

# Academic and Career Planning in Wisconsin High Schools: Results of a Study with Exemplar Schools

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# Agenda for Today

- ▶ Overview of our study
- ▶ Review of our preliminary findings in context to relevant research on ACP
- ▶ Discussion of next steps
- ▶ Bonus: Review of ACP research

# Our Study- Academic and Career Planning in Wisconsin High Schools

- ▶ We sought to understand the school's ACP program, the factors that contributed to the development of their program, and how the program was implemented/ delivered.
- ▶ Used Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) methodology to interview 11 schools

# Study Participants

- ▶ Participants nominated by professionals integral to training and consulting of ACP
  - ▶ Exemplar Sampling
  - ▶ Diverse Cross-Section
- ▶ 11 Participants (Districts)
  - ▶ 4 Suburban
  - ▶ 7 Rural
- ▶ 8 ACP Coordinators
- ▶ 5 School Counselors

# Study Participants

- ▶ Education Level
  - ▶ 6 Master's in School Counseling
  - ▶ 3 Master's in Administration
  - ▶ 1 Master's in Career and Technical Education
  - ▶ 1 ABD Doctorate in Educational Leadership
- ▶ Time in Professional Role
  - ▶ 5.5 years on average
- ▶ Time in Education Profession
  - ▶ 18 years on average

# Categories/Themes

- ▶ How ACP developed
- ▶ ACP resources and delivery
- ▶ ACP activities
- ▶ Student changes due to ACP
- ▶ Student outcomes
- ▶ Evaluation
- ▶ Barriers to evaluation and programming
- ▶ Value added to school
- ▶ Strengths
- ▶ Future goals

# How ACP Developed

- ▶ Coordinator hired to plan and coordinate
- ▶ Reviewed other district programs
- ▶ Ran pilot program
- ▶ Consulted with other resources (e.g., CESA, WSCA)
  - ▶ Provided examples for delivery of ACP
  - ▶ Provided professional training for ACP development (i.e., CESA)
  - ▶ Developed partnerships with businesses and Postsecondary institutions

# ACP Resources and Delivery

- ▶ Resources
  - ▶ Reviewed what "successful" schools are doing
  - ▶ DPI and CESA professionals
  - ▶ Websites/ Software (Career Cruising, Naviance, Xello, etc.)
  - ▶ ASCA standards
  - ▶ Administration (District and School)
  - ▶ Professional Development (conferences, webinars, etc.)
  - ▶ Community partners/ businesses
  - ▶ Strategic plan, ACP teams, colleagues
- ▶ Participants report delivery of services are administered by both teachers and counselors



# ACP Activities

- ▶ Provided Curriculum on career planning often through advisories
  - ▶ Postsecondary planning to align with HS classes and Post Secondary goals
  - ▶ Graduate requirements
  - ▶ Career direction, topics and planning
  - ▶ Scholarship resources for Post Secondary
  - ▶ Career assessment
  - ▶ Job requirements and careers
  - ▶ Post Secondary admission process
  - ▶ Reviewed the FAFSA
  - ▶ Arranged college visits

“[...] students are with an advisory for the duration of the four years that they are in high school, and so the goal is really to develop and cultivate some community and some kind of a school mom or dad kind of relationship with their advisor.”

# ACP Activities Continued

- ▶ Web-based program available for assessment and planning
- ▶ Fostered a supportive relationship with a caring adult
- ▶ Staff met one-on-one with students
- ▶ Coordinated activities with Middle School
- ▶ Collaborated with local businesses for internships
- ▶ Required students to complete an ACP portfolio
- ▶ Provided student-parent conferences
  - ▶ Focused on course selection
  - ▶ Reviewed goals and progress on goals

# From Ryan (1999) What are schools doing well?

- ▶ Written, reflective exercises (e.g., portfolios, reflection exercises)
- ▶ World-of-work information (e.g., job centers, Career Cruising)
- ▶ Modeling opportunities (e.g., mentoring, presentations to younger students).

▶ “[...] we also pulled in some other assessments like surveys like a personality survey things like that just so we can dig into who they are. A lot of circle discussion where they are in conversations and reflections about where they are at with things. We do a lot of small group work. [...] we want them to be like ‘Yes! we get to do ACP’ not like ‘oh god we have to do ACP.’”

# From Ryan (1999), what's missing?

- ▶ Most schools weren't using three or more of the interventions
- ▶ There is a lot of work being done, however they are often specific to one category
- ▶ Hard to know if they are using reflection on a consistent basis, specifically written reflection
- ▶ Students are getting assessment, but not individualized interpretation and ability to process
- ▶ Increased focus on modeling (e.g., internships, externships, job shadowing)

# So what kind of outcomes did we see...

- ▶ Student changes as a result of ACP
- ▶ Observed student outcomes
- ▶ Value added to school

# Student Changes Due to ACP

- ▶ Students graduate with a future plan
- ▶ Develop employability skills
- ▶ Start goal-setting early
- ▶ Students increase self-awareness of goals and values with ACP
- ▶ Increase knowledge of how to use ACP resources

“So we want them to be aware of all their options [...] apprenticeship, military, the two-year technical colleges, the two year-UW, private and public four year universities, just everything that’s out there for them. And if they don’t, and they want to go into the world of work right out of high school that’s fine. But really encouraging them to have a plan [...]”

# Observed Student Outcomes

- ▶ Increased student engagement with ACP and understanding of ACP
- ▶ Students find meaning in ACP
- ▶ Increase in Advanced Placement/ Dual-credit and place based learning

“So how do I want them to be different? I want them to all have had the same experience, but by the end of that same experience come with a good tool set, resources from each of those three people, understanding better what their next steps should be.”

# What are some possible outcomes to evaluate?

- ▶ Level of student engagement?
- ▶ Did students find this meaningful? Did they derive satisfaction in the exploration of options? Are they excited by that?
- ▶ How to use resources independently in the future?
- ▶ The caveat, these are not outcomes associated with achievement. ACP is part of a continuum.



# Evaluation Methods

- ▶ Student surveys
- ▶ Anecdotal feedback
- ▶ Need a formalized tool
- ▶ Utilize software metrics
- ▶ Use data (district, perception, process, enrollment, graduation, clearing house, etc.)

“Well again, there’s a lack of best practice on outcomes. If someone sent me an email that said ‘*hey. these are the end all be all indicators of success for your ACP program*’ I would implement them tomorrow, but we don’t have those.”

# Challenges/Barriers to Evaluation or ACP Program

## ▶ Evaluation

- ▶ No tool
- ▶ Not enough time
- ▶ Difficult to evaluate ACP

## ▶ ACP Program

- ▶ Teacher buy-in
- ▶ No longitudinal data
- ▶ Program fidelity

"We're trying to identify a metric to measure the "X Factor" for student motivation, parent involvement and student engagement that we don't know how to measure yet."

# Value Added to School

- ▶ Role of mentorship and supportive adults other than parents
- ▶ Teachers are invested in ACP, see themselves as active and important role in delivery of ACP, teachers are encouraged to share their past experience, to include the various career routes teachers took leading up to becoming teachers

ACP helps students “[...] figure out what to do with their lives with a supportive adult for four years[...].”

# Strengths of ACP

- ▶ Parent Involvement
- ▶ Integrated ACP curriculum into coursework
  - ▶ Integration into core curriculum shows there is a real-life application to their learning through career
  - ▶ Courses are meaningful to career direction

“it [ACP] gives kids meaning behind what they are learning, it gives them purpose”

# Future Goals

- ▶ Improved methods of evaluation
  - ▶ Development of appropriate metrics and tools for evaluating effectiveness of ACP
- ▶ Parent involvement!
- ▶ Use parent evaluations
  - ▶ Increase parent involvement in ACP (e.g., through Career Cruising)
  - ▶ Increase parent attendance at conferences

“[...] missing the boat on the parent piece.”

“

“[...] I would say that our students are going to walk across the stage next week, have put a significant amount of thought into where they're going, how they're gonna get there, and why they're doing it. So, that's really exciting.”

”

Thank you! Questions?

# 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?

# 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?

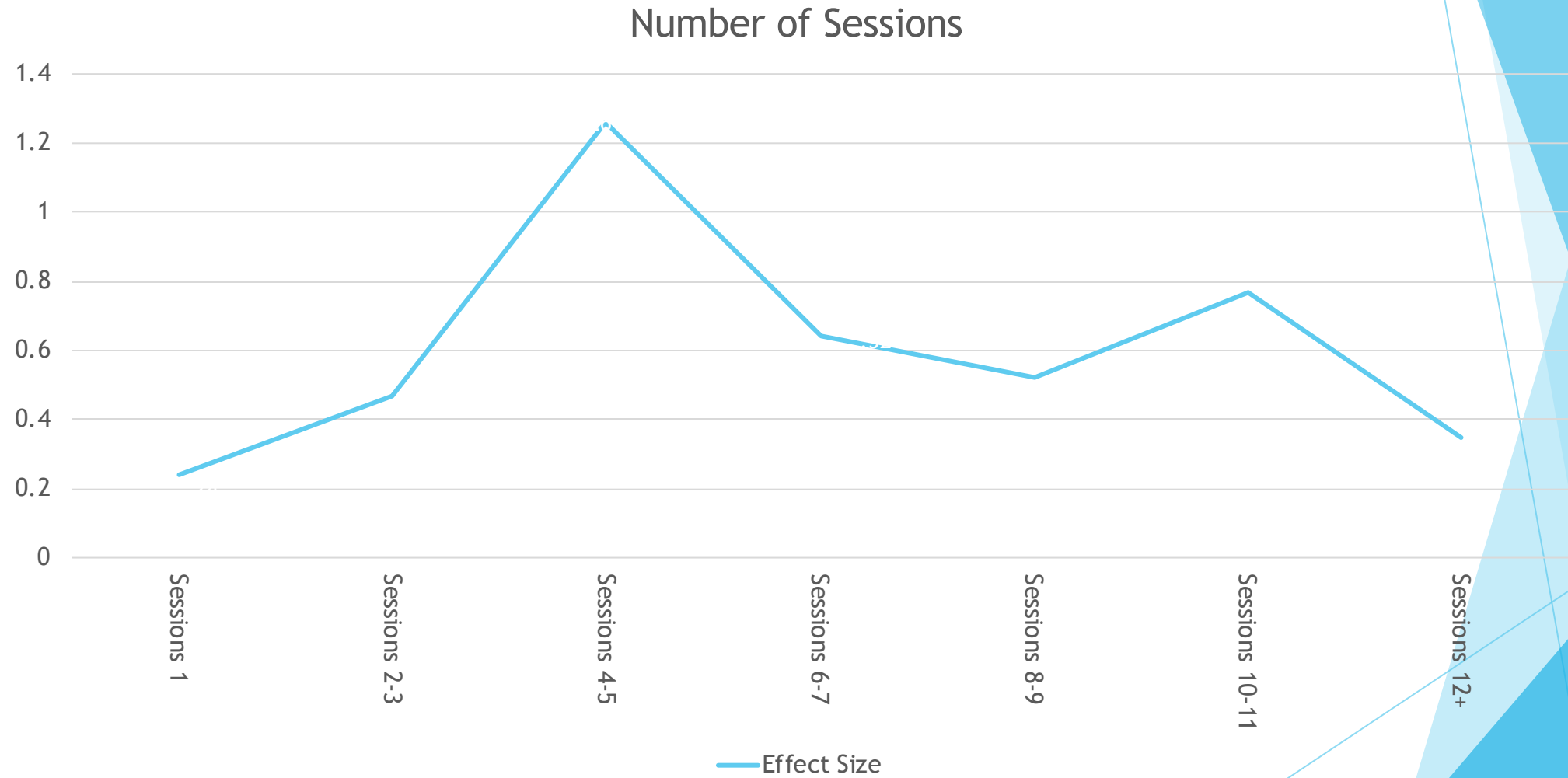
# Meta-Analysis

- ▶ 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 50<sup>th</sup> percentile
  - ▶ If the ES is .80, then the group mean for the treatment group is at the 79<sup>th</sup> 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

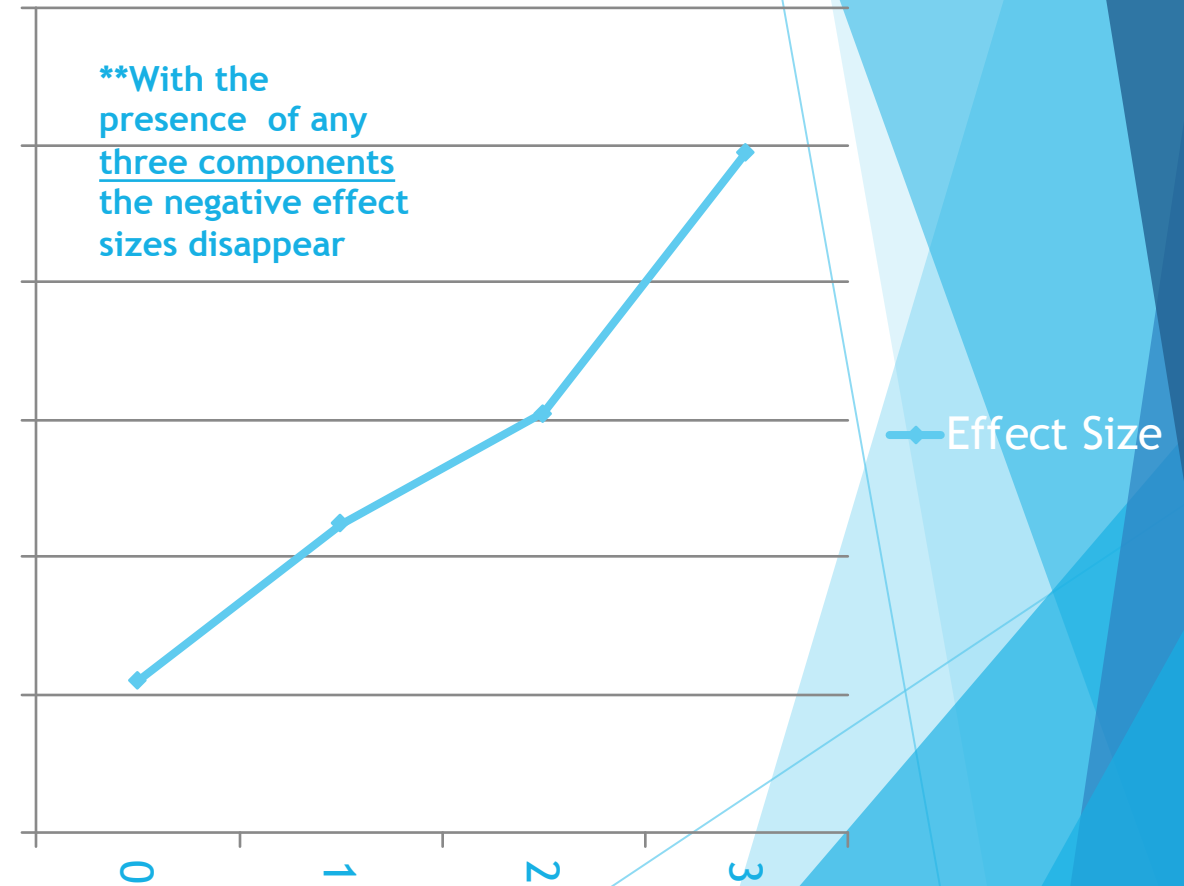
1. Participant characteristics (e.g., age, educational level, motivation) did not contribute unique variance to effect size variability
2. Career intervention effectiveness
  - a. Group (.55)
  - b. Classroom (.43)
  - c. Individual (.41)
  - d. Self-Directed (.23), by far the least effective intervention

# 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



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Questions?  
Comments?