Career Education for Children and Youth

PhD. **Inta Lemešonoka**

Abstract

Nowadays international interest in career education is increasing as people acknowledge the personal, social and economic benefits of equipping school students with the attitudes, knowledge and transferable skills they will need. Problem's actuality is connected with several conditions. According researches approximately 25% of youths have problems in finding self-confidence and to make career decision after schools` graduating, they have problems to find possibilities to continue education or to take part in job market. **Summarising the results of various studies made by the Latvian educational institutions over the last three years regarding high school students readiness to choose the most appropriate further educational or professional area for themselves, the conclusion is** that during the spring semester on average only 5 out of every 25 students studying in the 9th to 12th grade in different schools, that is 25% from 100%, clearly know their future educational or career path.

The aim of the study is to draw attention to pedagogical problems providing career support in the schools educational process and to offer some solutions for career education as a way to help individuals to apply the obtained knowledge and skills in particular conditions, when the decisions should be made concerning their career development.

The quality of career education is determined by the professional competence of pedagogical and support staff and by the competence of the class master. **It is not just counseling or providing information to children according to their individual needs. Career education includes the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned program of learning experiences in education and that will assist students to make informed decisions about their study and work options.**

The information about the general problem and possible solutions in this abstract is based on researches by scientists of pedagogy and psychology, career researchers on experience of career counsellor, on competence of school teachers or class masters.

Keywords: career, career education, career guidance

Introduction

In analyzing the mentioned study I would first of all like to clarify terminology**. One should note that the notion of term " career" has changed and considerably expanded in**

recent decades. Initially we understood the notion of career as a successful activity in a professional area with possibilities of promotion, fame and popularity while today the term "career" is understood not only as a progress in a professional area but also as a purposeful development of one's personality and a consecutive change of one's professional activity types during lifetime (Karjeras attīstības atbalsts: izglītība, konsultēšana, pakalpojumi, 2008). There are notable advantages in considering how the concept of 'career' can become integral to the mission of the school, and suggests that approaches that integrate a varied menu of career learning activities into the mainstream curriculum (Hooley, Marriott, Watts, Coiffait, 2012). Career is a lifestyle concept that involves the sequence of work, learning and leisure activities. Careers are unique to each person and are dynamic, unfolding throughout life. Careers include how people balance their paid and unpaid work and personal life roles. (A Career Development Resource for Parents, 2006; Super, 2001) It means that today every youngster should sooner or later grasp that in the 21st century one cannot learn a profession and acquire other skills for the whole life.

Therefore Career education is programmes and activities of learning to help children to develop the skills necessary to manage their career and life pathway, to develop self-awareness, their knowledge of opportunities and the skills to make decisions, also to manage transitions through their life, learning and work. (Hooley et al, 2012).

In Western nations career guidance in education is primarily based on trait-and-factor approach. In this approach which - through the work of Holland (1973,1985) - had a huge influence on the shape and content of career guidance and counselling in education, the concepts „informed choice" and „decision making" are the key. In this model, a good career choice is made when the personality and the talents of a potential employee match with the required knowledge and skills of the job in question. Counsellors and teachers should provide students with reliable information about their talents and with information about the knowledge and skills that are needed to carry out particular jobs (Kuijpers, Meijers, Gundy, 2011).

The aim of the study is to draw attention to pedagogical problems in schools and to offer some solutions for career education as a way to help individuals apply the obtained knowledge and skills in particular conditions when decisions should be made concerning their career development.

Materials and methods. The article analyses theories on youth career development and its guidance, and results of surveys within in Riga Career Guidance Centre for Youth and Parents. In gathering data we used observations, inquiries, tests, surveys, individual

interviews. Respondent group consisted of 9th – 12th class students from different schools receiving career guidance in the centre, teachers working with youngsters in various education institutions (primary and secondary schools, general and vocational schools, special education schools).

Results and discussion

In order to help children to plan their career, one should be aware of reasons for problems in schools` educational processes. Survey students` satisfaction with schools` career education and guidance, programmes summarising the results of various studies and surveys made by the Euroguidance Latvia, Riga Education and Information Methodological Centre for teachers (RIIMC), Career Guidance Centre for Youth and Parents (JV-KIKC) show various reasons why young people find it difficult to choose the direction of further education, or professional area.

The most important reasons are as follows:

- term „career" and „career education" not used as an aid in the decision-making process about choosing educational institution;
- meny of the students start thinking about their future only in the last grade of the high school and during the graduation exam time;
- the students don't have very good knowledge of the possible career information sources and internet websites;
- students haven't acquired self-assessment, career planning and decision making skills;
- career educations` activities within the schools' educational process are irregular and fragmentary and sometimes teachers use old and primitive methods;
- career education is mostly done by school teachers, psychologists, social teachers, vice heads but are not provided by career professionals;
- teaching staff know little about the labor market and what is involved in different types of jobs;
- students have very few or no opportunities to take part in work experience;

Career education and guidance is an inherent element of every school`s provision of a rich and balanced education. It assists students to make decisions at key transition points and supports their successful transition from school to further education or work. Career education consists of planned progressive learning experiences that help students develop career management competences that will assist them to manage their lives.(Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2009; Hooley, Marriott, Watts, Coiffait**,**

2012). It means that career education includes elements that stand alone and elements that are part of regular classroom teaching.

A survey done by JV-KIKC to find out reasons for problems in schools` educational process show that ~24 % of children think that there are very difficult situation in the schools: education content is very complicated, they have difficulties to learn and don't receive individual support. Young people believe that teachers sometimes use old, unproductive and primitive methods, and frontal work prevails. In discussions with career counsellor youngsters admit that often teachers do not understand themselves, changes in the society and the way those will affect their career paths, are not able to analyse their short life experience, interests and talents. Children are waiting for someone to prompt what and how should be done, where to study further, what is necessary for studies and future working life. Also, if someone still counsels them on the mentioned issues (subject or class teachers), it is mainly done in a formal way. Therefore teachers, on their part, admit that their work with young people is becoming more difficult from year to year: classes or study groups are becoming more heterogeneous, there are certain problems that have come up only recently and not everyone has experience how to act in such situation, e.g. teachers are informing of always growing numbers of youth with low learning motivation. 30-40% of pupils do not receive the necessary support from their families, and for them school is the only place where they are assisted in doing not only study tasks by also solve economic and social issues. Teachers would like to have been more trained in education management and use communication technologies (ICT). Career educators help youth to construct their careers by acquiring knowledge and skills that will enable them to identify, choose, plan and prepare for learning, training, work and other life roles and schools` staff would like to have been trained in this field too.

One of the most important skills which to learn in school is career planning skill. Career planning is closely related to decision-making and action planning and analysing skills. However this experience may only be gained if one is first informed on various employment areas. This includes knowledge on economy areas, understanding one's interests and skills, ability to learn and acquire information on employment possibilities (Ertelts, Šulcs, 2008; Garleja, 2006; Patton, 1999).

An equally important skill is decision making. One's career path has become more and more unpredictable (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005), and therefore, it is increasingly difficult to make rational and information-based career choices (Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999; Guindon & Hanna, 2002). The idea that students even have the cognitive

ability to make rational career choices is also being challenged. People are not able to make rational decisions because they do not have all the facts, do not have a consistent value system, and, furthermore, do not possess sufficient reasoning skills (Kuijpers, Meijers, Gundy, 2011). Between career specialists a well known and interesting is Vroom`s decision making model - „expectancy model" (1964). According to this model individuals try to make a decision in such a way that they realise the most desirable outcomes and avoid undesirable results.Vroom`s model is interesting approach for helping pupils to understand how they make a choice and it can help the pupils to develop a better understanding of their expectations, beliefs, values and interests. The above mentioned example shows that, in order to offer professional career support, career educators need to use scientifically developed method. However not every teacher has access to such methods and not every teacher knows how to use them. Therefore it is crucial to educate teachers themselves.

Other important skill is to learn. Taking into account that youngsters often evaluate their skills to learn and study results by how others think, enough attention in teaching process should be paid to the development of self-confidence assuming the so-called success-oriented guidance. Success-oriented school policy stimulates better achievements, especially ability to overcome hardships and successfully fulfil new tasks. Both helplessness and success-oriented behaviour are not related to one's intellect: it is a personal quality, a way the youngster sees herself, is able to treat other people and cope with different conditions (Fišers, 2005; Hargreaves, 2004).

The above mentioned skills may be learned already in schools with good career education, i.e. with a provision of planned activities, courses and programmes.

Three main policy goals can be identified that are served by careers work in schools: learning goals related to improving the efficiency of the education and training system and managing its interface with the labour market, including supporting student motivation and attainment and reducing drop-out; labour-market goals related to improving the match between supply and demand and managing adjustments to change; social-equity goals related to supporting social mobility and promoting social inclusion. Career learning is a key means through which schools have supported young people to think about how their learning fits with their life beyond school. The essence of career-learning is to connect to self to work that career-learning is a journey, from finding something out of knowing what to do to move on in our lives. (Hooley, Marriott, Watts and Coiffait, 2012; Kuijpers, 2006; Meijers, 2008).

Learning young people´s needs both in educational aspect and personal and social aspect is important. The school's role in this process is invaluable: it should be responsive towards the different and often complicated needs of individual pupils, and it should ensure that pupils finish it with sufficient knowledge and motivation to take up responsibility for studies during their whole life (Karjeras izglītība skolā. Pieredze 2009, 2010).

In career guidance there are different methods and approaches for assessing one's interests, suitability for a certain job, attitudes and values. If those methods are coupled with purposeful individual interviews, the youngster is able to learn to be aware of his or her talents, skills, level of knowledge and skills, to choose a path of education or working life, learn to take decisions and carry out autonomous career planning (Career counseling, compendium of methods and techniques, 2007). Career guidance provides individualised interactions to help students move from a general understanding of the life, learning and work to a specific understanding of the life, learning and work options that are open to them. It helps individuals or small groups to better understand themselves and their needs, develop new perspectives and make progress. An important role in youth career education is played by their self-assesment It helps to get to know oneself, one's interests, talents, skills, temperament, character etc. In encouraging the youngster to self-assess his or her daily learning results the teacher may strengthen pupils' inherent value, to enhance faith in one's own abilities, to help perceive learning process as a purposeful and personally important activity (Garleja, 2006; Patton, 1999*;* Watts, 2008*)*.

To achieve the main goal of career education – to help the student learn self-assessment, comparing their interests with their abilities, and take conscious career choices – it is essential that the student has participated in career education program that secures learning career skills lead. In schools career education program normally is multidisciplinary and it's base is formed by personal psychology, economics, sociology, ethics et al. (Saltana, 2011).

Teaching is not simply a set of technical skills for teaching knowledge to receptive students. Career theorist, professor Inglar Tron maintains: "Teaching involves caring for children and youth, and it is, to a certain degree, being responsible for their development. Teachers therefore need to think about the teaching "end" and the learning process, as well as the teaching "means"." (Tron, 2012, 93).

Conclusions

- Schools have a moral responsibility to ensure that young people leave school with the skills, knowledge, attitudes and attributes to manage their life, learning and work.
- Career education needs to be part of the schools` pedagogical process.
- The foundation of career self-management skills, for example: decision-making, self-awareness, self confidence are laid at an early age. However career education and guidance in the primary school are limited or non-existent, and little systematic provision is made to explore the world of work.
- Often career guidance staff do not have the resources that they need to provide career support properly;
- Career education and guidance are often considered to be the sole responsibility of the specialist career guidance staff, rather than the joint responsibility of all members of the schools` teaching staff.
- In career guidance there are different methods and approaches for assessing young people's interests, suitability for a certain job, attitudes and values. It is possible to help find one's talents, skills, level of knowledge, to choose a path of education or working life, to acquire the skill to prepare for taking decisions and autonomous career planning
- Education and training institutions need to develop methods of supporting the young people in a way that helps them to remain in education and to carry out their educational and vocational plans.

Bibliography

1. *A Career Development Resource for Parents.* (2006). Canada Career Information Partnership. Canada: Ahnsu Consulting Group.
2. **Bebriša, I., Ieviņa, I., Krastiņa, L.** (2007). *Skolēnu atbiršana pamatskolās. Problēmas risinājumi* [Dropouts in te basic schools. Solving of problem] Baltic Institute of Social Sciences. (in Latvian)
3. *Career Counseling, Compendium of Methods and Techniques.*(2007). Edited by Mihai Jigau. Bucharest.
4. *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools*. (2009). Ministry of Education by Career Services. Welington: New Zealand.

5. **Ertelts B.J., Šulcs V.** (2008). *Karjeras konsultēšanas kompetences*. [Career counsulting competences] Rīga: Valsts attīstības aģentūra. (in Latvian)
6. **Garleja, R.** (2006). Cilvēkpotenciāls sociālā vidē. [Personality potencies in social environment]Rīga: RaKa, 2006. (in Latvian)
7. **Fišers, R.** (2005). *Mācīsim bērniem mācīties.* [Lets learn students to learn] Rīga: RaKa. (in Latvian)
8. *Karjeras attīstības atbalsts: izglītība, konsultēšana, pakalpojumi* (2008). Autoru kol. [Support for Career Development: Education, Advisoring, Services] Rīga: Valsts izglītības attīstības aģentūra.(in Latvian)
9. *Karjeras izglītība skolā. Pieredze 2009*.(2010). [Career education in the school. Expereince 2009] Rīga: VIAA Karjeras atbalsta departaments. (in Latvian)
10. **Kuijpers, M., Meijers, F., Gundy, C.** (2011). The relationships between learningenvironment and career competencies of students in vocational education. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, No 78. Elsevier, p. 21-30.
11. **T. Hooley, J. Marriott, A.G. Watts and L. Coiffait** (2012). *Careers 2020. Options for future careers work in English schools.* London: ICGS
12. **Patton, W.** (1999). Career development and systems theory: a new relationship. Pacific Grove [etc.]: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
13. **Tron, I.** (2012). Learning&Counselling. Norway:Akerhaus University College
14. Watts, A.G. (2008). The partnership model for careers education and guidance: Rise, decline – and fall?' Career Research and Development
15. **Super, R.** (2001) –dok no lit saraksta

Useful links

- Association for Careers Education and Guidance –www.aceg.org.uk Careers 2020: Options for future careers work in English schools– full review http://goo.gl/2UPMM
- Australian Career Development Studieshttp://www.career.edu.au/
- The State of Queensland (Department of Education, Training and Employment) 2012 www.education.gld.gov.au/tomorrows-schools/