

Abstract

This research is devoted to consideration of the issue of career education in high schools, and the need of thereof as it is known to assure proper career choices for school graduates-to-be. It is difficult for some young people to decide what path to choose – whether to pick a well-paid job or to deal with something that brings them content. Career counselors and teachers play an enormous role in these choices, and thus they have to consider their students are unique personalities with their own unique abilities and inclinations. And thus teachers have to try and offer professional guidance to students. Career education is to be implemented as a separate subject at school which will help students find out their interest and develop their best abilities to be able to implement them in the future work.

The question of career education and occupational training is a very important issue for all high school students without exception, regardless of the fact whether these young people realize the need for such education or not. It is true that in a great variety of cases high school graduates do not even consider their possible career paths or begin considering them too late. This may result in spontaneous career choices and further understanding that the occupation chosen is not the one desired or bringing satisfaction to a person oneself. And if the person is not satisfied with one's occupation, does not enjoy what one does in the life, the results of such work cannot be productive and more or less positive.

It also happens at times that a career chosen and education obtained do not fit the canvas of the needed professionals, or on the other hand appear to be dissatisfying for the young employee. This means that the decision made concerning the career was not made consciously or the person was not mature enough to adequately assess all the possibilities and situations of the future life. It is impossible to disagree with Arnold (1997) in the statement that to make good and adequate as well as successful career choices a person needs to be mature and possess a certain sense of personal identity, and what is more this person needs to understand the world one lives in. But is it possible for high school students to be that mature to be able of entering the truly adult world, make serious decisions such as concerning their future career, by themselves? The answer is evident – it is not possible. Thus, it is critical for schools to assure that students before leaving school have at least some understanding of what their inclinations and vocation may be. This can be done through offering high school students needed support and counseling, assuring necessary knowledge, conducting tests as a result of which young people will be able to define their future paths and make right choices according not only to their financial possibilities and parents' desire but rather according to their abilities, interests and inclinations. As a result the country will be able to obtain a serious amount of good professionals who will not only enjoy their jobs but also work for the country's good. Thus, a great deal of responsibility rests with school teachers who are supposed to discover their students' inclinations and help develop their abilities as well as offer guidance of better implementing these talents in life.

The assumption can be made that some high school students still are mature enough to begin considering their future in a couple of years before leaving school. These young people may become interested in additional and quite advanced information about their possibilities and needed educational level if they decide to enter a certain college. An outstanding example and good possibility for such self-conscious students can be the case with the state of Georgia where the BRIDGE (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy) Act was passed to assure motivation for high schools students to consider their career opportunities far before they

enter colleges. (Bryant, 2010) According to this legislation, high and middle school students within the state are supposed to obtain career education each year as well as counseling regarding the possible choices to be made. It is necessary for high school students to develop their own graduation plans – of studying the subjects which they will need in their future career. The young people will be able to understand what makes them interested in life, what kind of work evokes passion in them, and what their inclination is. This, by the way, can be done not only at school – in the process of studying and communicating with other students and teachers. It is especially advised for the students in the state of Georgia to create their personal accounts at the website . This source will allow them first of all complete the necessary tests to define their inclinations and abilities, and then to plan their high school curriculum accordingly – the pieces of advice regarding the possible subjects choices will be offered. Furthermore, young school students will be able to obtain the information regarding different careers and the necessary knowledge to enter these careers. Furthermore, parents can also use the same website for collective search and discovering future possibilities for their children. It is understandable that this particular website is applicable for students living in Georgia, and it is a very good example for other states, educations establishments in means of creating similar opportunities for their high school students. However, it seems that any student may obtain the necessary information and complete the tests in this website. What also needs to be stated in these regards is the fact that not a great number of high school students may even realize that such useful resources exist in the first place. Thus, it is their teachers' and career advisors' task to guide young people to such websites – simultaneously with offering needed guidance personally.

Guidance offered by the teachers can consist in two aspects – developing certain programs which will include participation of the entire school faculty but not only of a teacher who deals with career counseling issues, as well as personal talks and lectures which may evoke the understanding for action in high school students. In preparations for such conversations it is good to bear on works of serious and respected scholars. The theories of well-known researchers in social sciences will be viewed later – in the context of preparing for classes in career counseling. But teachers themselves may offer students necessary pieces of advice such as Dr. Randall Hansen, a marketing professor and innovative teacher, offers. Beside of offering good recommendations concerning the ways of deciding upon college major (Hansen, 2007), he also offers interesting advisory support for high school students in particular. Among these guidelines are great points which could be useful for high school students when they only start considering their future career possibilities.

- First, it is necessary to consider the paths and careers which may be interesting. For this, it may be necessary to examine what careers exist in general and get to know more about those which appear the most interesting ones.
- Since many careers nowadays require solid preparation and at times additional knowledge it can be necessary to consider summer courses or educational trips to other countries. However, while it is important to challenge oneself and take more courses to obtain better and more knowledge it is vital not to overload oneself with too much work.
- Devoting time to gaining experience is also useful – it may be volunteering or working part-time in the field of interest. For instance, a student interested in journalism may participate in publishing the school newspaper and then work part-time as a writer for some local newspaper to gain practice and experience.

- It is good to obtain advice from family and older friends concerning possible career choices, but it is important to choose oneself and not to obey parents' demands of following their steps, for instance, if it is not what a student wants. The same may regard the communication with counterparts – their attitudes and opinions must not influence career choices of a student.
- Each student should remember that every person is different. One mature and become ready for considering careers earlier, and with others it happens later. It is never too early or too late to begin considering these issues and prepare for the future.
- Constant learning and developing one's mind is a guarantee for success in the future. Additional knowledge will never be unnecessary, and thus further constant self-education in parallels with school or college education is rather an advantage than a flaw.

In means of organizing the certain course of career education for high school students it is important to deal with all of them as with unique personalities. There is statistical information which proves that school guidance counselors who are supposed to assure adequate counseling to high school students regarding their future education and choosing their career path do not treat students as required. From 48% to 62% of high school students tell that their counselors treat them without any decent degree of attention, and hardly ever offer some advice concerning career possibilities. ("High School Counselors Get Low Marks from Students on College Advice", 2010) This situation definitely needs to be changed for the best through totally or at least significantly renovating corresponding career guidance programs. It is the nation's future which lies in the hands of future college graduates, and thus it is vital to assure these young people get adequate counseling and decent education.

When career counselors consider the issue of helping students in their career choices, they usually are supposed to build their advice upon certain theories of established and respected scholars who have worked in the field of career counseling, psychology and sociology themselves. One of such theories which can be used in career counseling is Donald Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory. (Patton & McMahon, 2006) This theory is good and deserves consideration as it considers the development of a career from the point of view of a person's life-span. It means that the person lives through different stages in one's life, and the same happens with one's career – with each stage career evolves or even changes totally, a career shift happens. High school students have to get the awareness of this issue and to realize that statistically people may tend to change careers (not only jobs, but entire careers) more than five times during their life. One more important consideration which should be used by counselors and also explained to students lies in the following. The fact is that each person is born with a certain amount of abilities, type of personality, interests and self-concepts. As a result, a number of occupations should be considered by each person according to one's characteristics. The decisions as for the possible occupations may be made as a result of some tests (psychological, professional, as well as measuring the level of education). Super in particular defined maturity of a person needed to make career choices. And while maturity is defined as the readiness to make career choices, there is also adaptability which is needed for succeeding in one's career. Adaptability lies not only in readiness for working tasks but also the ability to adapt and adjust to unexpected changes in the process of career development. There are four dimensions of adaptability defined by Super, such as concern for the future, career control, career curiosity and career confidence. High school students who need counseling regarding their career choices in the first place may belong to the very first dimension – concern for the future. This dimension is characterized by the need for planning (for which students may still be unable and thus may need a

counselor's help). The problem with this stage may lie in indifference for exploration or action in general. What may help students in this case are orientation exercises.

This is when counseling comes into play – students of high school grades need someone to make them interested in career issues in the first place, as many of them just do not consider it at all. And when special occupational training is to be developed it is necessary to view the differences in students, to see their unique nature, and not to treat them as “another one from the crowd”. This type of assessment can be used with the help of on more theory – Linda Gottfredson's theory of "circumscription and compromise". This theory lies in perceiving career as developing according to a certain trajectory. A person, according to Gottfredson's opinion, develops certain career choices in the context of family and social growth and development of one as a personality. However, socialization may still have limiting effects upon career choices. In the process of a person's personality development one lives through four stages. The first stage (3-5 years old) is characterized by orientation to size and power. The second stage (ages 6-8) defines orientation to sex roles. The third stage (9-13 years old) is known for orientation for social valuation, prestige. And finally in the fourth stage (14 years old and on) a person begins orienting on oneself, one's uniqueness. With this stage understanding comes of one's unique abilities to which the choice of career is to be limited. This is called circumscription. But in certain occasions, compromise is the choice – when aspirations for career choices are implemented but not developed. Thus career choices are modified and limited according to certain circumstances. (Brott, 1993) Special attention Gottfredson also pays to inborn abilities and inclinations of students. This should be taken into consideration when career counselors and teachers in career education consider conducting tests or begin career education in their classes.

While Gottfredson also has an opinion that men and women differ in their career aspirations significantly, students' gender has to be taken into consideration, too. According to Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2008), men and women really have special needs when it comes to career aspirations – the authors of *Career Development Interventions in the 21st Century* quote in this concern the theory of Cook, Heppner and O'Brien who separate the needs of men and women at the workplace. For instance, men's needs lie in understanding the connection between socialization and career development, learning to express feelings and cope with stressful situations, as well as pay attention and take parts in other aspects of life, not only in work. As for women, their needs consist in the ability to negotiate at the workplace, assuring childcare of a decent quality, dealing with sexual harassment, dealing with mentors, and attending the needs of others.

Thus, assuring career education for young people is a serious act which requires great responsibility and individual approach regarding any student as the young people rely on their teachers and counselors in their decisions; they need their pieces of advice as those from the sources alternative from their parents' advises and opinions. At times it may even happen that students tend to take teachers' and counselors' advice to heart rather than their parents as they perceive the former more neutral, unconcerned advisors when compared to parents. Thus, in building career training courses teachers are supposed to take into consideration not only progress in studies but also personal qualities, abilities and intents of students one at a time. Only under such a condition career training and advisory classes may become a success.

When considering how and in what way such career education is to be conducted, it is possible to examine experiences of other high schools in the same area in order to obtain a kind of a guidance and example. A very interesting case is offered by Australian Blueprint for Career Development – a guide developed by joint efforts of the Federal, State and Territory Governments. (*Blueprint*) This is

a very useful guideline and organization behind it which helps Australian schools in developing career counseling programs. The same initiative may be developed in the US but until it is inexistent in a country level, the Australian example and experiences of colleagues can be takes as a basis. According to many experiences of foreign and local teachers, it is much better to implement career education program at a school level and assure co-operation of the entire faculty, not the efforts of a single career education teacher. All teachers working in high school have to attract attention of their students to their abilities and talents which may become so-called beacons for possible career choices. Furthermore, communication between teachers and informing career education teacher/counselor about certain talents of students may play an important role in correctly defining their future career possibilities. But this co-operation is only one of the methods which may be implemented in high schools. Proper and multi-faceted tests should be conducted with all students. And when their talents are confirmed and inclinations discovered then it is possible to offer them certain pieces of advice. Furthermore, students have to be asked about their aspirations, too – in order to see whether choices of students and those advisory ones of teachers match.

In general, career education deserves greater attention in the schools for it is the kind of education students will certainly need in their future life. If conducted properly, this counseling may assure the development of great professionals happy in their careers.