

Evidence-Informed Academic and Career Planning

and the research says....

Beth Tinsley, M.S. Ed.; Shannon M. Skaistis, M.S.; Alan Burkard, Ph.D.

Marquette University

Agenda for Today

- ▶ Brief history of ACP
- ▶ Review of problems with, barriers to ACP research
- ▶ Review of the research
- ▶ What does the research mean?

Brief History of ACP

1. Frank Parson: Father of Vocational Psych
2. School Counseling (SC)
 - a. As early as the 1930s
 - b. Norman Gysbers in 1960s
 - c. ASCA National School Counseling Model, 1999
3. Individual with Disability Education Act (IDEA) mandated planning in 1975
4. Convergence of education professionals in the last decade
5. The National Governors Conference

Research on ACP

Two areas will be addressed

- Outcomes
- Interventions

Legislation of ACP has far outpaced research on ACP!

Research on ACP: Problems

▶ Outcome Research

- ▶ Largely description: self-report, survey-based research, qualitative
- ▶ Lack of reliable and valid measures
- ▶ Largely correlational research
- ▶ No controlled studies

▶ Intervention Research

- ▶ Interventions used are varied, not well documented
- ▶ Limited theory to drive research
- ▶ Not enough schools offering ACP services, limited research opportunities

Outcomes from ACP: Student Career-Post-Secondary Planning

▶ We see increases in....

- ▶ Quality of plans after working on plans
- ▶ Level of reflection
- ▶ Awareness of post-secondary work options and educational opportunities
- ▶ Understanding of skills, career interests and areas for improvement
- ▶ Confidence to act on career and post-secondary plans
- ▶ Aspirations for career and college
- ▶ Accessing career information more frequently

Outcomes from ACP: Student Academic

- ▶ Student academic goals are more clear, which appears to be connected to a more effective school experience
- ▶ Academic coursework chosen...
 - ▶ Tends to be more rigorous
 - ▶ More relevant to college and career choices
- ▶ Feel more engaged in schools after planning
- ▶ Have stronger sense of belonging after planning
- ▶ Pursue more leadership opportunities after planning
- ▶ Feel more responsibility for academic and career goals
- ▶ ACP planning was best predictor of student achievement when compared to other SC interventions such as consultation, counseling and SC curriculum

Outcomes from ACP: Parent and Schools

- ▶ Parents attend planning sessions and participate at high rate
- ▶ Parents report feeling better informed of academic and career expectations and skills necessary to attain careers
- ▶ Increased quality of relationship between parents and their children, teachers and students, parents and schools
- ▶ School counselors involved in ACP feel more effective in helping students and more committed to their jobs

What is missing from the outcome research?

The background of the slide is white with abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue (light blue, medium blue, and dark blue) on the right side, creating a modern, professional look.

ACP Intervention Effectiveness

What do ACP facilitators need for ACP Success?

- ▶ Commitment level to ACP is influenced by...
 1. Clear goals for the ACP
 2. Identified outcomes
 3. Training
 4. Ongoing communication
- ▶ Time: Positive mentoring requires time

ACP Intervention Effectiveness

What do students need?

- ▶ Time: quality of plans increase with time to plan
- ▶ High quality mentors who influence the quality of students' experiences in planning
- ▶ College bound students report wanting individualized attention...
BUT....
 - ▶ The evidence does not suggest that individual strategies are more effective than group strategies
- ▶ Varied instructional approaches...
 - ▶ Evidence suggests that students lose attention when the ACP strategies are...
 - ▶ Not varied in method of delivery
 - ▶ Lack of relevance to students' long-term goals

ACP Intervention Effectiveness

What do students need?

- ▶ Simple, clear goals that are connected to immediate steps that are attainable
- ▶ Better outcomes are attained when ...
 - ▶ Students have challenging academic goals
 - ▶ Students have community-based career exploration experiences
- ▶ Alignment between student, parent, school and teacher goals leads to higher achievement

ACP Intervention Effectiveness

What are the barriers to effectiveness?

- ▶ Scheduling
- ▶ Lack of collaboration among staff
- ▶ When the intervention strategies are undefined mentors struggle to be effective
- ▶ Students struggle to see how ACPs are an aid to academic and personal development, they tend to only see the connection to career planning
- ▶ **Intended outcomes of ACP interventions are unclear**

ACP Intervention Effectiveness: Career Counseling Literature

Overall message on career counseling interventions....

...Career counseling interventions are effective for career choice

Counseling Intervention (Brown & Krane, 2000)

- ▶ Ryan's (1999) study may be the most important study on career counseling interventions published to date for **career choice**
- ▶ Incorporated studies of career intervention used in prior meta-analyses plus any additional research ($N = 62$ studies; 7725 participants)
 - ▶ Fairly diverse racially-ethnically
 - ▶ Diverse interventions [e.g., self-directed (21%), individual counseling (8%), group counseling (16%), classroom (29%), combination (26%)]
- ▶ Used more contemporary meta-analytic techniques
- ▶ What is a meta-analysis?

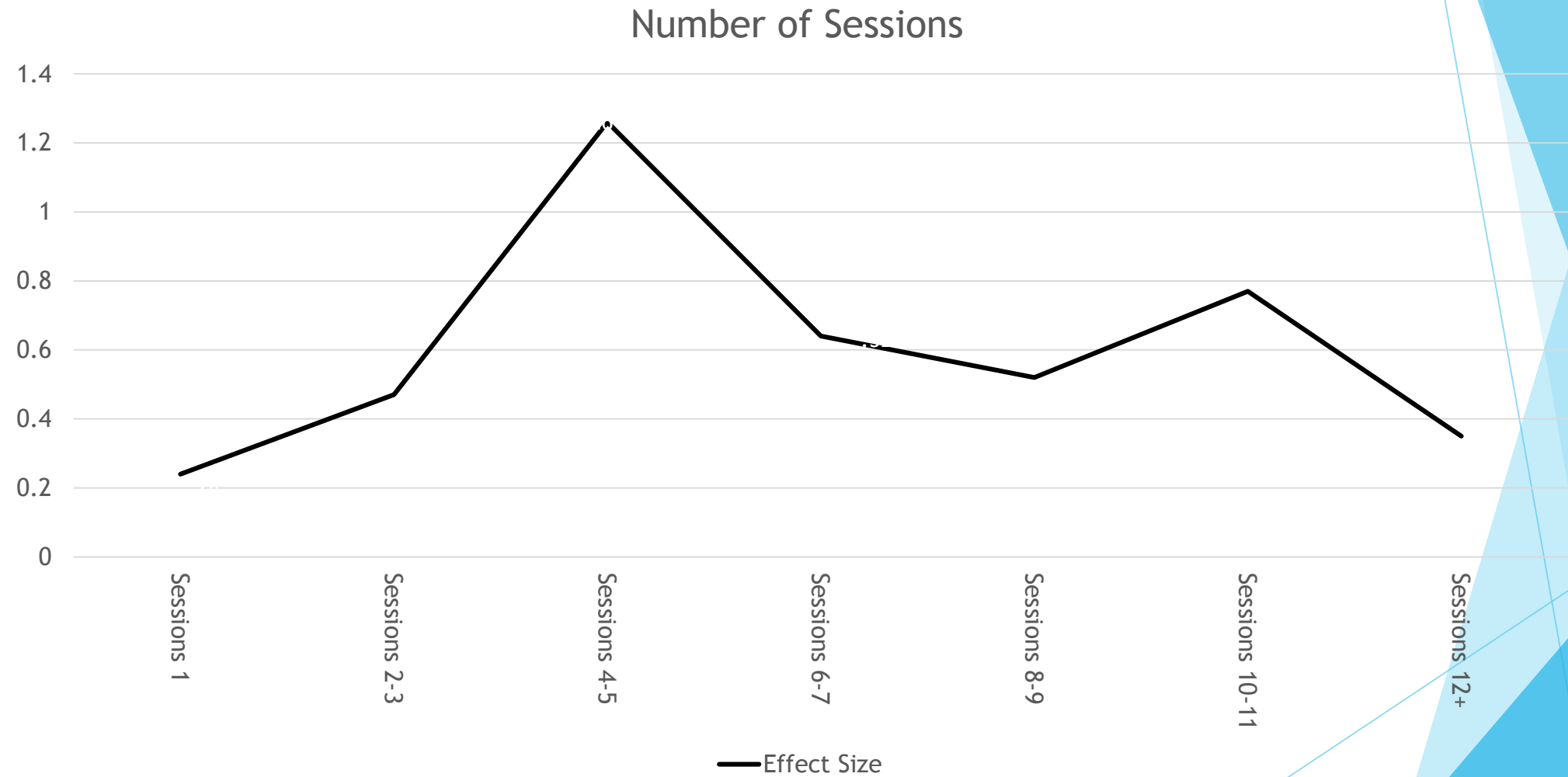
Meta-Analysis

- ▶ Statistical analysis of a large number of individual studies for the purpose of integrating findings across studies
- ▶ Compares untreated with treated groups and examines the percentile of overlap for effect sizes for both groups
 - ▶ So, if the ES is 0.0 for the two groups, the means for both groups are essentially at the 50th percentile
 - ▶ If the ES is .80, then the group mean for the treatment group is at the 79th percentile of the untreated group
 - ▶ If the ES is 1.70, the treatment group mean is at the 95.5 percentile of the untreated group
 - ▶ **Note** that different effects sizes are interpreted differently and the above descriptions are only examples
- ▶ Cohen's *d*: small ES = .20; medium ES = .50; large ES = .80

Ryan (1999) Results

- ▶ Interventions averaged 7.49 sessions, over an average of 5.36 weeks
- ▶ Effect sizes for ...
 - ▶ Career Decision-making self-efficacy beliefs: .21
 - ▶ Vocational Identity: .63
 - ▶ Mean across all analyses: .34

Ryan (1999) Results



Ryan (1999) Results:

Three important findings

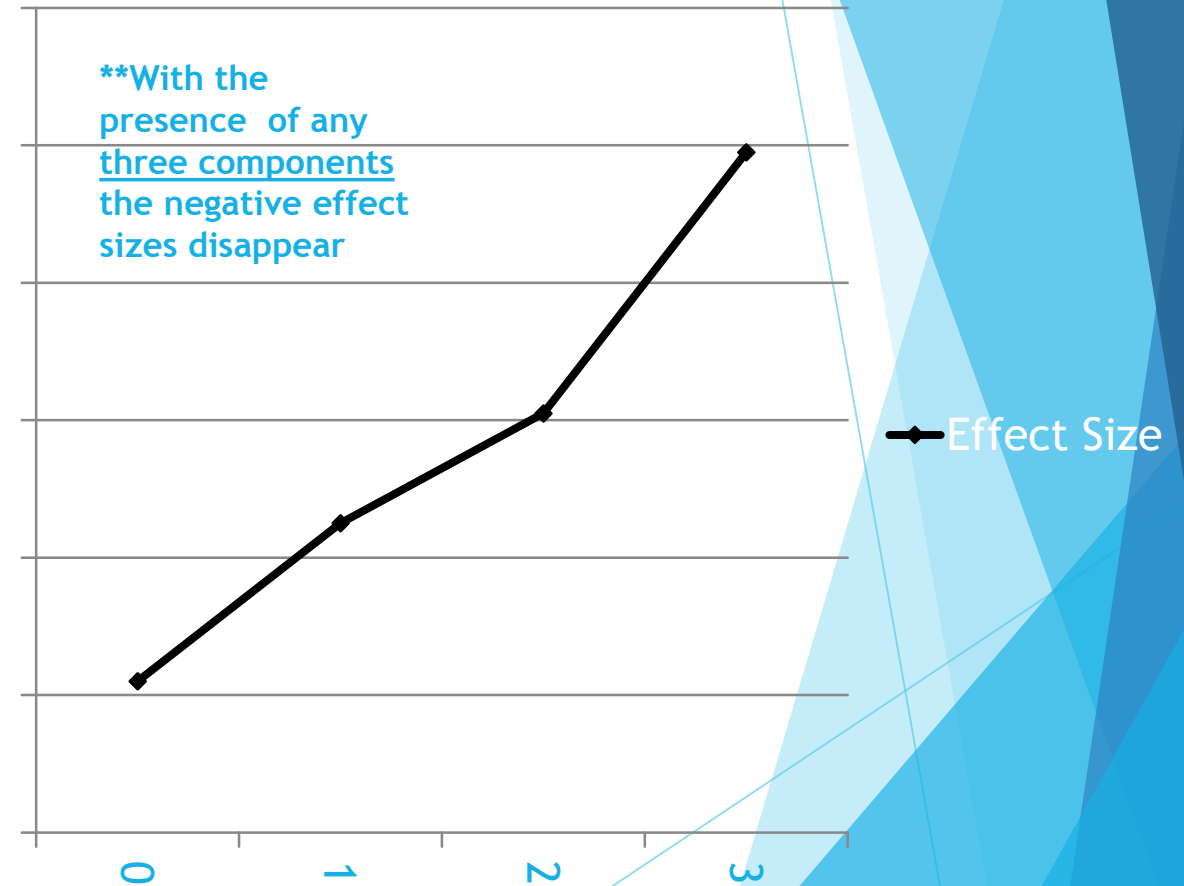
1. Participant characteristics (e.g., age, educational level, motivation) did not contribute unique variance to effect size variability
2. Career intervention effectiveness
 - a. Group (.55)
 - b. Classroom (.43)
 - c. Individual (.41)
 - d. Self-Directed (.23), by far the least effective intervention

Ryan (1999) Results:

Three important findings

3. Five specific interventions were identified as important, contributing 2% to 38% in outcomes
 - a. Individualized test interpretations and feedback
 - b. Written, reflective exercises
 - c. World-of-work information
 - d. Modeling opportunities
 - e. Building social support for choices

Number of Critical Components



Ryan (1999) Findings and School Counseling

- ▶ Weak effects (and negative effects) were more often found in classroom interventions (45%)
- ▶ Classroom interventions more often incorporated none of the five critical components

5 Key Career Choice Interventions- In Summary

1. Individualized test interpretations and feedback
2. Written, reflective exercises
3. World-of-work information
4. Modeling opportunities
5. Building social support for choices

5 Key Career Choice Interventions

1. Individualized Interpretations and Feedback

- i. Individually tailored feedback from counselor to client regarding career issues and development
- ii. Individual or group counseling, or classroom setting
- iii. Interventions included:
 - ▶ Testing interpretation
 - ▶ Individual attention on written career plans
 - ▶ Individualized feedback on career decision-making strategies

Key Career Choice Interventions

2. Written Exercises

- i. Activities for clients to record reflections, thoughts or feelings regarding career development (e.g., journals, logs, workbooks)
- ii. Largest effects for workbooks designed to help clients recognize personal occupational misconceptions and stereotypes (Brenner & Gazda-Grace, 1979; Glaize & Myrick, 1984)
- iii. Two important themes common to exercises:
 - 1) Establishing work and life goals plan for implementation
 - 2) Gaining accurate, nonstereotypic occupational information

Key Career Choice Interventions

3. Information about the World-of-Work

- i. Practical information from the counselor or resources on earnings, opportunities, outlook, work activities, advancement and training requirements for various occupations
- ii. Seems essential that counselors learn about a variety of career and employment paths

Key Career Choice Interventions

4. Modeling

- i. Involves exposing clients to effective role models who have attained success in the processes of career exploration, decision-making, and career implementation
- ii. Examples: guest speakers; facilitator disclosure of Holland type, work history, and personal career development; video or film presentations
- iii. Role models appear to impart important information and inspiration to clients
- iv. Community partnerships are particularly important to schools

Key Career Choice Interventions

5. Attention to Building Support

- i. Helping clients learn how to and to build supportive networks to facilitate career development and choice
- ii. Parents and significant others (e.g., peers, other family, school) have been found to be important as well as facilitators who are familiar with and informed about clients' specific cultural contexts
- iii. Teaching clients to interact positively with supports is seen as important
- iv. Relatedly, non-supportive peer networks have also been found to be damaging to aspirations

Focus of Interventions for School Aged Youth

Predominate Career Development Tasks from Research

1. Develop positive Career-related Self-efficacy expectations and attributional styles
2. Forming a vocational identity, with personally identified career interests
3. Learning effective social, prosocial, and work readiness skills
4. Construct a better understanding of self, world of work, and how one fits in the world of work
5. Empower all students to achieve academically, and become self-regulated learners

Beth Tinsley, M.S. Ed.

Marquette University

Elizabeth.Tinsley@Marquette.edu

Shannon M. Skaistis, M.S.

Marquette University

Shannon.Skaistis@Marquette.edu

Alan Burkard, Ph.D.

Marquette University

Alan.Burkard@marquette.edu; (414)288-3434

Questions?
Comments?