



The Career Development Bridge

Excerpt from:

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Career Counselling: A Handbook. New Delhi, India: Tata McGraw Hill.

In situations of disadvantage and socio-economic disadvantage, the Career Development Bridge plays a further function for career development. Young people from disadvantaged homes tend to prematurely enter the world of work as unskilled labourers. The most immediate target before the career counsellor therefore is to help these young people begin to consider career development as a real possibility. Career Alternatives that require long term planning and large investments may discourage these young people. The Career Development Bridge offers a stage-wise approach to career development. Take the example of a boy from a poor home whose personal profile indicates that he would do well as a graphic designer. Career counselling that merely makes this recommendation would discourage this young man and perhaps push him even more firmly toward unskilled employment. According to the Career Preparation Process Model, this young person would benefit significantly from counselling interventions that address negative career beliefs and enhance his career preparation self-efficacy. The Career Alternatives he develops could first of all focus on inexpensive short term courses within the broad spectrum of careers in the design industry. The counsellor for example could guide him toward a short course in screen printing. The skills obtained would place him in a position to command a better salary. The counsellor's role now is to facilitate his movement toward the long term objective of becoming a graphic designer by helping him plan his career development accordingly. The counsellor could help him identify government sponsored part-time courses in design. Alternatively he could be linked up with voluntary organisations, financial institutions such as banks and other supports available at the community level. The counselling objective is to facilitate career development in short, affordable steps that lead toward long term goals. This form of career development is far more arduous and the disadvantaged young person could falter. Therefore on the background is the vital necessity of continued and regular counselling inputs that address career and self-efficacy beliefs.

Developing a Career Development Bridge is in effect a counselling technique that facilitates career preparation for the disadvantaged. The role of the counsellor in this context is to first of all help the young person move from a 'no skill' status to at least a 'low skill' status. Subsequent career development would then be the result of encouragement, reinforcement and networking to help the disadvantaged move more deliberately toward prosperity.