by a course could be even higher if there were matching funds provided

from other sources.   Few other career interventions are likely to have the potential for

generating such income.

Institutions of higher learning must address the needs of the employment

marketplace, both to properly prepare their students for it, and in order to remain

competitive. The author has worked with hundreds of students at 12 colleges and

universities, and has found that their focus is increasingly on enrolling in programs that

offer a practical education that will lead to employment.

Over 30 years of studies have proven the efficacy of career development courses

and programs, and the trend is towards increasing the breadth of this work to include self-

awareness, self-reflection, and personal branding to empower students to transition to the

next phase of their lives. As the description of the MBA Career Course at The University

of the Pacific (2009) states:

> You are encouraged to remember that your ultimate "grade" will be reflected in
> your short and long term success in launching and achieving a rewarding and
> successful career. Such success cannot be defined by a grade in a career course
> but in your personal commitment to being the best you can be in the career you
> choose to pursue, and using the knowledge and insights you gain in this course to
> propel your career forward. (para. 7)

However, career courses and/or occasional meetings with a career counselor alone

are now insufficient. Our students must be trained over time for a freelance workplace.

In order to continue to find work, they must learn the habits they will need in order to

market their own brands. This study has surveyed employers, recent graduates, and

career counselors, who have advocated for integrating this coursework into the general

curriculum.

Chapter Three – Methodology

Introduction

Rossett (1999) said that the purpose of analysis is to "identify needs and define solutions" (p. 142). This analysis has taken the form of descriptive research, specifically a survey. Descriptive research is designed to "describe, rather than explain a set of conditions, characteristics, or attributes of people in a population based on measurement of a sample" (Alreck & Settle, 1995, p. 408). Isaac and Michael (1981) said that descriptive research is frequently used to describe existing phenomena, identify problems, or justify current conditions and practices. According to Babbie (1990), descriptive research "is probably the best method available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly" (p. 257).

According to both Tuckman (1999) and Cohen and Manion (1989), survey research is a regularly used descriptive method in educational research. Fink (1995) defined a survey as "a system for collecting information to describe, compare, or explain knowledge, attitudes, and behavior" (p. 1) Survey research was considered by Babbie (1990) to be the most appropriate method of data collection for the purpose of describing a population, and Tuckman (1999) believed that when a survey was properly constructed and accurately designed, it could be used to great advantage.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Analysis

In the quantitative mode, which is deductive, variables can be identified, and

relationships measured. This mode is predictive in nature, analyzes components and reduces the data collected to numerical indices.

The author has instead chosen qualitative research as the appropriate mode for this study. In this type of inquiry, the qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Here, data are mediated through this human instrument rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines. The qualitative mode is inductive, allowing for contextualization and an understanding of perspectives, with the researcher becoming an instrument in the search for patterns.

Sample

This study has utilized an investigative approach, administered in the form of an open-ended survey conducted via www.SurveyMonkey.com. The target group consisted of 10 people each from the three groups currently most impacted by career development training in higher education, the same people who stand to gain the most from a transformation of the status quo:

1. College graduates who earned their degrees within the last 2 years and took a career course and/or met with a career counselor prior to graduation. The author has taught at 12 different institutions of higher learning, and the subjects, all of whom are the author's colleagues, were chosen from these schools. They include:

   (a) An M.B.A. graduate with a concentration in marketing from Pepperdine University's Graziadio School of Business and Management. The author served as this man's career counselor during his graduate studies, and

continues to mentor him in his current role as a principal of a new brand

strategy consultancy company.

(b) A recent graduate (Class of 2009) of Pepperdine University's School of

Business who currently works in its development department while pursuing

her M.B.A. degree.

(c) An MDR/MBA graduate of Pepperdine University who has received career

counseling from the author.

(d) A woman who dropped out of Pepperdine's MBA program to accept a job

in feature film finance, after having worked for many years in the non-profit

world.

(e) A former student of the author's (in a management course) who is now the

lead instructor at a fashion institute and is planning to transition to a competing

school.

(f) A recent M.B.A. graduate with 15 years' experience as an engineer who

wants to transition into a management role.

2. Career counselors who are colleagues with whom the author has worked.

These include:

(a) Two career counselors who are employed by the State University of New

York.

(b) The Director of Career Services at The Art Institute of California –

Hollywood, where the author teaches a course in career development.

(c) The International Career Counselor at the Graziadio School of Business and Management at Pepperdine University. The author worked with this man, who served in career development for the State University of New York prior to joining the staff of Pepperdine.

(d) A career counselor at the Graziadio School of Business and Management at Pepperdine University. The author also worked with this man, who is pursuing his Ph.D. in counseling while consulting to Fortune 500 companies, including Google, on human resource issues.

(e) A Certified Job and Career Transition Coach and Certified Career Management Coach who is also an author of a book about choosing and using headhunters. This subject has been a colleague of the author's for over 15 years.

(f) The CEO of a company that recruits for senior management positions, corporate boards, and offers human resources support services tailored to staffing needs. Her company specializes in the entertainment, digital media, and wireless/mobile industries. She has been an executive recruiter for 17 years.

(g) The Assistant Director of Career Services at Pepperdine University's School of Education and Psychology, and the individual that the author has worked with most closely in the past few years as a career coach in his own career.

(h) A Human Resource Business Partner at Disneyland Resort. This woman

was also a member of the author's doctoral cohort.

(i) A senior executive with one of the top 20 executive search firms in the

United States. This woman has executed senior-level executive and CEO

searches for The Walt Disney Company, HBO, and Yahoo.

(j) The CEO of her own consulting group, who was formerly Executive

Director of Workplace Hollywood, a training and career placement center for

the entertainment industry.

3. Executives with whom the author has worked and who have (or in the past

years, have had) hiring authority. These will include:

(a) The Executive Director of a Community Food Bank in northern California,

which she has led for the past 12 years. The food bank is its county's central

clearinghouse for donated food. It distributed 18.2 million pounds of food in

2009 through a network of 275 member agencies, including food pantries, soup

kitchens, child-care centers, senior centers, and after-school programs, enough

food for 300,000 meals weekly.

(b) The President of Coach Watches, a division of Coach Leatherware. She

has a staff of 12, most of whom are based in New York, while she is based in

Los Angeles. She has been with the company for 12 years, beginning her

career there as a Marketing Assistant. She travels to Asia three times a year, to

Switzerland four times a year, and to New York once a month, so she has to

manage her team remotely, and because of this she brings a unique perspective to our study.

(c) The Vice-President of Business Affairs for its industry's largest mobile media network. The company creates, programs, and delivers multi-platform content and programming for entertainment directly to broadband and mobile platforms. This subject has worked in the entertainment industry for many years, for companies including MGM and NBC Universal.

(d) The COO of a nonprofit company that creates online social networking sites for faith-based organizations. He has held profit and loss responsibility for eight companies, directly managing numerous groups. He was co-founder and chief operating officer of an online company and raised over $32 million in venture capital while growing the business to 175 employees. After only 8 months, the company was selected as one of the "Top 10 Best Companies to Work For" by Interactive Week magazine. During that time the company's retail sales grew 800%—topping out at nearly $24 million annually.

(e) The Director of Corporate Strategic Sourcing (including content production, post production, and digital distribution) at one of the world's largest entertainment media companies. This man has had over 20 years of experience in the motion picture business, having hired hundreds of people for studio production teams at Paramount Pictures. He has also served as a media and entertainment consultant to Hewlett-Packard, and been a guest speaker at in the author's career development courses.

(f) The co-founder and senior partner of a consulting firm that focuses on

leadership, strategy, cultural change, and executive coaching. The firm's

clients include Intel, Cedars-Sinai Health System, Southern California Edison,

CB Richard Ellis, Amgen, and American Express.   He is a guest lecturer at the

Marshall School of Business and the School of Public Policy, Planning, and

Development at the University of Southern California, and co-author of a book

on leadership, representing the culmination of a 10-year study of

approximately 24,000 people in over two dozen corporations.

(g) An executive at an online game company who was a senior motion picture

development executive at several studios, including United Artists, Paramount

Pictures, and 20th Century Fox.

(h) A senior business development, sales, and marketing executive in

entertainment and new media who has worked with Ubisoft, NBC Universal,

and Time Warner.

(i) The executive vice president at one of the world's largest public relations

firms. She has 18 years experience in the field, including 11 in her current

position, and oversees a staff of 50.

(j) The COO of one of the largest cell phone companies in the United States.

Data Coding

The purpose of collecting and then coding data assembled by the researcher is to

gain an understanding of underlying reasons and motivations, uncover prevalent trends in

thought and opinion, and provide insights into the problem. This process generates ideas

and/or hypotheses for later research. Seidel (2008) believed that qualitative data analysis

(QDA) is like a symphony based on three notes: noticing, collecting, and thinking about

interesting things. The QDA process is not linear, but holographic, in that each step in

the process contains the entire process. For example, when the researcher first notices

things, he or she is already mentally collecting and thinking about them.

Noticing means making observations, and writing notes about them. As one

notices patterns in the data, the data is collected, or "coded." These codes then serve as

tools that facilitate discovery and further investigation. Code words can be considered to

be a condensed version of the facts gleaned from the data by the researcher (Seidel &

Kelle, 1995), and thus can be treated as surrogates for the text, and the analysis can focus

on the codes instead of the text itself.

The next step in the process is to collect and sort the data, analogous to working

on a jigsaw puzzle where one starts by sorting the pieces, thus making it easier to solve

the puzzle. When the pieces are identified, the researcher is noticing and "coding" them.

In QDA one doesn't always have a final picture of the puzzle's solution, nor are the

pieces of the puzzle precut; pieces of the puzzle are created as the data is analyzed.

Analysis consists of disassembling the data into pieces, parts, or units. Broken down into

manageable pieces, the researcher sorts and sifts the data, searching for patterns.

Charmaz (1983), who works in the grounded theory tradition, also felt that

disassembling - and reassembling - occurs through the coding process. Codes serve to

sort observations about the data, and coding is the means of categorizing a series of

discrete events and then creating order. The goal is make discoveries about what is being

researched, and then identify patterns.

After the pieces of the puzzle are sorted into groups, the individual pieces are

inspected to determine how they fit together to form the various parts of the picture. In a

QDA, one compares and contrasts each of the things he or she has noticed in order to

discover similarities and differences and find patterns. The aim of the entire process is to

assemble the data in a meaningful fashion (Jorgenson, 1989).

Data Collection

The author chose the subjects, set a deadline for their responses, and correlated

the data received. The subjects included the author's colleagues, or people referred to

him by his colleagues. Each subject was initially telephoned by the author, who

explained the purpose of the survey, and then asked the subject to participate. If the

subject agreed, they were directed to the study on www.SurveyMonkey.com. Use of

SurveyMonkey ensured that the identities of all participants were confidential.

Once a subject agreed to participate, the invitation to participate in the survey

stated:

Dear (NAME OF SUBJECT):

I am pursuing a doctoral degree in education at Pepperdine University, and
am in the final stages of completing my dissertation on the subject of
career development. As we discussed on the phone, you have agreed to
participate in a short survey. Please visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/austin to
provide your answers. Note that the survey has been structured so that you will
be able to add comments to some of your answers, if you choose to do so. As
your participation is entirely voluntary, I thank you in advance for your
cooperation. I would appreciate it if fill out your survey responses within one
week.

Research Questions

Consistent with Alreck and Settle (1995) and Wiersma (1999), these questions were designed to be brief, clear, and concise. The research questions addressed in this study are detailed in Table 1 and the Appendix, but briefly they cover the following three areas:

1. According to experts in higher education job preparation, are university students prepared for the workforce?

2. What specific recommendations are made that would improve students' readiness for the workforce, according to higher education employment experts?

3. As a result of the study, what is the model for integrating career development coursework into a college curriculum?

All respondents were given space to elaborate on their responses to selected questions.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instrument

Content validity was performed on the instrument created by the author using a three-member panel of those familiar with the subject, to modify the survey questions, if necessary. Choices were as follows: (a) keep the question as stated, (b) revise the question, or (c) delete the question.

Table 1

Research Questions

Research Question	Question in Survey	How statistically found
Job category	What type of work do you do?	All respondents
Preparation	Do you feel that college students are properly prepared for the workforce?	Executives and counselors
Recommend ations	What recommendations do you have that would improve students' readiness for the workforce?	All respondents
Preparation	Name and describe the career preparation your received during college (counseling and/or coursework)	All respondents
Preparation	To what extent do you feel you were prepared for your current position? (very, somewhat, poorly, not at all)	All respondents
Preparation	What are the major areas in which you feel you were *not* prepared for your current position?	Recent college graduates
Reflection	If you could do it over again, what training would you have wanted to receive during college that would have helped you adjust to and excel at your current position?	Recent college graduates
Design	If you were designing a career development program for an undergraduate, what would be its three major elements?	All respondents

Issues Relating to Protection of Human Subjects

This study was designed in accordance with provisions mandated by Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) Manual. An application was submitted to Pepperdine's IRB requesting (a) that this study be classified as exempt research, and (b) a waiver of the informed consent process.

In most research studies, participants provide information that may be considered confidential or personal. In the informed consent process, they must be informed about the degree of confidentiality both during the study and once it has been completed and the results made public, including naming the people and organizations who may have access to the research records. If the researcher's ability to protect any confidential information is limited, the extent of this limitation must also be disclosed at this time. Special attention to confidentiality is necessary when public knowledge of participation is potentially damaging to the participants or their community.

In this study, however, because the participants' identities could not be determined through the survey instrument, there was no chance of public disclosure of their identities either during the study or after the results are published. Federal regulations allow for waiver of consent requirements if the research involves no more than minimal risk and the waiver will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects. The application for exempt research was based on the fact that the study did not present more than a minimal risk to its subjects.

The value of any research depends on the integrity of the study results, which includes the ethical principle of respect for persons, also known as autonomy.

Participants were given a fair, clear explanation of how information about them would be handled. In this study, all information collected was confidential. Data will be stored in a secure manner and not shared inappropriately. The protocol clearly stated who is entitled to see records, both within and outside the project. No lists will be retained identifying those who elected not to participate.

Summary

The author's colleagues in the business world regularly complain that college graduates lack communication skills, do not understand what skills they offer, and have little information about the businesses with which they interview. Higher education has for decades failed to prepare students for the working world. Students take a series of courses and receive degrees, but by the time they graduate, they have no idea how to find a job. Many spend years wandering the workplace without a clear sense of direction. This study and this paper are a response to these chronic problems in the workplace.

Concurring with the author's assertions, which are based on his many years of experience in the field, the results of the survey (a) show the insufficiency of current career development training, and (b) demonstrate the need for a new paradigm for teaching career development skills to college students. This will take the form of a career course curriculum embedded into the standard college curriculum; the survey has helped to refine its structure. While there were only 30 survey respondents, their virtually unanimous agreement clearly supports implementation of the author's program.

Integrating a career development course program into a traditional curriculum will bridge the gulf between what businesses need in their employees, and graduates'

readiness to fill those needs. This program will train students in the practices they will be able to utilize for the rest of their careers. Given practices are developed over time, the program needs to be mandatory, and integrating it into a general curriculum will ensure that this will take place. In the new reality of the working world in the 21st century, by preparing our students for its challenges, we will have done our jobs as educators.

Chapter Four – Results

The goal of this qualitative research study has been to determine the need to alter the manner in which career development is delivered to college students. After many years teaching career development courses and serving as a career counselor, the author asserts that students are not being properly prepared to enter the workforce, and how they are trained needs to be radically overhauled.

To test this, a descriptive study using a purposeful survey was conducted among three groups: college graduates who earned their degrees within the last 2 years, took a career course and/or met with a career counselor prior to graduation; career counselors in higher education; and executives with hiring authority. Ten subjects were chosen from each group. Figure 1 illustrates the breakdown of the subjects.
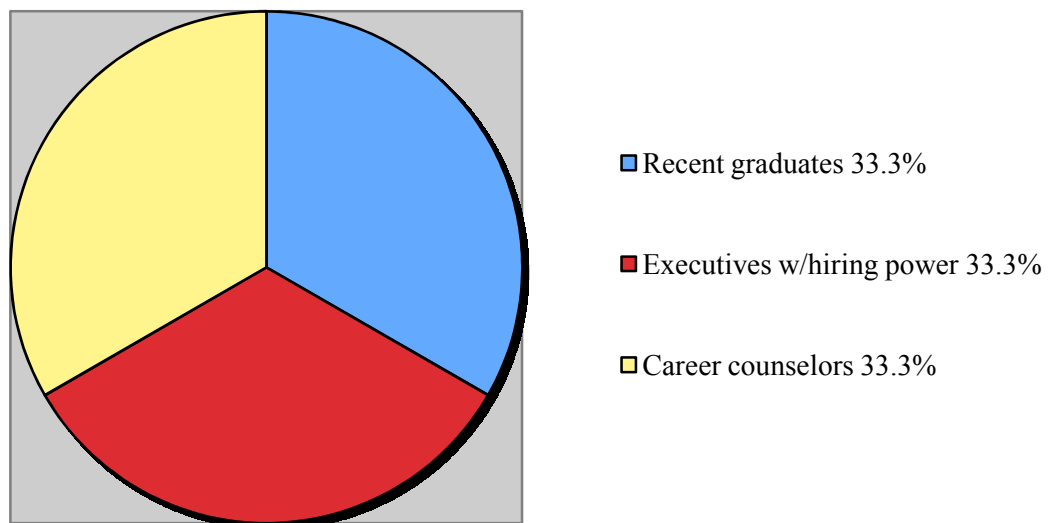

□ Recent graduates 33.3%

■ Executives w/hiring power 33.3%

□ Career counselors 33.3%

Figure 1. Breakdown of subjects.

Survey Results

The survey, administered via www.SurveyMonkey.com, consisted of eight

questions. This chapter contains the analyzed results for each of the survey questions.

As illustrated in Figure 2, of the 30 subjects surveyed in response to question two,

"Do you feel that college students are properly prepared for the workforce?,"80%
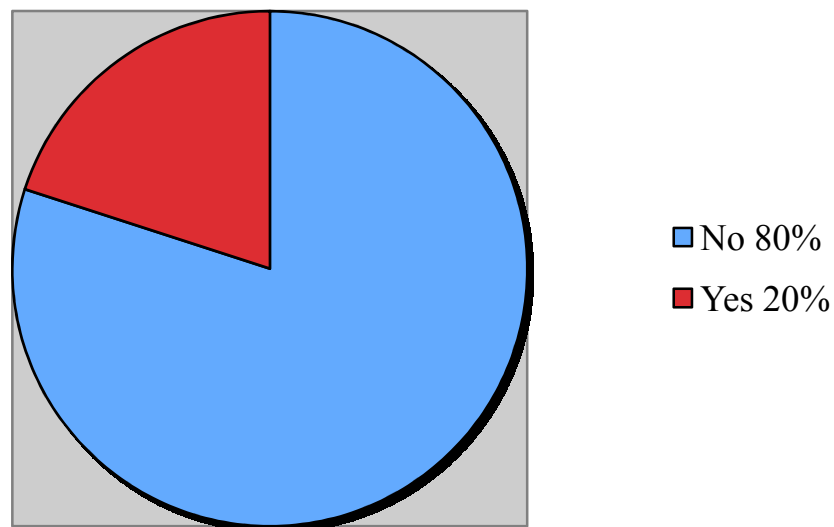
answered no. Only 20% said yes.

Figure 2. Are students properly prepared for the workforce?

Question three asked, "What recommendations do you have that would improve

students' readiness for the workforce?" Seventeen of the thirty subjects (46%) said that

internships should be required (see Figure 3). This response was followed by mandatory

courses (27%) "including career development curriculum within the general education

requirements for each major," as one person put it. Five percent of the subjects

recommended a liberal arts education stressing critical thinking. Other individual

responses suggested: improved written communications, a requirement that career

services be utilized by students, relevant information being supplied to students by career

services, and behavior modification. This last term addresses the Millennials, and

comments included: "Many students have an entitlement mindset and they need to be told

that it is not the case anymore"; "It is all about what you can offer to the company, not

what they can offer you"; "We are training our newer generation to expect instant

gratification through technology"; "[I suggest] more exposure to 'having to work' to earn

something that is wanted or needed"; "Our current way is to 'hold the hands'. Because of

this, many lack the resilience to bounce back after [receiving] an "F", or a family issue."

Internships 46%

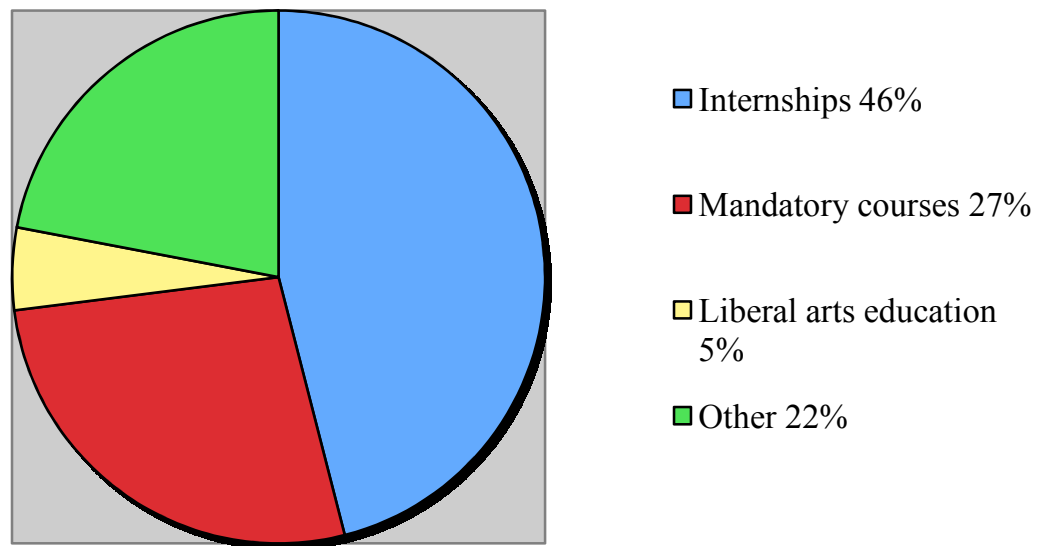Mandatory courses 27%

Liberal arts education 5%

Other 22%

Figure 3. Recommendations to improve students' readiness.

Question four asked, "Name and describe the career preparation you received

during college (counseling and/or coursework)." Survey responses underscored the author's findings that higher education has systemically neglected its students' career preparation needs. Thirty percent of those surveyed stated that they had had none, or very little career preparation during college. Typical responses were: "None. And not for want of trying. I went to the counseling center at my school to figure out what I wanted to do with my degrees after I graduated and was directed to a shelf of books. I was not even sure what to do with the books. No one offered to help me and I did not know I could ask." Another stated, "None. No career center, no coach. Might have been some books on how to put a resume together."

It was clear from the responses that since there was a paucity of formal resources offered, students had to pursue career help on their own initiative. They used a variety of resources, including courses and classes (20%). Interestingly, not all of these were career courses. The courses that helped them create their career direction were: marketing, strategy, management, communication, branding, leadership, and psychology.

The next most popular form of career preparation was a category that the author will call on-the-job training, which includes: volunteer opportunities, field work, work-study, and internships. Seventeen percent of the subjects found this the most useful form of career preparation. One subject said, "I was working and going to school at the same time, so I was able to apply what I learned in school in my work environment. How I applied my learning, not my degree, is what allowed me to be promoted."

Fourteen percent cited resume preparation. Unfortunately, the comment, "I only got help with my resume and cover letter. Nothing else was explained to me." was typical. Eight percent answered on-campus interviews and/or job fairs and 7% named counseling with a career advisor as being most useful to them (Figure 4).
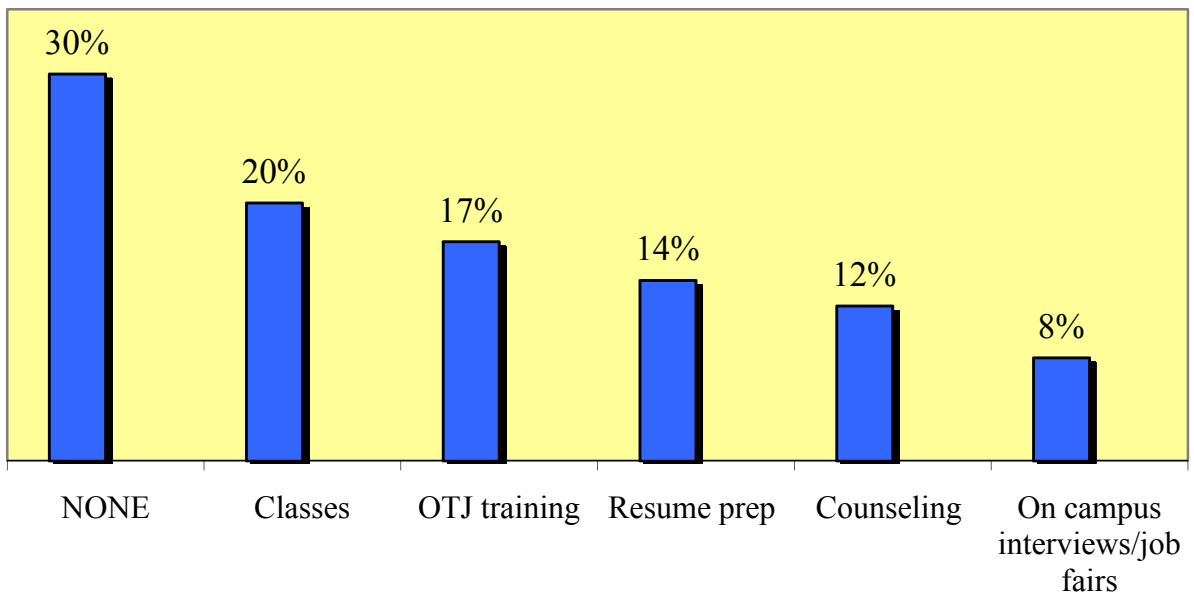

Figure 4. Career preparation received by subjects.

Question five asked, "To what extent do you feel you were prepared for your current (or most recent) position?" Twenty-five percent said they were "very prepared," 55% were "somewhat prepared," 10% were "poorly prepared," and 10% said they were "not prepared at all" (see Figure 5).
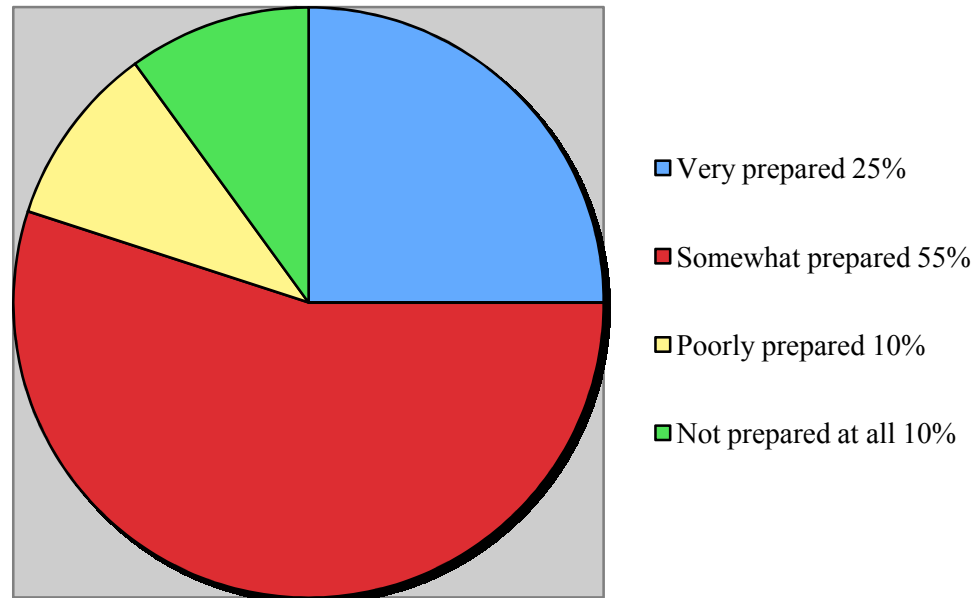
Figure 5. Extent of preparation received by subjects.

Question six asked, "What are the major areas in which you feel you were NOT prepared for your current (or most recent) position?" As illustrated in Figure 6, only 9% of the respondents said that college had prepared them for the workplace, whereas an overwhelming 65% stated that they simply were not prepared with a general, practical knowledge of how the workplace operates.

Specific areas of omission of preparation included the following, as per responses provided by some of the participants: "I would have liked more training about specific industries and more hands-on career counseling tools (how to write a resume/cover letter, interview, network)"; "The pace of learning, application, and expectations of the real world of work -- *every week is finals week*"; "Working in teams"; "Learning how to

manage client expectations, respond to their insane demands, and how to handle

mistakes, screw-ups, and overall mess ups"; "Negotiation skills"; "Understanding the

political landscape"; "Maintaining my core values in the face of intense pressure"; "How

to handle hostile work environments"; "Salary negotiation"; "Understanding corporate

politics"; "Business fundamentals"; "I was not fully prepared for the low pay and the

competitiveness"; "Corporate culture"; "College did not give me practical applications to

what I was experiencing at work"; "College gave me theory, tools and things to consider,

but it required my initiative to try them at work that was most helpful"; "If I had received

more accurate (honest) information about the employment environment, it would have

been helpful"; "How much extra hard work is involved to become successful"; "School

for me was strictly academics"; "All classes were focused on graduation requirements";

"I was working while in high school, so everything I learned was on the job"; "Theory is

great, but that is not what is really happening in the workplace"; "Students should also be

warned about the politics/issues that they will encounter as an employee and how to

control them"; and "Company etiquette".

Other areas in which the subjects felt they were not prepared included:

- Lack of sufficient technology training (9%).

- Self-knowledge (4%):

  Learning that choosing a career direction involves considerable self-knowledge and investigation. That a career should be based on what you do well and enjoy, not just on choosing something in the subjects you excel at. I think that many 21/22 year olds have not had the independence and life experience to really know what they want to do.

- Lack of training on how to network (4%).

- No support (4%):

  No support from college. Preparation for my field was learned independently through trial-and-error and self-study.

- No mock interviews (3%):

  Had never engaged in a mock interview -- ever. Now, one of my job functions is to run mock interview workshops for college students. At first, when I began running the mock interview workshops, I felt like it was the blind leading the blind.
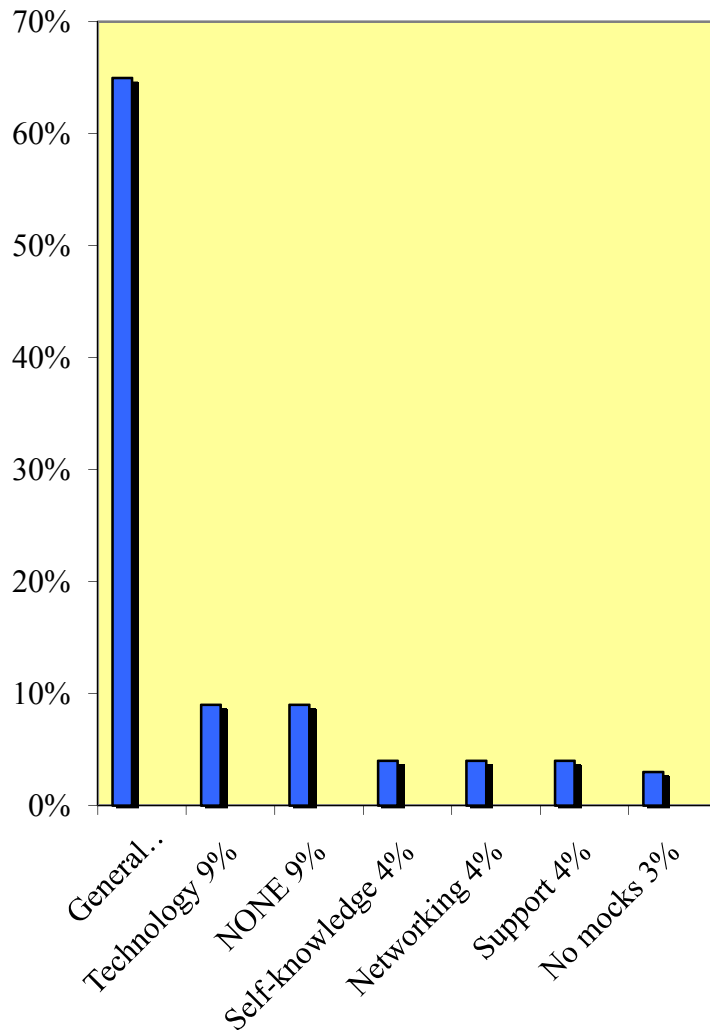

Figure 6.   Areas in which subjects were not prepared.

Question seven asked, "If you could do it over again, what training would you have wanted to receive during college that would have helped you adjust to and excel at your current (or most recent) position?" As this question was open ended and allowed the subjects to provide an unlimited number of suggestions, there were a dozen categories, as shown in Figure 7. The leading category was one the author will call "Readiness for the Workplace" (20%).

Specific ideas and responses related to Readiness for the Workplace included: "Specific information on 'What can I do with a major in _____?"; "Every student should be required to go through a career readiness class that covers career development basics on exploration, preparation, and networking/finding the job"; "More training in actual organizations"; "Real world type simulation"; "Training that puts you on the spot on a tough but safe environment"; "More time in real-life situations practicing the skills I use so I could ask more questions of the instructors"; "Researching companies and talking to key people within the organization"; "Someone to really help me drill down re[garding] my passions and interests"; "Skills and interests testing, followed by career potentials analysis"; "Instruction on networking to get information and connections before unilaterally deciding a major and career"; "Training on business practice, business management, legals, and paperwork, resume and career analysis and a list and real life examples of career options"; "More hands-on real world experiences"; "Dedicate one semester to job transition skills, interview techniques and job research tools"; "Ways to network in my field of study"; "Basic job searching skills"; "What is expected when on

the job (attitude, work ethic, hours, friends)"; "How to perform if you want to get out of

the intro position and into a higher position"; "Most students want to be at the top and

don't understand how important it is to learn from the bottom"; "More information about

career preparation"; and "Job search strategies".

Fourteen percent of the respondents cited what the author will call "Improved

Perspective," a contextual overview of what would be awaiting them in the working

world. Subjects described this as: "Not training but the perspective that acknowledged

learning and the growth process I would go through after college to discover my

passions"; "It would have been helpful to have an internship coordinator that sat you

down and said, 'Here are some options where most students go with their degrees, pick

one and explore these'...'here are some factors you may want to consider'"; "A greater

focus on preparing for failure"; "It happens to everyone and knowing how to best deal

with it would give people a greater sense of how to 'dust off, re-group, and move

forward'"; "Self-analysis"; and "How to handle hostile work environments."

One subject cited the youthfulness of college students and whether they were old

enough to enter the workforce. This person said,

> Realistically, if it were given to me, I am not sure if I would have listened or paid
> attention. Which is the same problem with students today, those that see the
> relevance, pay attention and appreciate it. Those that don't see an immediate
> relevance, don't.

Twelve percent of the subjects named networking as what they would have

wanted to learn and done more of, if they had to do it over again. Examples of responses

included: "I would receive more counseling from career center and talk to more people

who have lots of experience as well as do more networking activities"; and "Alumni, corporate and community partnerships should be developed and maintained with the university to see the success of a graduate to fruition in their area of study/profession."

The remaining suggestions included:

- Internships and/or job shadowing (10%): "Internship, job shadowing for exploration, more exposure to the many ways I could use my knowledge/degree"; and "Definitely hands-on training in a few areas so that I can get a good feel for at least 3 areas of which I was interested in getting into."

- Mentoring (7%): "More hands on activities in the classroom such as interaction with business professionals, and learning from their experiences at their workplaces"; "We did not have that many guest speakers during my school years"; and "Mentorship at an earlier stage".

- Financial management, including salary negotiation (7%): "Better and earlier understanding of financial management issues."

- Interview preparation (5%).

- Workshops on resume writing (5%).

- Courses (5%): "Fewer courses like philosophy and ethics, which were so high level as to not be very practical, more courses like business communications and practical economics that I use to this day"; "A business course"; and "I would have taken more marketing classes."

Categories cited by 4% of the respondents included:

- Curriculum: "An entire career coaching and career management curriculum and degree program," and "Personal Branding."

- Global Business: "I would have liked more global business courses. Also cultural business trips to understand how other countries do business."

- Testing: "The most important thing I could have received was a skills and interest assessment (ala Campbell's) so I could pursue something that would be fulfilling and not have to wait 30 years to get there."

And finally, question eight asked, "If you were designing a career development program for an undergraduate student, what would be its three major elements?" While not all subjects offered suggestions, those who did (80%) offered a myriad of options, which the author has broken down into 12 general categories: (a) Field Experience (internships, field training, community service, practica) was cited by 22% of the respondents; (b) Personal Development/Coping Skills (19%); (c) Networking and Job Search Techniques (14%); (d) Developing written marketing materials (resumes, cover letters, thank-you letters, a LinkedIn profile; 10%); (e) Counseling (8%); (f) Mentoring (6%); (g) Coursework (6%); (h) Financial literacy and negotiating skills (5%); (i) Selling/ Branding yourself (3%); (j) Corporate culture and politics (3%); (k) Assessment testing (2%); and (l) Informational interviews (2%).
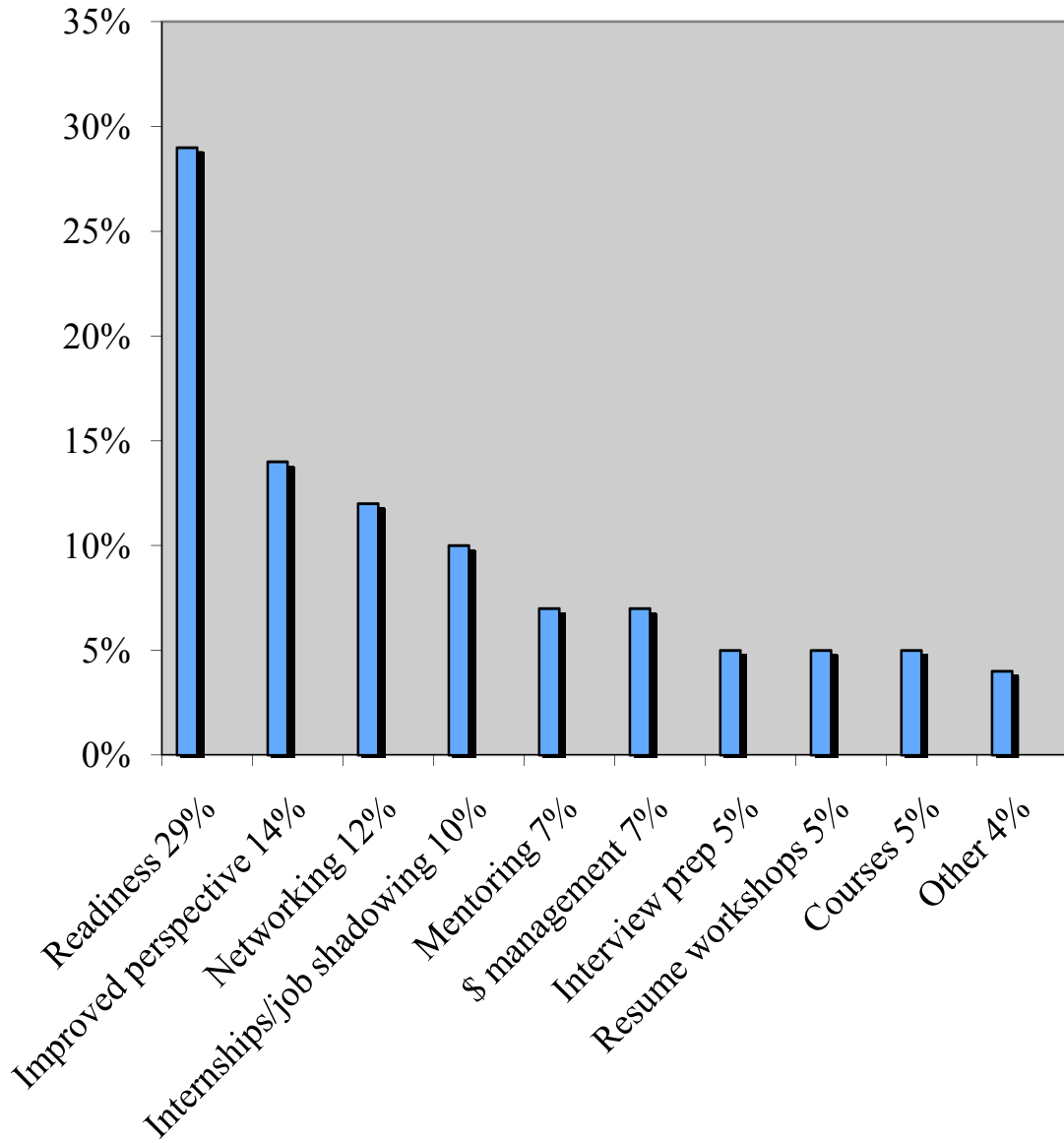
Figure 7. If I had it to do over again.

Additional Comments from Subjects

Field experience. Comments relative to this category included: "Provide resources to identify internships & stipends so all students could afford summer

internships"; "Actually having students volunteer/intern for perhaps for 10 weeks of a 12 week semester"; "Education in and outside the classroom to build competencies. This would necessarily include practical application (which gives exposure)"; "I went to a university that required all of us to serve in the community every year thus allowing us to build/hone skills, redirect, and create a network and references for future work"; "Mandatory internships for all students"; "In the field practicum"; "Observation of actual workplaces"; "What working in an office/your potential place of work is really like"; "Visits/shadow programs/internships - short and long to get a real feel of different industries/environments"; "Required internships, required project for a company, field trips"; "Internship/volunteer work"; "Learning at professional work setting"; "Reality check - what working in an office/your potential place of work is really like"; and "Internship involvement to provide actual experience in the chosen field of interest."

Personal development/coping skills. This category included the following ideas, as quoted from participants' responses: "Identification of an industry and job function they want to find employment in"; "Coping skills": "How to manage oneself in the market today"; "Ways of marketing oneself and networking (dealing realistically with one's skill set and finding jobs accordingly to build a career effectively"; "Personality, how you change over time"; "Values vs. ability to do things"; "Planning, preparation, execution"; "Planning your career advancement stages with room for flexibility (failure is not the end, it's an opportunity to rise up); "How to merge creative thinking with hard-nosed numbers/facts"; "Motivation"; "Interpersonal skills and passion/focus development"; "Time spent really exploring the myriad of career choices within student's

area(s) of interest"; "Questionnaire of what they are good at and what they need help in to excel, someone to check on their progress, advice on how to get there"; "Communication (email etiquette, phone etiquette)"; "Instruction on networking for information before jobs"; "Helping students: find their job passion (for right now), understand the world of work in their field, evaluate the elements of a job offer, and beginning their employ in a meaningful way (it's not watching for the clock to strike 5 p.m. and tweeting all day about how boring the meeting is!)"; and "Understanding with respect to human resource management and leadership."

Networking and job search techniques. Examples provided from the respondents included: "Meeting with executives and interviewers and listening to exactly what they look for in hiring someone"; "Job-search and networking training, role-playing exercises, etc."; "I know a number of instances where undergraduates successfully secure - and excel - in internships that result in job offers/employment upon graduation. But for many, not only is there a lack of focus and direction, but an inability to effectively use job-search resources"; "Phone screening and interview training, more role-playing exercises, and training in follow-up correspondence"; "Be able to present yourself, network and learn about what social groups to join"; "Help these students connect to specific individuals in their desired fields and track their progress with these executives/experts, not merely giving them websites to use"; "University corporate partnerships with hiring managers (direct contact from university to that manager); "More research of what companies are doing in that field, more engagement with professional associations"; and "I would regularly practice professional networking that

would include mock interviewing, field trips to chosen professions, presentations from chosen professions, and internship requirements."

Developing written marketing materials. Examples included development of collateral such as resumes, cover letters, thank-you letters, how to write a LinkedIn profile, email correspondence.

Counseling. Sample of responses included: "Continual and perceptive career counseling"; "Placement and follow-up: career advisors could actively seek to place students in their chosen field prior to graduation"; "It would be nice for advisors to follow up with students 3 months after graduation to ensure that students are on the right path"; "Career counseling to ascertain the best employment options based on individual student interests and strengths"; and "Real counseling - what are you good at? What do you like to do? How can you build those things into a career?"

Mentoring. Some suggestions from participants included: "Assign mentors in 2-3 different industries/functions, arrange "ride days" with mentors to show expectations"; "Mentorship/apprenticeship";"Work assignments and interaction with career mentors who have experience in the positions the student aspires to hold"; and "Guest speakers from all types of businesses."

Coursework. This included communications courses, business fundamentals, public speaking skills, writing, interview and networking workshop, interpersonal skills ("particularly listening and communication"), marketing skills, interviewing skills, career management, and presentation skills.

Financial literacy and negotiating skills. Responses included "Accounting skills, and how to deal with financial and budgetary aspects of a career"; "Understanding of global economics"; and " impact of financial management on decision making."

Corporate culture and politics. One example included, "How to move laterally within a company in under 2 years."

Assessment testing. Responses included: "Assessment (fascination, skills and values) and exploration to choose a likely career direction and course of study"; "Take a test and interview the student to determine what his interests are and what they would like to be doing as a career"; and "assessment of students' readiness to make a career decision at this time: undergrads are young."

Summary

A number of conclusions can be made from our survey results. Eighty percent of the survey subjects said that students were not properly prepared for the workforce. This number is unacceptably high. Any other program in higher education which failed 8 out of 10 students would require a major revision in its structure and delivery methods; revising the way in which colleges and universities administer career education is certainly an idea whose time has come.

When asked what they recommended to improve students' readiness, 46% of subjects named internships, and 27% said mandatory courses. The entire program is mandatory, and internships are a *required* part of the curriculum, beginning during a student's sophomore year.

As to what career preparation the subjects received during their undergraduate years, 30% received none at all, and only 12% received counseling. The career course program will address these issues.

How prepared for the working world did our subjects report they felt by the time they graduated college? Twenty percent said that they were either "poorly prepared," or "not prepared at all" - an unacceptably high number.

When asked to name the specific areas in which they felt unprepared, 75% said "general knowledge." Given it begins during a student's freshman year, the career course program will continually provide an overview of the working world, and teach the student to use his or her skill set and experience to find their place in it.

Asked if they had it to do over again, subjects said that their career training in college would consist of, in order of preference: readiness, improved perspective, networking, internships/job shadowing, mentoring, money management, interview preparation, resume workshops, and courses. All of the above have been embedded into the program curriculum that follows. This relates to the final question in the survey, in which the subjects were asked to name three elements they would include in redesigning a career development program.

The five most often cited elements were: field experience, personal development, networking, written materials, and counseling, as illustrated in Figure 8. All of these are part of the design of our career development course program.
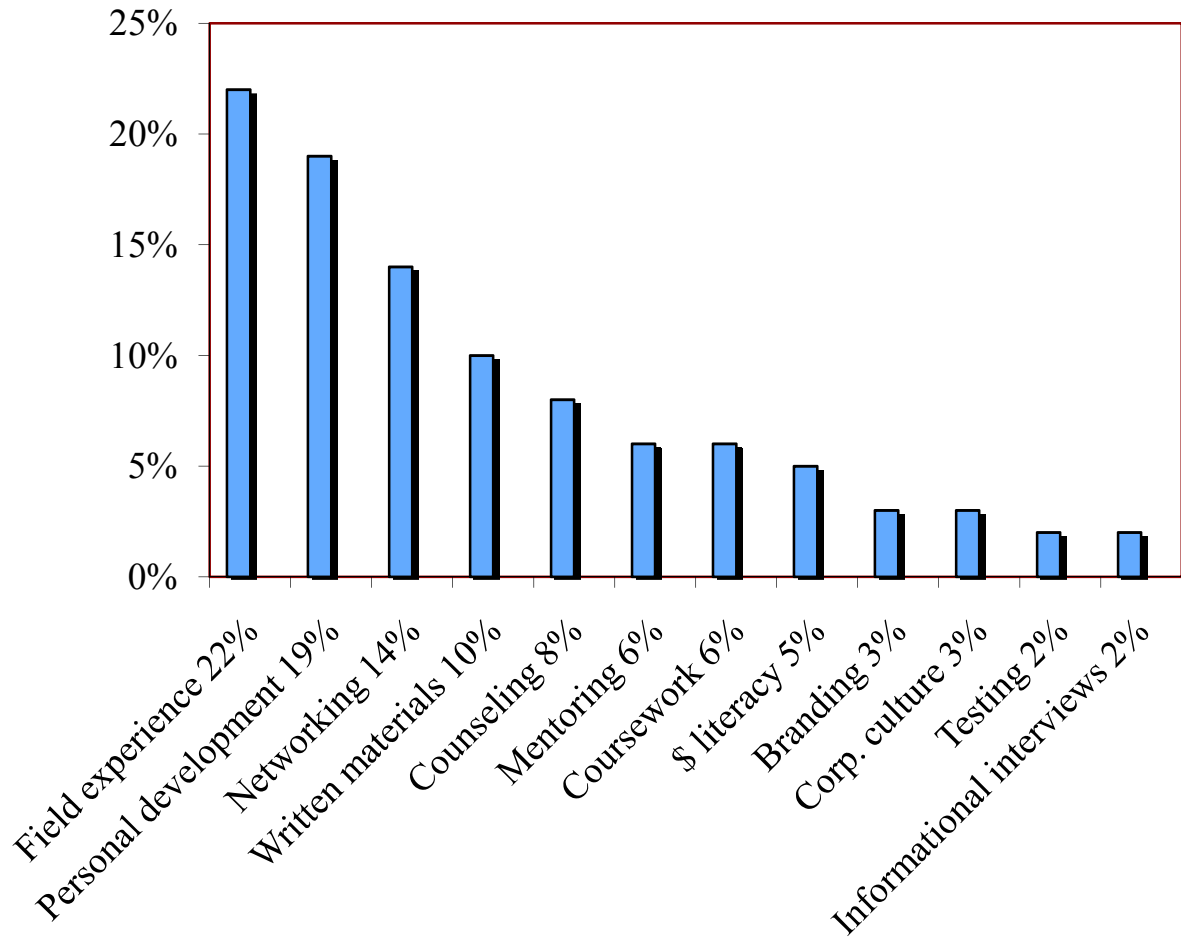
Figure 8. Three elements in a career program redesign.

Chapter Five – Summary and Recommendations

Introduction

The author's colleagues in the business world (some of whom participated in this study) regularly complain that college graduates lack communication skills, do not understand what relevant talents and experience they offer, and are not properly prepared with information about the businesses with which they interview and how they can make a contribution to those organizations. For decades, college students have taken course after course after course in order to earn a degree, only to graduate without knowing what type of work they wanted to do. If they did know, they were unequipped to find a job and spent years wandering the workplace without a clear sense of direction. Higher education has not been properly readying students for the working world.

This study has been a response to these chronic problems in the workplace as well as the insufficiency of current career development training that is one of its main causes. They point to the need for a new paradigm for teaching career skills to college students.

It is time for higher education to radically alter the way in which it delivers career development. This needs to take the form of a career course curriculum embedded into the standard college curriculum. There is virtually unanimous support from the survey subjects for implementation of the author's program, and the survey results have helped to refine its structure.

A student's education needs to be practicalized, beginning during freshman year and continuing until graduation. Students need to be trained over time both via one-on-one coaching sessions, and in required courses - as many of these skills are best learned

in a group setting. As was suggested by one of the survey participants, career counselors could work as consultants to faculty in incorporating career instruction into the curriculum. In 1978, Haney and Howland said that it was important that career courses provide academic credit because mandatory coursework was perceived as having value and thus was deserving of respect.

The efficacy of career development courses is incontrovertible: in a study at Central Michigan University, 81% of the participants said that the courses helped them to make career decisions; and Hardesty reported in 1991 that 48% of undergraduates said that these courses increased their career decidedness. Overall, 90% of courses nationwide reported positive gains in their students' preparedness. Career development courses have positively impacted all genders and ethnicities of students. They have improved students' adjustment to college, their chances of selecting a major, increased course satisfaction, decreased time to graduation, and improved GP's.

In terms of preparing students, these courses have: provided current information on the relative risks and rewards of different careers, and helped students to make decisions about graduate schools and careers. They have also resulted in: students beginning their career planning earlier, increasing their employability self-awareness and career maturity; helped them to understand the realities of the job market more quickly – and, as a result, they have been evaluated more positively by employers. In addition, they have provided mentors for students, and helped develop their support networks.

Once they have found employment, the courses have had the residual effect of providing them greater job satisfaction.

Integrating a career development course program into a traditional curriculum will bridge the gulf between what businesses need in their employees, and graduates' readiness to fill those needs. This program will train students in the practices they will be able to utilize for the rest of their careers, particularly their social skills (in which Millennials are notoriously deficient) that are critical to helping them sell their brand and develop and deepen the relationships that will result in employment. Since the "new normal" is that our students will have not only many jobs but multiple careers during their lives, the ability to constantly self-promote is critical to their continued success in finding work.

Given practices are developed over time, the program needs to be mandatory, and integrating it into a general curriculum will ensure that this will take place and that we can properly prepare our students for the new challenges of the working world of the 21st century.

It is clear from the results of this study that not only are current students not being properly readied to enter the workforce, but that this has been the case for many years. Eighty percent of all respondents agreed, and 30% of them stated that they themselves had had very little or no career preparation during college. When asked to what extent they felt prepared for their current or most recent position, 20% answered that they were poorly prepared or not prepared at all. It was not simply a matter of more courses or

more time with a career counselor: 65% of the survey subjects felt they were not even given a general, practical knowledge of how the workplace operates.

Woodbury University in Burbank, California, with whom the author worked, was one of only 30 institutions in the United States to receive a College Success Awards Grant from the Council of Independent Colleges and the Wal-Mart Foundation. The grant ($50,000) will allow Woodbury to embed career coursework into the standard curriculum. The wording of its grant proposal was based in part on this paper.

Beginning with their School of Business, career development courses will be integrated into each year of a student's studies. By emphasizing the skill sets necessary to succeed professionally, Woodbury's students will learn to focus on how their studies will lead to their eventual careers. The grant will support career staff and business management faculty to develop the new career program, with the eventual goal of expanding the approach to encompass all majors within the university's other schools.

The Career Development Course Program Curriculum

Tyler (1949) names four questions that are at the heart of creating an effective curriculum:

1. What educational purposes are being sought?
2. What learning experiences will be useful in attaining these objectives?
3. How will the learning experiences be organized?
4. How will learning experiences be evaluated for effectiveness?

The manner in which the author has organized the career course curriculum answers the first three questions. The fourth question will be addressed at the end of this chapter.

Tyler (1949) said that, "learning takes place through the active behavior of the student; it is what he does that he learns, not what the teacher does" (p. 63). The author's role in designing the career development course program is to create environments in which students can be active learners. Learning in the 21st century is no longer simply about passive exposure to information. Like Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (1998), Tyler believes the learner must be stimulated by the learning situation and connect with the material presented in order for learning to occur. Given this, the curriculum for the program will provide the student with the opportunity to integrate new information into what he or she currently knows or does.

Kolb (1984) also believed in experiential learning, and defined it as "the process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of experience" (p. 38). He said that it included four steps: concrete experience (being in the here and now); observation of and reflection of the learner's experiences; creation of concepts that integrate the learner's observations into theory; testing the theories in new situations (e.g., in the workplace).

The author has based the structure of the program on Kolb's theories. The courses are designed so there is continuity, sequence, integration, and an organizing thread (Tyler, 1949). The thread – and context for the program is: corporate loyalty and job security are becoming extinct. In the 21st Century workplace, everyone is a freelancer, effectively their own business, and thus their own brand. In this program, students learn how to determine, articulate, and then market that brand in order to continue to find work throughout their entire career. In other words, the program

empowers students to develop the resources needed for the lifelong practice of self-promotion.

But in order to properly train students for this radically altered workplace, there must be a radically new approach to training students: coursework needs to be mandatory, begin during freshman year and continue through the end of senior year, and the coursework needs to be delivered in conjunction with required one-on-one counseling.

According to Tyler (1949), any statement of objectives should not simply indicate what the instructor plans to do, but assert the kind of change that will take place in the student. These objectives should also identify the kinds of behaviors that will be developed and the situations in which the behaviors will apply.

The career course program will have students work to develop particular competencies (sound bite, interview skills, telling their story, etc.), and part of every class in the program will be spent on rehearsing these skills (as Aristotle said, "We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit" [as cited by Brainy Quote, n.d., para. 1]). Inspired by Kolb (1984), the program is largely experiential in nature. It is the author's belief that learning that lasts and changes behavior, particularly when it involves communication skills, is best accomplished through practice. Hence, though there are hundreds of books available that tell one "how to," rehearsing the skills students will require in order to find work, will create "muscle memory." Students primarily learn by doing . . . over and over and over again. This is not a theory curriculum. It is about

developing practical and relevant practices and habits that can be used for a lifetime.

What students can expect to receive is described below.

Student learning objectives. By the time you complete this program, you will:

1. Define your brand and its uniqueness in the marketplace.

2. Be more adept at articulating your message to the people who can hire or refer

    you for work.

3. Have developed a granular database.

4. Have a resume and/or bio that reflects what it is you offer and serves as a

    powerful marketing tool.

5. Learn to appreciate the employer's/client's perspective, and use that to better

    direct your sales efforts.

6. Have less anxiety about both the interview process, and negotiating.

7. Become aware of the other life skills you will need to navigate the world

    (business ethics, including knowledge of legal issues and sexual harassment

    guidelines; financial planning, business cards, your own web site, social

    networking, etc.).

8. Have made reading about current and future trends in your industry - and

    the world at large – a permanent practice that will last throughout your life.

We will work on developing particular social skills (sound bite, interviewing, telling your

story, etc.), and spend part of every course rehearsing these skills.

Based on the results of the study, the program model is initiated with the

incoming class of first-year students. Using a semester system with three semesters per

school year, in the 4 years a student attends college, they will complete 12 semesters of

coursework, so there are 12 courses in the career development program.

The number and frequency of classes can be adjusted to the needs of any

institution of higher learning. For example, some schools are on a term system, whereas

others have *four* semesters per school year. The program design is flexible enough to

expand or contract based on the school's needs and schedules. It is also appropriate for

integration into graduate programs, although the author believes that beginning the

training with younger students will ultimately have a greater impact.   Responses from

the survey subjects have been integrated into the courses and are reflected in their

descriptions.

Given the theoretical foundation of the program is Experiential Learning, there

are no textbooks. Learning that lasts and changes behavior, particularly when it involves

communication skills, is best accomplished through practice. Hence, though there are

hundreds of books available that tell one "how to," rehearsing the skills students will

require for finding work will create "muscle memory." There will be handouts, but there

are no assigned textbooks. Students will learn by doing . . . over and over and over again.

Students will take the courses according to the following schedule. Course

descriptions written for the students follow the course number and title.

Freshman year – first semester: "101 Introduction/Overview of the 21st Century Workplace: You are a Freelancer." The 20th century version of employment

(a job at one company for decades, retirement with a pension) is now the exception. You

are on your own, and you have your own brand. You will learn to design and manage

your career; you will examine what it is you are selling, who your market is, how you reach potential employers – and what you tell them when you meet them.

A study that provided the foundation for this program reported that 65% of college graduates said that they were not prepared with a general, practical knowledge of how the workplace operates. This course will correct that, prepare you for your career, and begin to train you to self-promote and self-market.

Freshman year – second semester: "102 Determining Your Monetizeable Passion - and Exercises to Help You Find It." Choosing a career direction involves considerable self-knowledge and investigation. A career should be based on what you do well and enjoy. You will examine what it is you want to do (answering the questions: what service or services am I offering, and is there a market for it?). In-class exercises will help you determine your professional niche. You will also drill down to find your passion(s) and during required individual meetings with your career counselor, which will be run in conjunction with the course.

Freshman year – third semester: "103 You, the Brand: What are Your Sell Points?" You will create, refine, and practice your sound bite (A.K.A. elevator pitch) in front of the class. This is your primary marketing tool and you will become comfortable saying it to everyone you meet, as you never know who may be in a position to offer you work, or a referral. Your sound bite will tell the listener: what you do (what you offer), and what you are looking for as a short-term goal.

Sophomore year – first semester: "201 The Employer's Perspective." Once you better understand your audience, you can gear your pitch to make it more effective.

In this course, you will begin to focus on the employer's/client's needs, and learn compassion for their perspective in the hiring process. We will also create a schedule for your internships. You will be required to have at least three during your next 3 years of college, all of which must relate directly to your field of interest.

Sophomore year – second semester: "202 Developing Your Story." The extension of your sound bite is your story, actually a series of interesting and engaging stories about your life and passions. Imagine your life is a movie, with you as the star of that movie. Your story is the narrative of how you got to where you are in your career, and your goals for the future. You will develop these stories and enrich them with details, and then continually practice telling them to your peers in the classroom until you have become comfortable with the process of selling yourself.

Sophomore year – third semester: "203 Creating a Granular Database & Networking (including Affinity Groups)." Students are continually encouraged to network, but seldom are you properly trained on exactly what that is, or how to actually go about networking. Networking is making friends for the purpose of forwarding your career, and this course will train you in this lifelong practice.

We will begin with a portable, electronic, granular database, the foundation for all networking. You will create an initial database of leads near the beginning of the semester, and then develop those leads, including a recent history of your contact with them, and the next steps you need to make. There will be a second assignment later in the semester, which will involve expanding that list.

We will also discuss the value and usefulness of social networks, including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, and joining and volunteering for professional associations in your field. You will also be assigned a certain number of mandatory meetings with your career counselor throughout the remainder of your college years, and we will schedule those during this course. We will discuss mentoring and job shadowing, and you will be assigned Leadership Interview Papers as a way to begin those processes.

Junior year – first semester: "301 The Resume: Your Primary Marketing Document." You will create a resume and/or a bio that reflects who you are in the workplace. You will write as many drafts as necessary so that the final version will be ready by the end of this course. Your work will be edited by your classmates and your professor.

Junior year – second semester: "302 Budgeting." Everyone is a freelancer with his or her own business, or brand. Financial liquidity is critical to sustaining that brand. A working budget – which should be reviewed every 6 months – and the cushion it can provide, is essential during the downtimes between projects and/or jobs. If you are living in financial desperation, you are not in a good position to negotiate for a job, a client, or a raise. In this course, you will learn to distinguish needs from wants, create a budget listing your expenses and income, and explore ways to increase revenue and cut expenses.

Junior year – third semester: "303 Interviewing." This course is conducted like an acting class. You will rehearse - in front of your classmates - how to interview. You will be given the questions you can expect to be asked in formal interviews, and

begin to formulate your answers. These questions include: What adjectives would you use to describe yourself? What got you interested in what you do? What do you consider your greatest accomplishment? Name two things you'd like to improve about yourself, describe a time when you worked with someone difficult. What happened, and how did you resolve the problem? How do you deal with stress? What would you like to be doing a year, 5 years, 10 years from now? If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

The mock interviews, conducted by the professor, other students, and industry professionals, are the most valuable part of your career development program. Industry guests will inform you what it is they look for when hiring someone, and there will be opportunities to develop mentoring relationships and job shadowing opportunities with them.

Senior year – first semester: "401 Interviewing the Employer." In an interview, part of your job is to learn if the potential employer/client is a good fit for you. The better your brand self-awareness, the more confidence you will exude and the easier it will be for you to question the employer's appropriateness to your needs. Questions to ask can include: How many people have left your department since you began your employment here and why did they leave? What's the worst thing about working here? Why should I pick your organization over your competitors? Describe your company's culture.

Senior year – second semester: "402 Cover and Thank-You Letters." There is a myth that a good cover letter will get you an interview. Maybe it will - but only

maybe. In this course, you will dissect job descriptions, and practice writing cover letters that are short and to the point (less is more), using the three-paragraph approach: the connection, the match, and the next step.

Senior year – third semester: "403 Negotiating." What does one ask for when offered a job/project/consulting agreement (or when asking for a raise)? This course explores negotiating from a position of strength (not desperation), and benefits to consider beyond a salary. We will learn, explore, and practice your own negotiating skills.

Program Implementation

It is the author's experience that in higher education, what is variously known as career development, career counseling, or career education is perceived as *vocational* in nature, as opposed to traditional coursework, which is seen as *academic*. There is, therefore, some resistance among academics about the suitability of including career *courses* in a student's college experience. Because meeting and working with career counselors is not required, and only a limited number of courses are being offered at this time to train students in how to self-market, the general perception is that career counseling is simply an extra service, like the school nurse or soft drinks available at the campus bookstore; they make the college experience more pleasant, but are not an essential part of a student's education.

This is important to understand, because some members of the administration and/or faculty will consider an entire career course *program* to be a radical departure from tradition, and resist its implementation. Just as students in the program are trained

to approach their career growth incrementally, given this expected resistance, it is suggested that, if necessary, career coursework be rolled out over time. There are two reasons for this. The first reason is to mitigate the dislocation that staff or faculty may feel. The courses in a new program will replace existing courses, and educators are reluctant to give up their classes, particularly if they feel that what is supplanting them is not appropriate for the classroom. The second reason is that it is easier to fine-tune the program if it is activated slowly.

The efficacy of career development coursework must be demonstrated to deans, department chairs, and faculty, and it is suggested that these courses be started on a test basis. The process would begin with a few sessions included in an existing course; for example, a marketing course could contain sessions on self-marketing.

Surveys of participating students should be conducted at the end of the course to determine the efficacy of the career sessions. These will be successful compared to other best practices for career development; the career courses the author has taught have met with unanimous approval from students, and based on this past success, students will be happy with the sessions, and request more class time devoted to career preparation. The dozens of endorsements he has received illustrate the effectiveness and applicability of this work. Following are a few that have been selected:

Elizabeth Ishii, a student in the author's Career-Life Planning course at The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM), said,

> Thank you so much Professor Austin. I just got a job at this company called Lapis and I'm going to be the Assistant Designer. I am so excited, especially getting the job within a week of graduating from FIDM. My new boss told me

that my resume was so honest unlike all the others he received . . . I have only you to thank for that. He said it was so direct and to the point and hired me on the spot, even though he had 12 other interviews to go . . . I just wanted to thank you for *educating* me about the work world. I really wish that I had your class a lot sooner than the last quarter of school. I really would have avoided a lot of rejection. (E. Ishii, personal communication, November 12, 2004)

Talin Koutnouyan, with whom the author worked at Woodbury University, said,

I was able to find a position at JPL [Jet Propulsion Laboratories] . . . I just wanted to tell you how thankful I am for all your help - it really paid off. Before I got help from you, I was going from interview to interview and they would always tell me at the end that they decided to hire someone else. After going to you and being confronted with the reality that it is more about focusing on the employer than having the employer focus on me kind of idea, I shifted my way of thinking. After meeting with you, I walked into every interview giving off the vibe that I am there to serve them and exert all my effort for them. Today, I got a call from the Human Resources department at JPL telling me that I had three offers from three different interviews I had ever since we had met the last time for that mock interview. Not only that, but since all of the employers I had interviewed with were aware of the number of offers I had, I went with the position which best matched my skills and the job that I want to focus on and also had the most competitive pay out of three. I will be starting this job on June 1st. I really can't thank you enough for all your help . . . . (T. Koutnouyan, personal communication, February 17, 2010)

Kenny Cogo, who was a student in the author's Career Development course at

The Art Institute of California – Hollywood, apologized for leaving class early:

I just wanted to say I'm sorry I couldn't stay, but I had an actual interview for a Macy's warehouse job downtown. It went well. I should be expecting a call within the next few days. Your class really taught me a lot. The constant mock interviews are genius. Your concept of social networking is what I have always thought is the best way to find work because it's not just about what you know, it's who you know. I got this interview through one of my contacts that I made through your class, so your methods work, and work well . . . . (K. Cogo, personal communication, April 4, 2009)

Another student at the same school, Joseph Kim, said,

I just wanted to thank you for this past quarter. I will be honest, I wasn't sure what to expect when I first found out I had Career Development as one of my

classes. However I have to admit it as one of my favorite classes, and the most useful. Thank you for all your insight . . . . (J. Kim, personal communication, March 17, 2009)

Tom Smith wrote,

The Post Production Marketplace & Job Essentials that you taught was probably the most useful and important class that I attended as part of the Pro Tools Career Program at Video Symphony . . . If there was ever any 'attenuation' of my confidence it would have to have been in the area of 'Self Promotion and Marketing' (a phrase which I would never have thought to use before the workshop). The information, ideas, and techniques presented in the workshop have really helped point me in the right direction. I no longer simply 'look for a job' but rather attempt to engage in the Marketing, Branding, and Promotion of the services that I can provide. I want to thank you and tell you that I particularly appreciated your up-beat, can-do, no-nonsense attitude which I found to be inspiring and motivating, especially during those moments of uncertainty and self doubt that inevitably arise at the start of any considerable endeavor. (T. Smith, personal communication, December 11, 2005)

Eric Bleitz, who holds both MBA and MDR degrees from Pepperdine University, said,

Professor Austin provided me invaluable advice at a time when I needed it most. He is concise, honest, and upfront. I spoke to him in the morning, and landed my current job that evening, by doing exactly what he recommended. (E. Bleitz, personal communication, April 20, 2010)

Gabriela Caro, a student in the author's Marketing for the Modern World course at Loyola Marymount University Extension, said,

You gave me a sense of empowerment . . . and how to focus my knowledge and experience where it will best [be] utilized in making me happy. I gained a lot of confidence in myself. (G. Caro, personal communication, March 19, 2003)

Danielle Keller, a fashion student at Woodbury University acknowledged the author for a referral he made for her,

I just wanted to let you know that I met with Frances Harder, CEO [of FBI - Fashion Biz, Inc.] last week and am going to start interning for FBI when I get back from Europe in two weeks. I also have already written an article for their newsletter. I just wanted to say thank you for all your help. I am so excited to really start my career. (D. Keller, personal communication, December 20, 2010)

Ross Van Voast of The Art Institute of California – Hollywood wrote, "I wanted to let you know the career development class was awesome and a great inspiration for me. I realized building your brand is most of the battle" (R. Van Voast, personal communication, November 19, 2009).

Michael Tanenbaum, a graduate of Pepperdine's MBA program said, "Professor Austin understands the importance and power of networking and personal selling, skills which cannot be underestimated in today's professional marketplace" (M. Tanenbaum, personal communication, March 18, 2009).

Angela Copeland, another Pepperdine MBA graduate, shared the following,

Simply put, Professor Austin is a life changing career coach. He identified potential opportunities for me that lined up perfectly with my goals and encouraged me to lay my foundation for a successful future. He goes above and beyond any typical career coach to help his clients put life changing strategies into motion. (A. Copeland, personal communication, October 29, 2009)

Lilian P. Baghdasarian of Woodbury University said, "You make me feel much better every time I walk out of your office with an inspiring hope of a brighter future in my career" (L. P. Baghdasarian, personal communication, February 6, 2010). Mychelle Lozano said of the author's Management course at Westwood College,

This was a great class . . . enriching and very informative because Prof. Austin shared so much of his knowledge. It was exceptionally educational and fascinating . . . it introduced me to the importance of planning, social and ethical responsibilities, and the changes that are shaping today's workplace . . . Prof. Austin gave me broad-based, valuable insights, [and a] practical introduction to

the key ideas that I will be able to use for years to come. (M. Lozano, personal communication, November 14, 2006)

And finally, Leandro Ramos from the same class, stated, "I learned who I really am and who I will be" (L. Ramos, personal communication, November 13, 2006).

Once the career sessions have proven effective, they can be expanded to stand-alone courses. After those are delivered, further surveys need to be conducted. After analyzing the predicted positive results, the administration and faculty will realize that these courses: (a) are popular with students, (b) increase retention to graduation, (c) reflect positively on the institution, and (d) are cost-effective because they train students how to find work, and employed graduates tend to be more generous in gift-giving to their alma mater. At that point, a full career course program can be established.

Dr. David Rosen, the Senior Vice President and chief academic officer at Woodbury University, with whom the author worked to design and implement exactly such a program, described the early stages of its development:

> During the fall Board retreat, I saw a printout of a presentation that Charles had prepared on a new plan for career development. I found Charles' plan refreshingly different and likely to be effective. Immediately after the retreat, I contacted Charles to get a copy of the presentation . . . We sat for nearly an hour reviewing his work. I was impressed with his ideas . . . From that moment, Charles and I joined forces to look for ways to implement his new model for career development. When the opportunity for a Wal-mart grant to support a career development curriculum arose, I asked Charles to be on the team to prepare the grant. His research and ideas were helpful in creating a successful proposal. (David Rosen, personal communication, June 11, 2010)

Dr. Rosen is an example of an enlightened leader who appreciates the benefits of a career course program to a university. He represents an anomaly, and to those who may

consider implementing the author's program at their own institutions of higher learning, a more measured approach is recommended.

Recommendations for Further Research

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, three outcomes must be measured:

1. Recent graduates will be surveyed, and it is predicted that the majority of them will report that the content and sequence of the program courses was useful in helping them find employment within 3 months after graduation.

2. A survey of employers will be conducted, and they will report higher employment readiness among recent graduates (vs. graduates they met with in the 3 years prior to implementation of the program). The increase will be measured in the following areas: better written resumes, cover letters that relate more directly to the job for which the applicants applied, and enhanced interviewing skills.

3. It is further predicted that data will show an increase in the hiring rate of graduates who completed the program vs. students who graduated in the 3 years prior to the time the program was offered.

Tyler's (1949) fourth and final principle regarding curriculum deals with the need for evaluation of the program. According to Tyler, it is essential to evaluate whether objectives were met and if a change in behavior did in fact occur.   McMillan and Schumacher (1997) defined evaluation research as "the determination of the *worth* of an educational program, product, procedure, or objective" (p. 542). Evaluation serves to

measure the success of a program, to justify the program, to assist in planning for the program, and to indicate improvements that may need to be made to that program (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997). Rossett (1999) said that the purpose of analysis is to "identify needs and define solutions" (p. 142), and that the results of the analysis can then be used to develop objectives that result in improved performance. The author has found the wording of Rossett's question, "What would the organization be doing if it were functioning *splendidly*?" (p. 144) to be a useful way to focus on the desired results of the program.

Quantifiable results need to be determined in order to gauge success. Evaluation allows for reviewing the results of the program, and then identifying specific steps that may need to be taken in order to improve its effectiveness. Kirkpatrick (1996) discusses four levels of evaluation that identify the type of outcome being sought: reaction, learning, behavior, and results.

Level 1: Reaction. Defined as "measuring customer satisfaction" (Kirkpatrick, 1996, p. 295), and will gauge how effective recent graduates have found the program. Kirkpatrick recommends that post-training evaluation be administered no less than 3 months after the end of the program (in this case, graduation). The survey questions that they will be asked at that time will be designed to learn how they felt about the program's instructional methods, course content, course sequence, and objectives. This measures Student Learning Objective #1.

Level 2: Learning. Measures whether the program's objectives were met. It occurs when attitudes are changed and knowledge and skills are acquired (Kirkpatrick, 1996).

Level 3: Behavior. A change in behavior is the objective of a curriculum. Behaviors change when students possess the desire to change them – and are given the tools to do so. Analyzing behavior will show how much the content of the career courses in the program was relevant to and used by graduates to find employment after graduation.

Level 4: Results. Determine the impact of the program courses, chiefly the increase in job placement following students' completion of the program. These can be compared with figures from the years prior to the establishment of the program, measuring Student Learning Objective #3.

Using Kirkpatrick's Methods of Evaluation achieves clarity about the type of information being sought while identifying any areas that may need further evaluation. This paper has categorized the data collected according to its ultimate purpose (formative versus summative) and its sources (recent graduates, employers, and career counselors).

Formative Evaluation

Holcomb (2001) said that evaluation has two purposes: to identify indicators of practice (formative evaluation), and to identify indicators of impact (summative evaluation). Summative evaluation is generally used at the *end* of a project to measure program outcomes and if they accomplished the desired results (Holcomb, 2001). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997), both are essential, given information is

needed in the development stage of a program to guide areas of improvement, and then

once it has been established, to determine and justify its future worth and need.

Formative evaluation provides information *while* the program is being rolled out.

Data collected by means of a formative evaluation can improve a program by identifying

the need to modify or revise a curriculum, guiding us in determining "What is working?"

and "What needs to be improved?" (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997, p. 544). "The flow

of a change . . . is one of continuous diagnosis as one is continuously intervening"

(Schein, 1992, p. 279). Formative evaluations will be administered periodically

throughout every school year in order to monitor student progress.

Students. As students begin their career coursework, ongoing and anonymous

surveys can be administered to determine the effectiveness of both the individual courses

and their sequencing. This represents a type of Level 1 (Reaction) evaluation, as the

information received will be used to identify areas that can be modified in order to

maximize the effectiveness of the program for students. Given how ubiquitous the

Internet has become for students, these evaluations can be conducted online.

A pre-assessment student survey can be conducted during Freshman Orientation,

providing a baseline from which to work. The additional advantage of conducting a

survey at the start of the program is that it will give students the opportunity to begin

thinking about their career coursework and allow them to offer suggestions for improving

its effectiveness.

To determine the perceptions of students regarding the program, a survey will be

distributed school-wide every semester, which is a Level 1 (Reaction) evaluation. The

purpose of the survey will be to give students the opportunity to anonymously evaluate

the program and its ongoing effectiveness for them. While this can be classified as a

summative measure to see if the program is meeting its objectives, it is also a formative

measure in that it will direct efforts towards improvement.

Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation, which occurs at the end of a program, determines its

effectiveness and certifies its usefulness. Questions typically answered in a summative

evaluation are whether the outcome satisfied its objectives, and whether it delivered on

what it promised. Though evaluation is never truly complete, this evaluation consists of

collecting information, and then cross-tabulating, analyzing, and interpreting the findings.

Results can be triangulated from (a) career course assessments written by

students, (b) assessments of graduate preparedness by employers who have conducted job

interviews with graduates, and (c) data that shows the percentage of graduates who have

found employment within 3 months of graduation (as compared with the years prior to

the establishment of the program).

Recent graduates. If students cannot find work within 3 months of their

graduation, the program has failed them. Recent graduates are the most important

segment of the summative evaluation process. The surveys they submit after graduation

(these will be mandatory if they want to continue to qualify for career guidance) will

provide important feedback on how to adjust and improve the career course program.

This type of evaluation is Kirkpatrick's Level 1: Reaction, in that graduates are being

asked to provide an assessment of the program process.

Employers. Another means of determining the effectiveness of the program is to survey employers with whom the college or university works in order to assess the readiness of graduates to begin working in corporate America. This feedback can be utilized to pinpoint the areas in the program that need improvement, including: resumes, cover letters, and improved interview skills, all representative of Kirkpatrick's Level 3 (Behavior) evaluation.

Kirkpatrick's fourth level of evaluation is Results. Ongoing monitoring of the success of the program with both students and employers will serve as a good summative indicator of the program's effectiveness. Direct causation can be implied: the greater the number of recent graduates finding employment, the more effective the program.

Summary

It is time to elevate career development to parity with other academic disciplines. The traditional model for delivering career services is outmoded, inefficient, and wasteful. Career counselors cannot accomplish much in an hour-long meeting with a student, yet given working with a career counselor is not mandatory, that is often as much time as a counselor will have with that student. If career courses are a mandatory part of the curriculum, regular visits with the counselor can also be made mandatory, and these one-on-one sessions can have a lasting impact on students.

The training being advocated will teach students to develop practices they can use to advance their careers for as long as they want to work. Institutions of higher learning will benefit in numerous ways, as well. Studies have shown that career development courses are a cost-effective intervention. Gimmestad (1984) said that career courses

provide for the efficient use of staff and the delivery of services. When academic credit is involved, the sponsoring institution almost always stands to benefit due to commonly used funding formulae that are based on generating student credit hours. In addition, retention rates and credit hour efficiency are both increased.

A college student who is taught over time how to sell their brand will be more likely to have work when they graduate. An employed graduate is a happy alumnus. A happy alumnus repays his or her alma mater in donations, thus reducing the workload of the college's advancement department. Knowing that their alma mater prepares its students for the workplace, the same alumnus will be more likely to offer jobs, internships, and mentoring to its students, thus saving time for the college's career development department. All this will forge stronger ties between the school and its alumni, one of the primary goals of any institution of higher learning. Conversely, and unfortunately, an alumnus who isn't working will often blame the school for his or her failure to find employment.

By training students how to monetize their education (a growing concern to both students and their families), a value-add is provided for the college or university that will help differentiate their brand from other institutions of higher learning.

The survey conducted to support the assertions of this paper, other studies reporting the success of dozens of courses and similar, though more limited programs suggest an idea whose time has come. It is recommended that more schools implement programs similar to the one described here, one that has already been endorsed and

underwritten by the Wal-Mart Foundation. Studies of the effectiveness of this program will, it is predicted, continue a process that, the author predicts, will result in career development coursework being integrated into the general college curriculum in every institution of higher learning in the United States in the next decade.

Integrating career development coursework into the general college curriculum will be a boon to students, the universities at which they study, and the organizations for which they will eventually work. A student population that is better prepared for the world will make a positive impact that is both more immediate and more lasting on society as a whole.

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APPENDIX

Interview questions

1.   What type of work do you do?

2.   Do you feel that college students are properly prepared for the workforce? (executives and counselors)

3.   What recommendations do you have that would improve students' readiness for the workforce?

4.   Name and describe the career preparation you received during college (counseling and/or coursework).

5.   To what extent do you feel you were prepared for your current position? (very prepared, somewhat prepared, poorly prepared, not prepared at all).

6.   What are the major areas in which you feel you were **not** prepared for your current position? (recent college graduates)

7.   If you could do it over again, what training would you have wanted to receive during college that would have helped you adjust to and excel at your current position? (recent college graduates)

8.   If you were designing a career development program for an undergraduate, what would be its three major elements?

All respondents will be given as much space as they need to elaborate on their responses.