Connecting Students with People who Care(er):
Post-Secondary Professionals as 'Everyday Career Influencers'

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Who is responsible for career development?

What is a career centre?
Comprehensive career needs survey
(Magnusson & Bernes, 2002)

Public perceptions about career development
(Environics Research Group, 2011)
“KPU offers all learners opportunities to achieve success…necessary for good citizenship and rewarding careers.” (KPU VISION 2018, p.4)

Challenge:
20,000 students + 50,000 alumni / 1.5 staff = Unrealistic

Opportunity:
Teaching university = Small classes + Faculty from industry
Career Influencers (CIs)

“Individuals working in a post-secondary institution who informally provide career-related advice, guidance, and/or counselling to prospective and current students and/or alumni.”

- Community helpers (Redekopp & Austen, 2015)
- Definitions of career advising, guidance, and counselling (Hiebert & Borgen, 2002)
- Student engagement cycle (Bontrager, 2004; Fee & Forsyth, 2010)
Career Influencers (CIs)

Methodological considerations for exploring the concept of CIs
Research Method

- 15 participants in staff, faculty, and administrative roles
- Purposive, snowball sampling
- Two-part interview
- Used grounded theory components
Research Question and Subquestions

How do post-secondary education professionals conceive their influence in student career development?

• How do they see their role as having an impact on student career development?

• How do they see themselves as individuals as having an impact on student career development?

• How do they conceptualize the term “career”?

• What resources and/or competencies do they believe are important in furthering their impact on student career development?
1. Professionals see their role impacting student career development by performing these functions:
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- Advising
- Teaching/Facilitating
- Guiding (Guidance)
- Counselling
- Advocating
- External Liaising
- Leading

The extent to which professionals exercise a particular function hinges on:
- their role
- their experience/training
- the type of request
- their relationship with the student/stakeholder
“The professional cultivates relationships with external organizations and agencies to enhance student career success”
Implications for Practice

Consider career activities professionals can facilitate, versus activities that require referrals.

ANTICIPATE REFERRALS AND PROVIDE SUITABLE SUPPORT

Empower and recognize professionals’ contribution.

ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY

REFER TO EXPERTISE

Organizes a career fair.

Department Chair

David
Reflection/Discussion

Which of the seven career functions do you see yourself conduct in your role?

(advising, guiding, counselling, advocating, external liaising, teaching/facilitating, leading)

How does fulfilling these functions enable you to help students with their careers?
2. Professionals see **themselves** impacting student career development by **sharing their life story** and by demonstrating personal attributes that promote meaningful interactions and relationships.
Career is “the constellation of life roles an individual plays over his or her lifetime. It’s one’s ‘life story’”.

(Magnusson, 2014)
Jacques’ Constellation

Lifelong learner

MA in Education

Instructor of professional designation

Former manager

Assigns professionalism mark

Supervisory experience

Industry connections

Facilitates and promotes networking

Instructor & Case Competition Coach

Sports coach

Has a competitive spirit

Hockey player
Failed first semester as a Science student at a large research university

Transferred to a regional university & pursued a Business major

Applies learning from entrepreneurial leadership program to develop transition curriculum

Shares experience of failure and exploration with new students and paraprofessionals
Professionals exhibit personal attributes such as being...

- Approachable
- Authentic
- "A natural coach"
- Empathetic
- Vulnerable
Implications for Practice

- Encourage professionals to integrate their life roles, whenever and wherever appropriate.
- Help professionals recognize the role of happenstance in their lives.
- Teach students to identify CIs by seeking the five personal attributes.
Reflection/Discussion

Consider the life roles you serve in addition to your professional role.

How do they contribute to your approach as a professional?
3. Post-secondary education professionals **conceptualize** the term *career* as a way to make ends meet as a series of progression from one job to another as an expression of one’s skills and knowledge as an ongoing pursuit of meaning and happiness as a means to contribute productively to society.
“If you were truly in a career that’s right for you, you’re in the zone the whole time and then when you fall out of it, it’s probably time to think about if this is what I want to do or how do I get back…that’s the importance of career…having something that can become a joyous lifework” (Jan, a dean)
as a way to make ends meet
as a series of progression from one job to another
as an expression of one's skills and knowledge
as an ongoing pursuit of meaning and happiness
as a means to contribute productively to society

Implication for Practice

Provide opportunities for professionals to engage in regular reflection
4. Furthering professionals’ impact on student career development requires professional development*

- Career development theories
- Career practices related to roles
- Giving application feedback
- Finding and interpreting LMI to inform advice
- Networking with potential employers and organizations
- Formal: CDP certification, industry practicum
- Informal: Community of practice, job shadowing

*PD to be supported and accessible
4. Furthering professionals’ impact on student career development requires institutional commitment.

- Career success in key documents
- “Walking the talk”
- Invest in current initiatives and incentivize new ones
- Current programs to consider alignment with institutional mission and priorities
- Faculties to incorporate career-themed outcomes in curricular and co-curricular learning
Discussion

What support do you need to help students with their career development? How might to obtain these resources within or outside of your institution?
Who is responsible for career development?

What is a career centre?
Concluding Thoughts

career development is everyone’s responsibility

What is a career centre?
Concluding Thoughts

career development is everyone’s responsibility

the institution becomes the career centre
Thank you!
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