

ESTUDIOS

COMPETENCIES FOR PROVIDING QUALITY CAREERS SERVICES: A LOOK AT CANADIAN STANDARDS FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

In November 1996, an initiative was begun to develop Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Service Providers in Canada. This paper provides the context that gave rise to this initiative, outlines the main stages in the developmental process, and highlights the main features of the standards. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the strengths of the Canadian initiative, focusing on the features that are most transferable to other countries.

Key Words: Career Development Standards and Guidelines, Career Development Services in Canada, Consultation Process, Career Development Competencies.

RESUMEN

En noviembre de 1996, en Canadá, se empezaron a desarrollar unos Estándares y Directrices para los Servicios de Orientación para el Desarrollo de la Carrera de ese país. En este artículo se describe el contexto que dio lugar a esta iniciativa, las fases principales en su desarrollo, y se señalan los rasgos principales de estos estándares. Se destacan las ventajas y los puntos fuertes de esta iniciativa canadiense, haciendo énfasis en aquellos aspectos que pueden ser transferibles, con las oportunas adaptaciones, a otros países.

Palabras clave: Estándares y Directrices para el Desarrollo de la Carrera, Servicios de Orientación para la Carrera en Canadá, Proceso de Consulta, Competencias del Desarrollo de la Carrera.

The Context

Canada is a large country, covering about 10 million square kilometres. It spans 5,000 km from East coast to West coast and about 3,000 from its southern boarder with the United States of America and the Arctic Ocean on the North. More than 80% of its 30 million people live within about 600 km of the Southern boarder. It is divided into 10 provinces and 3 territories, each having autonomy over matters such as: public education, social services,

job training, colleges and universities, and licensing of professionals. Given the size of the country, and the relatively sparse population, national initiatives are difficult and expensive to coordinate and even province-wide initiatives are present challenges.

The professional community in Canada is diverse also. The most recent estimates suggest there are more than 100,000 practitioners providing career development services as part of their jobs (CCDF, 1993). There are more than 20 professional associations whose members provide career services as part of their jobs. These professionals have a wide range of training, ranging from little if any formal education to graduate-level training in counseling or related disciplines (Conger, Hiebert, & Hong-Farrell, 1994, 1995). Currently, there are no graduate-level university programs specializing in career development, however, graduate counsellor education programs may offer one or two courses in careers. Some universities and colleges offer a one or two year diploma in career development, but these programs are not widely accessible. There is no legislation governing the practice of career development in Canada, and in reality, anyone who wants to can call himself or herself a career specialist.

Within this context, Canada, like other nations, is experiencing the effects of globalization, organizational down-sizing, changing demographics, and massive shifts in the composition of the labour market (Hiebert, Jarvis, Bezanson, Ward, & Hearn, 1992). Increasing numbers of Canadians are seeking assistance from a wide variety of people who provide career development services. At one time, career services were perhaps thought of as needed only by those who were indecisive or difficult to employ. However, the fast pace of change in the labour market, the frequent ups and downs in our economy, and the staggering figures on downsizing, have resulted in more and more Canadians being in need of, and seeking, help in managing their work and work transitions effectively. As a result, career services have taken on a higher profile, more attention is given to the career development field, and quality of service has become more visible and more important (Bezanson & Hiebert, 1996).

In such a setting it is important for career development practitioners to be able to map out the scope of service they provide and the competencies that are important for ensuring quality service to clients. Practitioners who are already knowledgeable and competent know that career development is a distinct area of expertise. They also are aware of the knowledge, skills, and personal attributes that are important for practitioners to provide quality service. Many practitioners are worried because there are no guidelines for consumers to use when seeking service and no standards regarding the competencies needed for people to call themselves qualified career practitioners. Recognizing the need to formally address these issues, several groups began developing guidelines for the delivery of career development services as one means for enhancing accountability and helping service providers better identify the processes in which they are engaged.

The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development initiative began as an attempt to help various groups combine their efforts to become more explicit about career development competencies. The key objective of the initiative is to map out the competencies that service providers need to be able to deliver comprehensive career services to clients across the lifespan. The initiative is coordinated by a volunteer, multi-jurisdictional steering committee, committed to managing an inclusive, grass roots process

that will help to bring the career development community to a higher level of professionalization.

History of the Initiative

In the fall of 1996, a national Assembly on Guidelines and Standards brought together a wide range of stakeholders from a broad cross-section of sectors involved in career development. The Assembly on Guidelines and Standards explored the possibility of establishing a collaborative process for creating national standards for the practice of career development. A National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards was formed to manage the process. The process focussed on practitioners who were providing career development services directly to clients. It developed a framework for creating standards for career development that was built on consultation and consensus, and recognized existing best practices and the diverse roles and skill sets of practitioners in the field. It also mapped out the scope of career development and identified potential uses, benefits, risks, and advantages of creating guidelines and standards.

The steering committee operated according to a stewardship model rather than a representative model. The primary concern was that members presented their unique perspectives as professionals in the field, informed by their involvement in various professional organizations, but not bound by being officially sanctioned voices of the organizations or associations with which they were involved. Members of the Steering Committee were drawn from a wide variety of different areas so that multiple views would be inevitable.

The main goal of Phase One of the project was to develop a draft framework for creating standards and determine the amount of support from the field for developing the standards. In the fall of 1997 a series of regional consultations were held to get feedback on the proposed framework for standards. Approximately 1,250 people participated. In all, 70 consultation groups were conducted in eight provinces and one territory. Almost 900 feedback forms were returned, representing a return rate of about 70%. About 27% of the respondents were from community-based agencies, 23% were from the education sector, 15% were from mental health or rehabilitation settings, 10% were in private practice, and the balance were distributed across a wide variety of sectors that provide career development services as part of their mandates. Hiebert et al. (1998) provide a summary of the findings from the consultation. A full copy of the final report is available from the website given at the end of this paper.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly in favor of proceeding to develop the guidelines and standards. Over 80% of respondents reported thinking that developing guidelines and standards would be in the best interests of themselves, their clients, the organizations for which they worked, the profession, and the general public. The proposed framework made sense to them and they liked the idea of framework based on what practitioners actually did, rather than the training they took. They also liked the fact that a code of ethics would form the basis of the framework. In response to the question, «Would you support the next step, namely to develop, field-test, and validate national guidelines and standards for career development?», 93% indicated they were in favour of proceeding.

Phase Two of the initiative focussed on developing and validating the standards in a manner that involved people working in the field and the professional organizations, special interest groups, and other stakeholders who were interested in the provision of quality career services. The process has provided multiple routes that stakeholders can use to access and comment on the work being done (Hiebert, Crozier, & Collins, 1999; Hiebert et al. 1999). The work is being completed and field-tested in both English and French. A modified Delphi system is being used to generate and revise drafts of the standards. This involves using selected regional groups, professional organizations, and interested individuals in repeated iterations of reviewing and providing feedback on documents, incorporating their suggestions, and returning the documents to see if the suggestions were incorporated satisfactorily. Using this process will ensure that people's suggestions are addressed in a satisfactory manner. A full consultation was held in Winter 1999 and wide-spread endorsement of the work done to date was expressed. Descriptive language, rather than jargon, will be used throughout the model.

The Scope of the Standards and Guidelines

In this initiative, career development practitioner refers to those who work principally in the delivery of direct services in the areas of: self-exploration and personal management, learning and work exploration, and career building with individuals, groups, and communities. Career development is an umbrella term that may include at least the following: career education, career counselling, employment counselling, community rehabilitation, human resource development, training in employment skills, and training in personal, but job-related areas, such as job-search, interviewing, self-exploration, time management and anger management, entrepreneurship.

Career development is provided in a variety of settings. These settings include schools, post-secondary institutions, private vocational colleges, community-based agencies, private practitioners, federal and provincial government departments, organizations like Workers' Compensation, private agencies, human resources departments in larger businesses, and joint labour-business partnerships. Career development is provided by a variety of practitioners, including but not limited to: career advisors, counsellors, job marketers, teachers, community trainers, psychologists, educational planners, and social workers. This brief overview is not exhaustive, nor does it explore all of the potential venues where career development is practiced. It does however, provide a flavor of what career development is and mentions some of the more common places where practitioners do career development work. It is intended to help people locate themselves in the standards document and to begin thinking about how the standards can help them describe more clearly the types of knowledge and skills they possess.

In Phase 1 of the Canadian Career Development Guidelines and Standards project, a framework for guidelines and standards was developed, revised in consultation with the field, and used in a national consultation in the fall of 1997. Three decisions influenced the nature of the framework. First, it was important to build the framework on the common points of models that have been developed to date. This ensured that people would embrace the new model being developed. Second, it should focus on people who provide direct services to clients. Thus, people who used labour market information with clients would be

included in the model, but people who analysed labour market information would not. This limitation was used to make sure the project remained manageable and did not expand to an unworkable level. Third, it was important to use a functional approach based on what service providers need to do in order to offer quality services to clients. This approach was chosen for several reasons. It accounts for the activities that professionals perform and is therefore easily understood by both practitioners and clients. It recognizes that people acquire proficiency many ways and ultimately, it is more important to address what people can do, rather than how they learned to do it. A functional approach lends itself readily to prior learning assessment and recognition. In addition, it allows for recognition that competency can be gained through both formal and informal training.

The Framework of Standards and Guidelines

Based on these points, the following model was developed. It contains three types of competencies: core competencies that all career practitioners need, competencies that are required for specialized work, and skills and knowledge which are common of to several areas of specialization. The model is built on a code of ethics to symbolize the foundation that ethical practice must have to any standards model. See Figure 1.

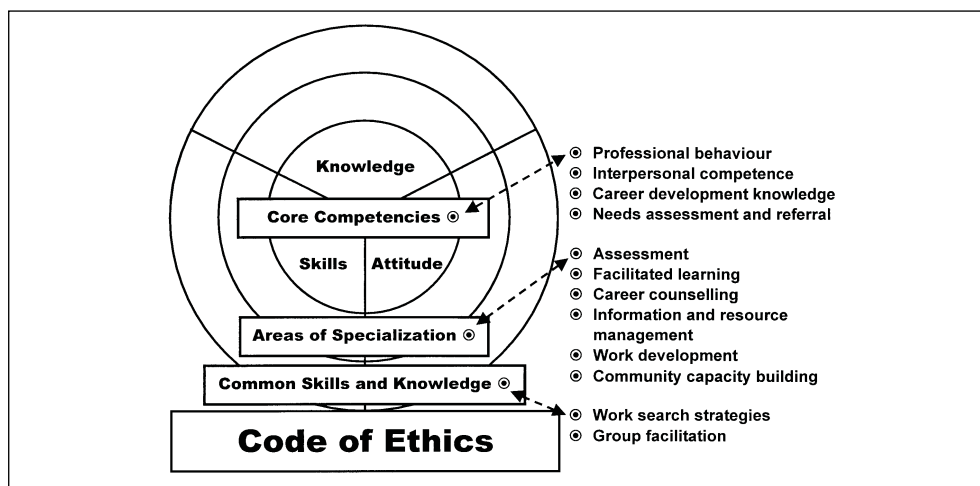


FIGURE 1.
Competency Model for Career Development Standards and Guidelines.

Core Competencies

Core competencies consist of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that all career development practitioners need to have regardless of their employment setting. Some work settings may require service providers to possess only the core competencies. Other work

settings may require service providers with competency in one or more of the specialty areas. In a setting offering comprehensive services, each staff member would have the core competencies, and in addition, the staff as a whole would likely possess all of the specialty competencies, even though any given staff member may not possess all of the specialty areas individually. The core competencies can be grouped into four areas: professional behaviour, interpersonal competence, career development knowledge, needs assessment and referral.

Areas of Specialization

In addition to the core competencies, some career development practitioners will need to have more specialized competencies. These will vary according to the nature of the service being provided, the type of work setting, and the client groups that are being served. Service providers may meet the standards in one, or more, or none of the areas of specialization, depending on the nature of their duties and the service they provide. The areas of specialization can be thought of as sets of competencies involved in providing the broad range of services that clients might require. The relationship between the core and specialty areas is seen as non-hierarchical, meaning that they are equally valued. No area is seen as more or less important than any others. Nor are the specialized competencies seen as more or less important than the core. All of the competency areas are important in providing comprehensive career development services.

There are many ways to organize the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to carry out more specific duties associated with the provision of quality career development services to clients. In our extensive consultation, we identify six main areas of specialization: assessment, facilitated learning, career counselling, information and resource management, work development, community capacity building.

Likely, all career development practitioners will need to have a certain level of proficiency in all six areas of specialization. Thus, some of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes in each area of specialization extends into the core. However, some part of each area of specialization likely can be considered the domain of specialists. That is to say, all career development practitioners will not need the same level of expertise as the specialist. For example, all career development practitioners likely will need to have a certain amount of competence in assessment, but some practitioners may be assessment specialists and have competencies that most career development practitioners do not have. Figure 2 illustrates how this relationship might look.

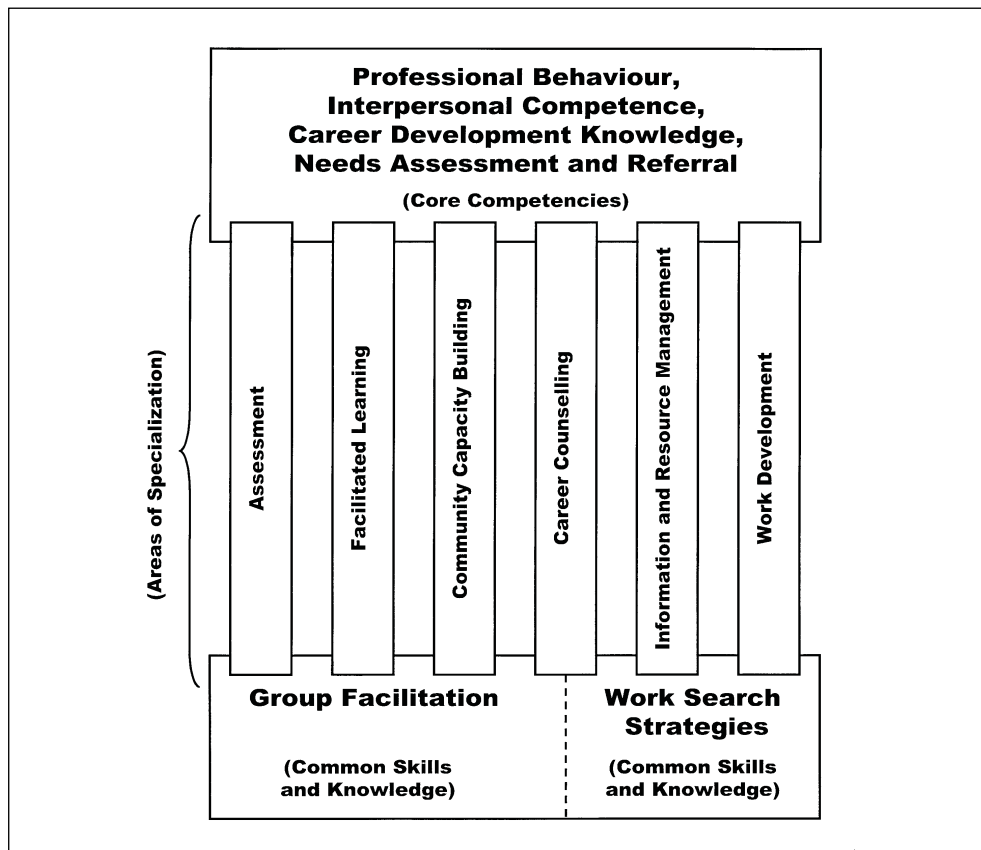


FIGURE 2.
Relationship between Core Competencies, Areas of Specialization and Common Skills and Knowledge.

Common Skills and Knowledge

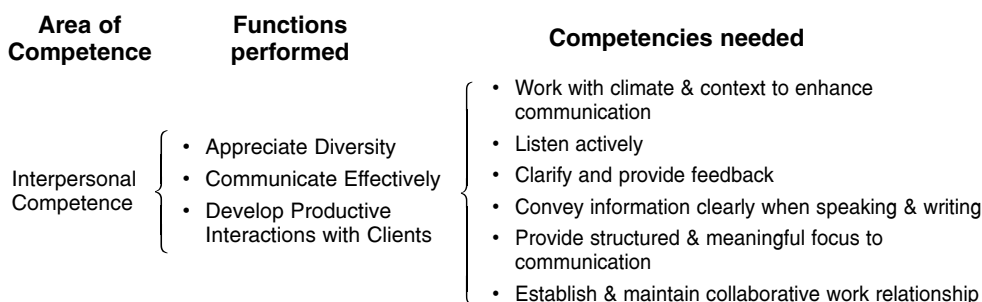
Common skills and knowledge consist of competencies that are used in more than one area of specialization, but not in them all. Initial field-testing of the standards document revealed that some competencies were relevant to more than one area of specialization (or to say it another way, they were common to more than one area of specialization). Rather than list these competencies as part of each Area of Specialization, we chose to group them together and call them Common Skills and Knowledge.

The total framework for the Canadian Standards and Guidelines initiative is presented in Figure 3. For a complete description of the standards and the performance indicators attached to each competency, readers are invited to visit the web site listed at the end of this paper.

FIGURE 3.
Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development.

Built on what career practitioners do when delivering services directly to clients

The competencies are grouped into two **Clusters**, Core Competencies and Areas of Specialization. Within each **Cluster**, there are several **Areas** of competencies that career development practitioners need. Within each **Area**, there are several **Functions** that are performed in delivering service. These are things that career development practitioners do or know in order to provide quality service in each area. Within each **Function**, there are several **Competencies** that are needed in order to carry out the functions that are performed in delivering service.



Cluster	Areas	Functions	Competencies
Core	C1. Professional Behaviour	C1.1 Follow the Code of Ethics and the Ethical Decision-Making Model	C1.1.1 Follow code of ethics & ethical decision-making model
		C1.2 Demonstrate Professional Attitudes	C1.2.1 Demonstrate professional attributes
		C1.3 Demonstrate a Commitment to Self-Improvement	C1.3.1 Develop relationships with other professionals
			C1.3.2 Demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning
			C1.3.3 Keep up to date with technology
		C1.4 Use Analytical Skills	C1.4.1 Apply problem-solving framework
			C1.4.2 Collect, analyze and use information
		C1.5 Manage Work	C1.5.1 Use planning and time management skills
			C1.5.2 Follow case & project management procedures
			C1.5.3 Document client interactions & progress
			C1.5.4 Evaluate service you provide to clients

Cluster	Areas	Functions	Competencies
Core (Continued)	C2. Interpersonal Competence	C2.1 Respect Diversity	C2.1.1 Recognize diversity
			C2.1.2 Respect diversity
		C2.2 Communicate Effectively	C2.2.1 Work with climate & context to enhance communication
			C2.2.2 Use a framework for verbal communication
			C2.2.3 Use a framework for written communication
			C2.2.4 Use effective listening skills
			C2.2.5 Clarify and provide feedback
			C2.2.6 Establish & maintain collaborative work relationships
		C2.3 Develop Productive Interactions with Clients	C2.3.1 Foster client self-reliance & self- management
	C2.3.2 Deal with reluctant clients		
	C3. Career Development Knowledge	C3.1 Possess Career Development Knowledge	C3.1.1 Understand how human development models relate to career development
			C3.1.2 Understand major career development theories
			C3.1.3 Be aware of how change and transition affect how clients move through the career process
			C3.1.4 Recognize how life roles impact career development
			C3.1.5 Recognize components of the career planning process
C3.1.6 Identify the major organizations, resources, & community services for career development & community services			
C3.1.7 Explain components of labour market information			
C3.1.8 Keep current about the labour market			
C4. Needs Assessment and Referral			C4.1 Refer Clients to the Appropriate Sources
	C4.1.2 Respond to client needs		
	C4.1.3 Make appropriate referrals		
Areas of Specialization	S1.1 Assessment	S1.1 Guide Client Self- Assessment	S1.1.1 Describe assessment tools
			S1.1.2 Evaluate assessment tools
			S1.1.3 Gather information to identify client issues
			S1.1.4 Provide comprehensive information about the assessment process
			S1.1.5 Explore the appropriate tools & procedures with clients
			S1.1.6 Implement tools & assessment interventions
			S1.1.7 Review the results with the client
			S1.1.8 Evaluate assessment outcomes

Cluster	Areas	Functions	Competencies
Areas of Specialization (Continued)	S2. Facilitated Learning	S2.1 Possess Knowledge About How to Facilitate Learning	S2.1.1 Describe commonly accepted principles of learning
			S2.1.2 Describe techniques commonly used to facilitate learning
		S2.2 Facilitate Learning	S2.2.1 Prepare for program delivery
			S2.2.2 Determine client existing competencies
			S2.2.3 Deliver the program
	S2.2.4 Evaluate the program		
	S3. Career Counselling	S3.1 Possess Knowledge About Career Counselling	S3.1.1 Describe major theories & models pertaining to counselling
			S3.1.2 Describe major theories & models pertaining to career development
			S3.1.3 Describe major models pertaining to change & transition
			S3.1.4 Describe barriers to career development
			S3.1.5 Describe electronic-based guidance systems & information resources
			S3.1.6 Describe types of educational & training opportunities & resources for employment
			S3.1.7 Describe labour market information
		S3.2 Demonstrate Your Method of Practice in Interactions with Clients	S3.2.1 Develop a method of practice
			S3.2.2 Establish & maintain collaborative relationship with clients
			S3.2.3 Explore issues
			S3.2.4 Develop & implement a process for achieving client goals that is consistent with your method of practice
	S4. Information and Resource Management	S4.1 Develop and Maintain an Information and Resource Base	S4.1.1 Describe the role of information & resource management in career development
			S4.1.2 Describe classification systems
			S4.1.3 Determine the information needs of clients & community
			S4.1.4 Establish an information & resource base
		S4.2 Provide Information to Clients	S4.2.1 Respond to client & community needs
	S5. Work Development	S5.1 Develop Work Opportunities for Clients	S5.1.1 Liaise with professionals, employers & clients
S5.1.2 Develop work opportunities			
S5.1.3 Prepare clients to respond to the labour market			
S5.1.4 Support clients with employment maintenance			

Cluster	Areas	Functions	Competencies
Areas of Specialization (Continued)	S6. Community Capacity Building	S6.1 Increase Capacity of Community to Be Healthy & Productive	S6.1.1 Develop relationships with key community partners
			S6.1.2 Work with the community to facilitate development of a community vision
			S6.1.3 Work with community to assess current community capacity
			S6.1.4 Conduct analysis of sectors based on human resources
			S6.1.5 Conduct analysis of sectors based on physical resources
			S6.1.6 Work with community to determine gaps between goals & capacity
			S6.1.7 Work with community to develop action plan to address economic, social, educational & employment goals
			S6.1.8 Assist the community & individuals to identify employment & lifestyle alternatives
			S6.1.9 Work with community to implement action plan
			S6.1.10 Work with community to evaluate action plan
Common Skills and Knowledge	SK1. Work Search Strategies	SK1.1 Posses Knowledge of Work Search Strategies	SK1.1.1 Describe guidelines that assist clients to identify skills, strengths & interests
			SK1.1.2 Describe guidelines that assist clients with personal presentation
			SK1.1.3 Describe guidelines that assist clients with networking
			SK1.1.4 Describe guidelines that assist clients with résumé preparation
			SK1.1.5 Describe guidelines that assist clients with writing cover letters
			SK1.1.6 Describe guidelines that assist clients to complete application forms
			SK1.1.7 Describe guidelines that assist clients to use portfolios
			SK1.1.8 Describe guidelines that assist clients to make cold calls
			SK1.1.9 Describe guidelines that assist clients to use references
			SK1.1.10 Describe guidelines that assist clients with interviews
	SK2. Group Facilitation	SK2.1 Facilitate Groups	SK2.1.1 Describe the principles of group facilitation
			SK2.1.2 Facilitate groups

Indirect Services to Clients (An Aside)

While the focus of the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development initiative is on providing direct services to clients, we acknowledge that there are other important areas of work associated with the provision of quality career development services, many of which do not involve direct interaction with clients. For example, a person involved in gathering and synthesizing labour market information might never actually interact directly with clients seeking career development assistance. However, the information provided by such a person will be vitally important to the service provider. Similarly, a person who develops self-exploration tools for clients might not be involved in the provision of services to clients, but the results of his or her work will be used by service providers in meeting client needs. These can be thought of as «Indirect Services». Indirect Services could be organized into several categories, such as: administration of programs and services, research and evaluation, marketing, advocacy, and development of programs, services, and resources

Standards for those who provide indirect services are beyond the scope of the current initiative and therefore will not be elaborated in this paper. However, it should be acknowledged that many cases, the results of the work of those who provide indirect services to clients will form part of the knowledge needed by those who provide direct services. For example, a person who teaches job search skills to clients may not need to know how to gather and organize labour market information, but will need to know how to access the finished product and how to relay that information to clients. A career counsellor may not need to know how to administer career development services or supervise other service providers, but the work of the program administrator will greatly affect the counsellor.

Indirect services play an indispensable role in the provision of quality career development services to clients. The decision to focus this initiative on those who provide direct services to clients is not intended to undervalue the essential nature of those who provide indirect services. It is simply the attempt to make sure the initiative addresses a manageable goal.

Potential Uses of the Standards and Guidelines

In the field consultations during Phase Two, participants were asked to comment on the potential uses of the standards and guidelines. Several suggestions emerged. First, the standards could be used as a guide for self-assessment by practitioners, to assess their strengths and plan their own professional growth. The standards also could be used by employees and supervisors as a guide for performance appraisal. Employers could use the standards as a recruiting tool or a guide for writing job descriptions. The standards could be used as a guide for developing training programs, revising existing curriculum, or as a guide for prior learning assessment and recognition. This could result in more consistent and comprehensive training. Finally, the standards could be used by professional associations as a foundation for developing a career specialization or as a basis for licensing career development practice.

Practitioner Competencies and Client Outcomes

In the consultations conducted to date, people have asked about the role of clients in the Canadian Standards and Guidelines project. A companion initiative is focusing on articulating more clearly the types of outcomes that clients can legitimately expect to receive from career practitioners. The initiative focusing on clients, the *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* (Haché, Redekopp, & Jarvis, 2000), is simultaneously occurring using wide national consultation networks as well. Both initiatives represent significant advances for the career development field and each initiative is compatible with the other.

The Standards and Guidelines and Blueprint initiatives are independent, but very complementary. The Blueprint is a national effort to clarify the outcomes of quality career development programs and services. The Blueprint specifies what individuals can expect to learn from services at different developmental levels, ranging from elementary school, to secondary and adult populations. The Blueprint also has a strong focus on implementing career development programs and helping providers be clear about the outcomes actually achieved by specific programs.

The Standards and Guidelines initiative is a national effort to clarify the competencies needed by career development practitioners, in order to support and assist all populations to achieve personal career development outcomes. The Standards and Guidelines have a strong application to practitioner preparation and professional training. The Standards and Guidelines have a strong focus on the knowledge and skills needed in the delivery of career development services.

There has been a frequently raised concern that career development is often not clear outside of the profession. Outside the career development profession people are often unclear about what career development is; what it achieves, and what career development practitioners do. The Standards and Guidelines and Blueprint initiatives are innovative leaps forward in becoming more clear about the answers to these questions among ourselves and with our many publics.

Conclusions

Career development is evolving into a strong and dynamic profession, focused on addressing a broad range of client needs. The resulting divergence in the backgrounds and orientations of career practitioners makes it crucial that the profession «walks the talk» by implementing a human resource strategy that links potential areas of service to the knowledge and skills sets that are important for service delivery. Phase 1 of the National Guidelines and Standards initiative demonstrated that it is possible for divergent groups to work together to build a common framework that can guide service delivery and increase occupational mobility for those delivering career development services.

Phase 2 has involved widespread consultation with all levels of people involved in the delivery of career development services. Mechanisms have been established to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in the process so that there will be wide spread endorsement of the guidelines and standards when they are completed. Solid support for Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development has been shown across

virtually all segments of the career development profession. Building on the momentum created to date, the creation, validation, and implementation of Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development promises to be an important step in the evolution of the career development profession in Canada.

The most prominent strengths of this Canadian initiative lie in the process followed. The process parts of this Canadian initiative are likely also generalizable to other countries wishing to pursue similar projects. This has been detailed in previous papers (Hiebert, et al., 1998; Hiebert, Crozier, et al., 1999) and thus will only be summarized here. The process has relied heavily on a collaborative model, where all interested stakeholders were welcome to participate. Dissenting voices were encouraged in the belief that a stronger model, and more buy-in, would result from dealing with concerns at the beginning, during the developmental phases of the initiative. The approach included wide consultation with the field, on several occasions. The costs involved in bringing people together presented a particular challenge, but through extensive use of volunteers, modest funding from Human Resources Development Canada, «in kind» contributions from the career development community, and the use of information technology to maintain communication links, it was possible to involve a large segment of the profession in the process. Canada respects and encourages diversity, and true to that spirit, the various professional groups involved in this project have not needed to relinquish any control in order to participate in a meaningful way. In fact, most associations now see that the creation of national standards will help the speak with an even stronger voice than they had previously.

NOTE: Copies of the documents referred to in this paper are available from the author, or they can be down-loaded from the website: <<http://www.career-dev-guidelines.org>>.

SÍNTESIS EN CASTELLANO

Competencias Necesarias para proporcionar Servicios de Orientación de Calidad: Directrices Canadienses para el Desarrollo de la Carrera

En este artículo se presenta el proceso llevado a cabo recientemente en Canadá para diseñar unas líneas generales y directrices referidas a las competencias que deben poseer los orientadores profesionales (en Canadá entendida como orientación para el desarrollo de la carrera, educación para la carrera, etc.). El objetivo principal era proporcionar un marco de referencia a todos aquéllos implicados en este campo, por un lado mejorando la formación de los orientadores y la realización de sus funciones, y por otro promoviendo una mayor sensibilización y concienciación sobre lo que hacen estos profesionales, algo desconocido por la sociedad en general.

El proceso seguido para desarrollar estas directrices ha sido principalmente mediante grupos de trabajo y consulta a las personas trabajando en este campo, las organizaciones profesionales, grupos especiales de interés, y otras partes interesadas en proporcionar servicios de orientación de calidad, con una alta participación de todos estos grupos. La respuesta ha sido mayoritariamente favorable a la necesidad de desarrollar estas líneas generales, siendo positivas para los mismos orientadores, sus clientes, las instituciones para las que trabajan, la profesión, y el público en general. En una segunda fase, una vez desarrollado un borrador de cuáles podrían ser las competencias de los orientadores en el campo del desarrollo de la carrera, se procedió a su validación.

Como resultado de todo este proceso se ha propuesto un modelo de cuáles competencias deberían tener los orientadores, dividido en tres niveles: competencias básicas que necesitan todos los orientadores profesionales, competencias necesarias para áreas concretas de especialización, y por último unas competencias comunes a varias áreas de especialización. Se presentan dos gráficos en los que se aprecian el modelo y la relación entre las distintas clasificaciones de competencias, y una tabla en la

que se especifican las funciones de cada área de especialización y competencias concretas para cada una.

El autor termina con unas conclusiones en las que destaca el proceso seguido, considerándolo como uno de los puntos más fuertes de la iniciativa canadiense y que en su opinión es transferible a otros contextos y países. Proporciona una dirección en Internet en la que se pueden consultar los documentos a los que hace referencia a lo largo del artículo y en la bibliografía.

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