FARIHA GUL *
DR. RIZWAN AKRAM RANA **

BRINGING FUTURE IN CLASS: INTEGRATING CAREER PLANNING ACTIVITIES IN TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS

Abstract

Career planning is a process to explore and plan a career according to aspirations of an individual. It is mutual responsibility of teachers, students and educational organizations. However, it has been ignored in local context. This study aimed to develop activities for career planning that can be used in class and to examine effectiveness of all these activities. For this purpose one group post-test only experimental research design was used. All the students, twenty two in number, enrolled in Bachelors of Science education (one year) program were formed the sample of the study. Three instruments were used for whole study and were developed by researcher herself following literature review. Carrier planning activity pack was used to go through the process of carrier planning. Second instrument was a self -developed likert scale questionnaire aiming towards evaluation of effectiveness of career planning activity, while the third instrument was embedded in second instrument, this included three questions regarding efficiency of the activity. Validity of these three instruments was assured by taking expert opinion while reliability of close-ended part was measured through pilot testing. Value of Cronbach alpha was 0.83. At the end of all these activities a self-developed questionnaire was used to measure effectiveness of this career planning activity as a whole. Simple descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. The results indicate that student were satisfied with their career planning activity. On the basis of these results it can be suggested that such activities should be carried out in class in order to help students to plan career from initial stages.

Introduction

Career planning is a process to explore and plan a carrier according to aspirations of an individual. It is mutual responsibility of

---

* PhD Scholar, Institute of education and research, University of the Punjab
** Professor and Chairman, Department of Science Education, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab

students, teachers, educational organizations and parents. However it is one of the ignored aspects of teaching and learning process in native context. The students' carrier is chosen by parents or by marks they achieve during state exams. Although it is considered that career planning starts at upper elementary level i.e., from eight class when students choose science or arts as their area of study. This also becomes more obvious when they go into fields of pre-medical, pre-engineering, commerce, or general science at intermediate or higher secondary level. Subject selection for graduation and post-graduation also give a dimension for career to students.

However, still there are students who are unable to recognize their innate potentials and capabilities. Even after sixteen years of education they do not know what they are aspiring for and what they are doing. This confusion results in increased demotivation, low self-efficacy, and depression. The researcher identified this problem in her class. All of these students were enrolled in bachelors of education, one year program, and all of them had completed sixteen years of education. During introduction they told that they were here just to pass time until they could find a better job. They also clarified that they were still confused that what they could do with their degree.

After talking to them the researcher realized that it seemed they were unable to plan their career. The reasons behind them included inappropriate guidance, lack of information, pressure from families and fear of failure. Most of the students who took degrees in biology, zoology, botany, environmental sciences and chemistry were those who were unable to get admission in medical science. They felt themselves as losers and this sense of failure was increased by comments from family, relatives and friends.

Keeping in mind the indigenous context in which becoming a doctor was like conquering the world and it was ultimate aim of most of the students enrolled in educational institutes. Now when in spite of all efforts when they were unable to get admission in medical science they proceeded to Bachelors of Science degree with subject options of botany, zoology and chemistry. After that many

of them took admission in Master programs in any of the subjects. At this stage, when they passed out with degrees in hand they had very low chances of employment. Most of them did not know where they could apply and get suitable job. Others who knew what to do lacked skills as these degrees focused on academic knowledge instead of giving students employability skills.

All of students in my class came with this back ground. They were confused and depressed; they did not know what they were aspiring for? They were just doing things people were telling them, none of them chose this as choice. This increased importance of career planning activity for them. Secondly, Career planning was important because globalization has triggered rapid changes in employability skills and qualification required, in addition to this availability of various subjects had intensified the competition so it was necessary to plan the career and remain aware of best available options. Additionally rapidly changing economies (Arthur et al., 1999) and working life (Miles Morgan Australia, 2010) have also augmented importance of planning a carrier.

Career planning is a continuous process of discovering abilities, skills, motivations and aspiration of oneself and developing occupational interests accordingly. When process of career planning is integrated in teaching learning process, it help students to find better career options, market need that lead towards learning appropriate skills. As the world is getting more digitalized opening new carrier paths as well as requiring more skills so responsibility of education to meet the criteria has also increased. Additionally carrier planning is also positively correlated with increased rate of return. Another study conducted by (Hughes et. al., 2001) revealed that student with goals and a planned carrier go for higher studies. Additionally carrier planning is considered as good predictor of carrier success (Seibert, Crant, &Kraimer, 1999).

Another important aspect of carrier planning is time of decision making, usually final years are considered best for taking decisions about employment or further studies. Although the participants of the study has completed sixteen years of education but they were still confused employment opportunities that might match with

their personal goals. As availability of multiple carrier options along with personal skills and environmental factors influence on decision regarding carrier (Roger et.al., 2008), so it might be a reason for confusion of these students.

Career planning and exploration are actions or behaviours that are integral to the career development process. Career planning is associated with career decision self-efficacy and high levels of goal-setting (Rogers et al., 2008), work experience (Creed, Patton, & Prideaux, 2007), career expectations and goals (Patton et al., 2004), Career planning involves a future orientation and knowledge of what actions are required in order to pursue one's goals (Phillips &Blustein, 1994).

Although taking carrier decisions is sole responsibility of students themselves, however parent (Astin, 1984; Eccles, 1994; Farmer, 1985; Lent et al., 2002; Young, 1994), teacher (Farmer, 1985; Sewell & Hauser, 1975) and peers (Furman & Buhrmeister, 1992) also influence in taking carrier decisions.

Another study conducted by (Rogers et al, 2008) reported positive relationship between carrier planning and support from parents, teachers and peers. Many other demographic factors that might influence individual carrier choices include age, gender, education, society, economy and environment (McMahon and Patton, 1995).

In demographics described above, age also plays a very vital role, as the carrier planning activity takes place in final school years when students are reached at their adult age. Previous studies also support the notion that adolescence is best stage for planning a carrier (Super, 1990). At this stage of life the individuals began identify carrier options (Erikson,1963) on the bases of personal and vocational interests and skills.

Lack of carrier planning end up in choosing a carrier that do not match with personal aspirations.This may also result in choosing or trying to get job for a carrier that do not match with personal skills. Another major loss is in economic terms, as the students whose carrier aspirations are different from skills and knowledge required

in market, are compelled to take new courses spending extra money and putting extra effort (same happened in case of participants of the study, who were doing additional courses in order to get suitable job). Although it is evident from above discussion that planning and exploring a carrier are very important Super, 1957 & Crites, 1973), however little attention has been given on this aspect in local context. This study was carried out after identifying problems students were facing in carrier planning, major focus of study was to help students to identify and plan carrier for theirselves. However, at the end this effectiveness of carrier planning activity pack was also evaluated through a close and open ended questionnaire.

Objective of the study

Main objective of the study was to help the students to plan their career through career planning process. Secondary objective was to evaluate effectiveness of whole activity.

Sample of the study

As this activity was performed with one class, so the sample of the study comprised all the students registered in the course of 'teaching of biology' offered in one year bachelors program for science teacher education. Total number of students was twenty five, however three of them left due to private reasons. Thus, total number of students who took part in this activity was twenty two.

Instrument

Three instruments were used for whole study and were developed by researcher herself following intensive review of the literature. Carrier planning activity pack was used to go through the process of carrier planning. This was combination of eight activities that were developed after literature review while basic idea was taken from career cruise.

Second instrument was a self -developed likert scale questionnaire aiming towards evaluation of effectiveness of career planning

activity, while the third instrument was embedded in second instrument, this included three questions regarding efficiency of the activity. Validity of these three instruments was assured by taking expert opinion while reliability of close-ended part was measured through pilot testing. Value of Cronbach alpha was 0.83.

Methodology of the study

This activity was started in fourth week of the semester, as stated earlier that students were dissatisfied with their careers and were worried about it, so a group discussion was carried out before planning this activity. In this class discussion everyone was asked to describe their dream career, they were asked questions about that e.g., qualification and education required to enter that profession, skills required and reasons not to join that.

The results were quite unsatisfactory, many students were unaware about profession of their choice and they were unable to respond any questions. When they were asked to describe skills required for that they were unable to respond. Few example included that one of the student wanted to be IT specialist, while throughout his life he studied biological sciences. Additionally, he did not have any know how about computers and never went to get a certificate for it.

Another student wanted to be a journalist and current affairs analyst but she never participated in any activity in her whole education life that increased communication skills required for success in this profession. There were as many wrong concepts as many students were there. During this discussion session when they were asked why they had taken degrees in sciences and that were they interested in becoming teachers? Many of them quoted they were here as their friends recommended to go for it, their parents also forced them to adopt this field of study, and for second statement all of them said a big NO. When they were asked for reasons of joining this course; they were interested to become teachers, they told that they were here to get an additional degree and their parents forced them. They also joined course as many of their friends were joining this.

The third reason was that they wanted to pass time until they become able to get admission in higher education. They were asked at the end that have they decided yet that what they would do after completing their studies, than most of them were confused about it they told they had never thought about this aspect and needed guidance.

At that moment researcher got consensus about career planning activity. These career planning activities were combination of eight activities named as follows;

Activity 1.   Choose a career
Activity 2.   Evaluate yourself regarding this career
Activity 3.   Relate dream/education and skills
Activity 4.   Know yourself
Activity 5.   Know your skills
Activity 6.   A day in person's life working in your dream career
Activity 7.   A day in your life
Activity 8.   Think once more

A brief description of these activities is as follows:

Activity 1.   Choose a carrier

First step of activity was to explore and gather carrier related information (Blustein, 2002). All the students were asked to find three major carriers that they found more suitable for themselves. They were also directed to write advantages and disadvantages of each carrier, and also reason that what has attracted them to choose these carriers as most suitable one from a plenty of options. Gathering such type of information about carrier requirements in form of required qualification, skills and gained benefits, lead towards informed decision making (Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun 1997; Whiston & Sexton, 1998).

Activity 2.   Evaluate yourself regarding this carrier

After that in second activity the students were asked to evaluate themselves against skills required in chosen carrier. Self-evaluation

help in streamlining carrier exploration and planning process (Flum & Blustein, 2000), so this activity was included in carrier planning pack.

Activity 3.   Relate dream carrier, education and skills

Gathering information about a carrier includes relating information and skills to make decision about a carrier (Crites & Savickas, 1995). In this activity respondents were asked to relate skills learned through education, and skills required in dream carrier. At this stage they have chosen one carrier, which they aspire most.

Activity 4.   Know yourself

This activity was concerned with analysis of self. Respondents were asked to write their weaknesses, strengths, skills, values, abilities and activity level.

Activity 5.   Know your skills

This activity was concerned with evaluation of skills required for employment and skills used to retain job in dream carrier. They were asked to write at least ten skills that were required in each aspect.

Activity 6.   A day in person's life working in your dream career

During this activity they were asked to conduct interview of a person who was already working in their dream carrier. Purpose of this activity was to let them be aware about routine tasks that were performed by the person who was working in the field of their choice.

Activity 7.   A day in your life

In this activity the students were again asked to compare skills that they used in their daily life and the skills used by a person (who was working in their dream carrier) in daily life.

Activity 8.   Think once more

This was last activity, in which students were asked to read all their assignments, given previously, make comparisons and finally decide about choosing a carrier that best matched with their skills and education. This activity was not final, if at this stage even the student assumed that either knowledge or skills did not match with his dream carrier, they were asked to find best courses suitable for them.

Procedure of the study

These activities were performed over the period of sixteen weeks, as these activities were not part of their formal teaching-learning process so students were little relaxed while performing them. However, they all were motivated to participate because this was greater chance for them to know about career planning process. At the end of activities students were asked to fill a questionnaire for evaluation of effectiveness of overall activity. Diagrammatical representation of the method is as follows;
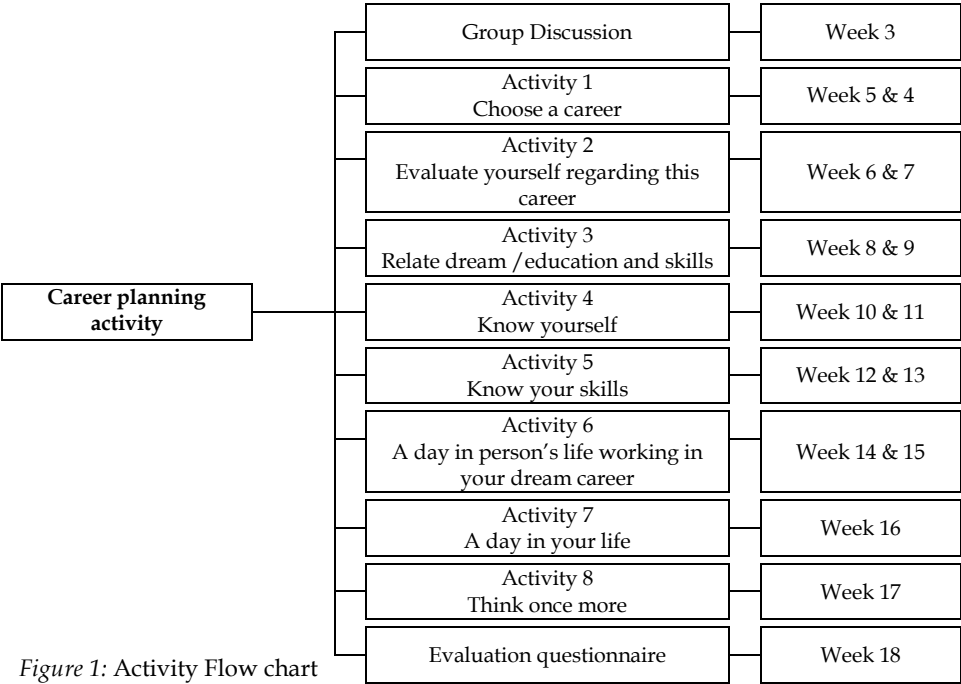

Figure 1: Activity Flow chart

Data analysis and results

As stated earlier two instruments were used to collect data for effectiveness of career planning activity, first instrument was a Likert scale questionnaire, descriptive statistics was used to analyze data, results are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Frequency distribution for effectiveness of career planning activity

Sr#	**Statement**	A %	N %	DA %
1	Career planning activity has been performed earlier during your studies	2	3	95
2	This activity helped me to learn about the links between subjects studied at school and future career choices	87	10	03
3	This activity helped me to gain in-depth knowledge of occupations that I wanted to choose, including education and training requirements	84	12	04
4	This activity helped me to become familiar with the career information	88	08	04
5	This activity helped me to understand that how the subjects and academic skills they learn in school are important in the workplace	80	13	07
6	This activity helped me to learn that how factors like working conditions, education, core tasks, and income help to sort occupations finding suitable career choices	82	11	08
7	This activity helped to gain in-depth knowledge of one or more occupations, including day-to-day working conditions	87	09	04
8	This activity helped me to clarify my interest	98	02	----
9	This activity helped me to relate my interests with my career choice	95	03	02
10	This activity helped me to explore alternative choices for career	80	12	08
11	This activity helped me to understand how personal characteristics and personality affect career choices	85	13	03
12	This activity helped me to learn that people/information/things are one important way of organizing occupations	90	07	03

13	This activity helped me to gain in-depth knowledge of one or more occupations	80	14	06
14	It is responsibility of educational institutions to help us in career planning	87	04	09
15	This activity was helpful for clarifying my professional goals	83	16	01
16	Such activities should be performed at institutional level	99	01	----
17	Such activities should be performed at classroom level	97	03	----
18	Current education system is helpful to find out our own abilities and relate them with our career interests	01	04	95

For sake of convenience in analysis and interpretation the first two options of Likert scale i.e., strongly agree and agree were combined into one category of agree while strongly disagree and disagree were merged to form one category of disagree, however the neutral option remained same.

It is evident from the table that for statement regarding use of activity in past schooling years, about 95% of the respondents agreed that, it never happened to them. For statements 2-15 was regarding effectiveness of this activity, the responses in agreement were tilted towards strongly agree. The response percentage for statements from 2-15 is 87 %, 84%, 88%, 80%, 82%, 87%, 98%, 95%, 80%, 90%, 80%, 87 %, 83% respectively.

Statement number 16 and 17 were about opinion of respondent on inclusion of such type of carrier planning activities at institutional and classroom level. Both of these statements gained high response rate in agreement i.e., 99 & 97%.

Additionally, last statement was about perception of students regarding current status of education with respect to providing carrier planning activities, 95% of the respondents disagreed. The results of first and last statement showed that currently education system was not focusing and helping students to plan their carriers.

Qualitative data analysis

Three open ended questionnaires were asked to evaluate effectiveness of this activity. The students were asked to write their responses on paper, thematic analysis was carried out to analyze responses. After the themes were developed percentages of respondents regarding each category was found out. The results are as follows;

First question was regarding the best thing about this activity, three themes emerged including goal clarification and about 26 % of the respondents said that this activity was very helpful for clarifying their professional goals, for example one respondent said earlier she held a very negative approach and assumed that she could not get job because corruption and bad luck, however this activity has helped her to find out that she was going in wrong direction and now she was better able to re-develop her career goals. About 36 % of them stated that this activity helped them in getting in-depth information regarding career, they wanted to adopt, they were going to adopt and they can adopt, while 39% of the participants agreed that this activity has helped them to know about career planning process and now they were better able to choose best option for them.

Second question was regarding their opinion that who was responsible for their career planning, about 26% of them took responsibility of planning their own career while other 34% stated that although they were also responsible for planning their career but parents should also guide them. On the other hand 26% of respondents said that it was liability of teacher as well educational institutes to help them and guide them in planning their career. Two responses were totally different, one stated that

> "*It is all about luck and we have nothing to do with it*"

while second statement was;

> "*Our previous marks also shape our future career choices*"

Third question was regarding addition of this activity in formal education system and almost hundred percent of them were agreed that such activities should be part of formal education system. They also stated that these activities should be part of school curriculum, in her own words;

> "*these activities should be performed at school level so that students can have better idea of career options and choose best for them from earlier stage*".

Other statement added

> "*I wish that activities like this could be part of our masters curriculum so that we could choose better options for ourselves*".

Results and percentages of this part of instrument are presented in table 2.

Table. 2 Themes and percentage of qualitative analysis

Question 1		Question 2		Question 3	
Theme	**percent age**	**Theme**	**Percen tage**	**Theme**	**percent age**
Clarified goals	26	Myself	26	Performed at school level	100
Enriched informatio n	34	Myself with guidance of parent	34		
Helped in getting idea of career planning process	39	Institute and teachers	26		
		Fate/marks obtained	2		

Conclusion and Discussion

From above results it can be concluded that currently education system is not helping students to explore and plan career. This has resulted in dissatisfaction of students as well as wastage all around. This also has resulted in unskilled or poorly skilled employees, who are unable to get job of their own choice. Secondly it can be clearly seen that the students were quite motivated to and they all were agreed that carrier planning activities should be part of teaching/ learning process throughout all school years.

The results also showed that carrier planning activity pack was highly effective in helping students to learn about their carrier aspiration, carrier exploration and carrier planning. These results were also confirmed by open ended statements, particularly when they were asked to write any suggestion, majority of them did respond that these activities should be part of schooling. The results are also collaborate with previous studies, showing that carrier planning is very important during higher education. The results also support the notion that although the students owes responsibility of carrier planning, however, parents, teachers as well as peers play a very important role in developing carrier aspirations and planning process (Lent et al., 2002; Rogers et al. 2008, Lent, Brown, Schmidt, et al., 2003; Lent, Brown, Nota, et al., 2003; Lent et al., 2001).

Although the results are highly supportive and favorable, however it might be due to many reasons, for example the respondents were disappointed and little bit confused about their carrier options, and when they were provided with an opportunity to explore and plan a carrier, this motivated them leading towards success of this activity. This activity also supports idea that carrier planning activities should be part of routine teaching/learning process and particularly at higher education level. Secondly institutions must take responsibility of helping students to plan their carrier. Seminars, workshops and job fairs can be better activities that can be chosen. One very thought provoking response was about responsibility of carrier planning, although many of them admitted that they own responsibility of planning of their life, however, all

of them were confused till now. They also agreed that teachers and parent are also responsible, this could lead towards exploration of a new prospect, that what had led them not to fill their responsibility of planning and exploration of carrier. This could be a future study.

References

Astin, H. (1984). The meaning of work in women's lives: A socio-psychological model of career choice and work behavior. *The Counseling Psychologist*.

Australia,   M.   (2010).Australian   blueprint   for   career development.*Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs*.

Bluestein, H. (2000). A tornadicsupercell over elevated, complex terrain: The Divide, Colorado, storm of 12 July 1996. *Monthly weather review*, 128(3).

Blustein, D., Juntunen, C. and Worthington, R. (2000). The school-to-work transition: Adjustment challenges of the forgotten half. *John Wiley & Sons Inc*.

Blustein, D. (2002). The relationship between career development and educational development: A selected review of the literature. *Boston College*.

Crites, J. and Savickas, M. (1995).*Career maturity inventory - sourcebook*. 1st ed. Boulder, CO: Bridges.com.

Crites, J. and Savickas, M. (1995).*CMI, career maturity inventory*. 1st ed. Boulder, Colo.: Bridges.com.

Flum, H. and Blustein, D. (2000).Reinvigorating the study of vocational exploration: A framework for research.*Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 56(3), pp.380--404.

Furman, W. and Buhrmester, D. (1992).Age and sex differences in perceptions of networks of personal relationships.*Child development*, 63(1), pp.103--115.

Lapan, R., Gysbers, N. and Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 75(4), pp.292--302.

Lapan, R., Gysbers, N. and Sun, Y. (1997). The impact of more fully implemented guidance programs on the school experiences of high school students: A statewide evaluation study. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 75(4), pp.292--302.

Lent, R., Brown, S., Brenner, B., Chopra, S., Davis, T., Talleyr, and Suthakaran, V. (2001). The role of contextual supports and barriers in the choice of math/science educational options: A test of social cognitive hypotheses. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 48(4), p.474.

Lent, R., Brown, S., Nota, L. and Soresi, S. (2003). Testing social cognitive interest and choice hypotheses across Holland types in Italian high school students.*Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 62(1), pp.101--118.

Lent, R., Brown, S., Schmidt, J., Brenner, B., Lyons, H. and Treistman, D. (2003). Relation of contextual supports and barriers to choice behavior in engineering majors: Test of alternative social cognitive models. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(4), p.458.

Lent, R., Brown, S., Schmidt, J., Brenner, B., Lyons, H. and Treistman, D. (2003). Relation of contextual supports and barriers to choice behavior in engineering majors: Test of alternative social cognitive models. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(4), p.458.

Lent, R., Brown, S., Talleyr, McPartl, Davis, T., Chopra, S., Alex, er, M., Suthakaran, V. and Chai, C. (2002). Career choice barriers, supports, and coping strategies: College students' experiences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 60(1), pp.61--72.

Rogers, C. (1980). *A way of being*. 1st ed. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Rogers, M., Creed, P. and Ian Glendon, A. (2008). The role of personality in adolescent career planning and exploration: A social cognitive perspective. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 73(1), pp.132--142.

Seibert, S., Crant, J. and Kraimer, M. (1999).Proactive personality and career success.*Journal of applied psychology*, 84(3), p.416.

Sewell, W. and Shah, V. (1968).Parents' education and children's educational aspirations and achievements.*American Sociological Review*, pp.191--209.

Sewell, W. and Shah, V. (1968).Social class, parental encouragement, and educational aspirations.*American Journal of Sociology*, 73(5), p.559.

Whiston, S. and Sexton, T. (1998). A review of school counseling outcome research: Implications for practice. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 76(4), pp.412--426.