ED 231 948   CE 036 157

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TITLE   A Systematic Approach to Vocational Needs
                Assessment.
INSTITUTION   University of North Florida, Jacksonville.
SPONS AGENCY   Florida State Dept. of Education, Tallahassee. Div.
                of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education.
PUB DATE   Aug 78
NOTE   11p.
PUB TYPE   Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   *Career Development; Career Guidance; *Educational
                Assessment; *Educational Needs; *Educational
                Planning; Flow Charts; *Needs Assessment; Objectives;
                *Program Development; School Psychologists; Secondary
                Education; Vocational Education; Vocational
                Interests

ABSTRACT
                This unit is designed to provide school psychologists
with information helpful in consulting with teachers and counselors
who have questions regarding the career and vocational needs of
students. It is intended to help the school psychologist assist
teachers and counselors to be effective in assessing the needs of
students in their particular setting. By means of a flow chart and
explanations, the guide leads the reader through a step-by-step
process of needs assessment. These steps include the following:
formulating a goal statement, creating a needs assessment instrument,
brainstorming or programming, formulating a needs statement, stating
objectives, selecting strategies to accomplish the objectives, and
evaluating the results to see if the objectives have been achieved.
(An example of a complete program using these steps is given in the
booklet.) (KC)

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO VOCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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August 1978

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO VOCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The following unit is designed to provide school psychologists with information helpful to successfully consult with teachers and counselors who have questions regarding the career and vocational needs of students in individual schools. Since you are often in contact with students, teachers, and counselors, it is appropriate that you be as familiar, as resources permit, with assessment information which will facilitate the exploration of careers.

It is our hope that the information presented here will assist you in helping teachers and counselors to be effective in assessing the needs of students in their particular setting. Schools are comprised of students from a variety of backgrounds: location, socioeconomic background, family sizes, minority status, and many other factors influence the special career/vocational information needs of students. In establishing a useful program, geared to a particular school, you will find that familiarization with the following information is extremely helpful.

THE NATURE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

A global statement describing one or more classes of desired outcomes is necessary to give a general direction to any project. This type of statement is called a goal. Goal statements have three characteristics: they are timeless, unmeasurable and they provide general directions. An example of a goal statement is - "students will acquire the ability to make wise career choices."

Once a goal statement has been formed, the next step in planning calls for a needs assessment instrument. Results from the needs assessment instrument will indicate the differences that exist between current status and some desired future status, identified by the goal statement. Bridging the gap between current and future desired status, then, hinges on designing the needs assessment instrument. In this sense, needs statements are the outcome of some form of survey instrument designed to assess the specific area covered by the goal statement.

The next phase encountered upon completion of the needs assessment is called brainstorming or programming. During this phase of planning assessors determine what needs were identified by the instrument and which of those are the most important. Priorities should be set so, in the event of time loss or shortage of revenue, all programs will not be equally effected and the more urgent needs will be met to some degree of demonstrable success.

Once needs have been established, the next step is to formulate a needs statement. An example of a needs statement is, "fifty percent of the students express a need for more career awareness." Once a needs statement is derived, objectives to meet that need are formulated. It is possible to have only one objective for each need, but usually there will be several.

An objective, unlike a goal, is an operational statement describing a single, desired outcome. An objective is characterized by relative timeboundedness, measurability, observability, and orientation to the real world. "By January of 1979, ninety percent of the students who participated in career awareness activities will demonstrate an understanding of careers by successfully scoring 70% on a career awareness assessment device." This is an example of an objective.

The next step is to select strategies that will help the target population to accomplish the objective. Once all possible strategies or activities are considered, the process of selecting the most realistic and practical ones is accomplished. Any given objective may have more than one strategy and more than one objective can be achieved by a single strategy.

The last phase of the operation is an evaluation of the results to see if the objectives have been achieved. The question of whether a particular strategy was effective and whether the resources expended were worth the gains should be examined. One should ask how the strategy can be improved. Finally, did the objective once achieved, reduce or eliminate the need? On the next page is a diagram depicting the needs assessment process.

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                        ┌──────────────┐
                        │  FORMULATE   │
                        │    GOALS     │
                        └──────────────┘

                        To Determine
                        Future Status

  e.g.   "Students will acquire the ability to make wise career choices."

                              │
                              ▼

                     ┌──────────────────┐
                     │    PREPARE A      │
                     │ NEEDS ASSESSMENT  │
                     └──────────────────┘

                        To Determine
                        Current Status

                              │
                              ▼

               ┌──────────────────────────────┐
               │    BRAINSTORMING BEGINS       │
               │ AFTER NEEDS ARE ASSESSED      │
               └──────────────────────────────┘

                        To Produce

                  ┌────────────────────┐
                  │  NEEDS STATEMENT    │
                  └────────────────────┘

  e.g.   "Fifty percent of the students express a need for career awareness."
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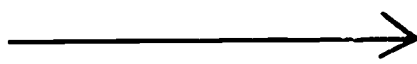
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   ┌──────────────┐                              ┌──────────────┐
   │  OBJECTIVES  │ ──────────────────────────▶  │  STRATEGIES  │
   └──────────────┘                              └──────────────┘

e.g.  "By January 1979, 90% of the     e.g.  "We will meet this objective
       students will score 70% or              by....."
       better on the Career
       Information Index."

   ┌──────────────┐
   │  EVALUATION  │ ◀─────
   └──────────────┘

e.g.  "Did achieved objectives
       eliminate needs?"

         and

e.g.  "How can strategies be
       improved?"
```

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The following is an example of a complete program, from goal statement through evaluation procedures. All steps previously mentioned are demonstrated.

Goal: Students will acquire the ability to make wise career selections.

Needs assessment instrument and tabulated results.

Yes No? 1.) I need to compare my interests, abilities, and values to those required by a group of jobs which interest me.

Yes No? 2.) I need indepth information on jobs which relate to my interests, values, and abilities.

Yes No? 3.) I need to know how my personal values and important people in my life may affect my job choice.

Yes No? 4.) I need to be able to make decisions as I study career possibilities.

Yes No? 5.) I need to select one career for extensive exploration.

Yes No? 6.) I need to explore how attitudes are affected by specific types of jobs.

Yes No? 7.) I need to develop plans which will help me reach my occupational goals.

Yes No? 8.) I need to know what I would have to do to get a job that would interest me.

Yes No? 9.) I need to know how to find occupational information and guidance.

Yes No? 10.) I need to know what I can do now to prepare for work that I want to do in the future.

Yes No? 11.) I need to explore, in real life, those vocational and educational opportunities which are compatible with my interests, values, and abilities (e.g. talk to people who do the job, or make visits to the job site and observe the work).

Yes No? 12.) I need to know how to perform well on job applications, resume writing, and job interviews.

Yes No? 13.) I need on the job experience to know what it is like to be employed and to learn more about jobs.

(Remember this is an example. This instrument may need modification to suit particular needs.)

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Results of Needs Assessment

		% YES	% NO	% No Answer
*	1.)	91	5	4
	2.)	85	5	10
	3.)	30	60	10
	4.)	40	40	20
	5.)	80	15	5
	6.)	40	30	30
	7.)	88	5	7
	8.)	85	5	10
*	9.)	93	5	2
	10.)	70	20	10
	11.)	40	50	10
*	12.)	93	6	1
	13.)	45	50	5

Total Population = 100 Students

Needs Assessment Results and <u>Needs Statements</u>:

For the purposes of this example, we will only work with items in-
dicated as "Yes" by 90% or more of the sample. If you are working with
a real group, any responses over 50% would probably be reviewed and
acted upon.

1.) 91% of the students need information relevant to their interests,
abilities, and values with regard to jobs which interest them.

9.) 93% of the students need information about jobs.

12.) 93% of the students need help on job acquisition skills (e.g.
interview, resumè, application).

Objectives:

1.) By January of 1979, at least 80% of the students taking part in career awareness activities will demonstrate an understanding of career awareness by successfully completing an evaluation instrument designed to assess career awareness. (Refers to item one.)

2.) By August of 1979, 90% of all students taking part in occupational information training will demonstrate a knowledge of area occupations and occupational publications by successfully completing an instrument designed to assess these abilities. (Refers to item nine.)

3.) By September of 1979, 85% of the students participating in job acquisition skills programs will demonstrate their ability by successfully completing tasks assigned to assess this skill. (Refers to item twelve.)

Strategy For Objective 1:

1.) Instruments designed to assess interests and abilities will be administered, and group or individual counseling will be provided to increase awareness of interest, abilities, and values as they relate to jobs.

Strategy For Objective 2:

1.) Information will be provided to students concerning local job markets (e.g. credentials necessary, salary to be expected, stability

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of position, etc.). Students will be taught how to use the Occupational Outlook Handbook, the Dictionary of Occupational Titles and other publications that provide job-related information. This will be accomplished in a classroom or study hall time slot.

Strategy For Objective 3:

1.) A workshop will be conducted for the purpose of teaching job acquisition skills, including role playing and training in resumé and application writing.

Evaluation Procedures For Objectives:

1.) A pre-test and post-test design will be used to evaluate attainment. Prior to beginning group work and the administration of inventories the students will be given an instrument designed to assess awareness of interests, abilities, and values as related to jobs. Upon completion of the program the same instrument will again be administered. A score of 80% will indicate success.

2.) A ~ e-test and post-test design will be employed. Before any training is completed students will be given a pre-test that assesses their knowledge of the local job market and their ability to use the various publications related to jobs. A score of 80% will indicate success.

3.) A pre-test and post-test design will be used. Prior to beginning skill training (e.g. interview, resumé, application), students will be observed writing resumés and applications, and performing in mock interviews. Following the training program the same activity will be employed. Success will be considered if students have improved their skills by at least 60%.

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