

Connecting Career Development and Mental Health for Youth in Schools



Module 3 Everyday Career Development for K-12 Educators: 3.2 Fostering Adaptability

SFU

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Review

1. The world of work is changing so rapidly that traditional ways to help young people are no longer effective or valid.
2. Teachers play an important role as “career influencers”
3. Taking a developmental approach, helping young people explore directions, and fostering attitudes of confidence, personal agency and adaptability provide the strongest foundation for youth

Preview

- **Setting a conceptual career framework for helping youth (the Mental Health framework will be developed in Module 4)**
 - Adaptability skills: The 5 Career Survival Skills
 - A Framework for Helping: 5 Processes (3.3)
 - Putting it Together: Organizing Career Interventions (3.4)

Theme: Having a conceptual framework will allow you to recognize “teachable moments”.

5 Career Survival Skills: Future-Proofing Our Youth

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Future-Proofing Youth: Fostering Adaptability

- If change will be a fact of life for our students, then the best career support we can provide is to foster adaptability skills
- Teachers can help youth recognize and develop skills that will foster life-long career engagement
- The process of acquiring adaptability skills is far more important than the content of decisions

#1: Self-Assessment

A deep and growing capacity to articulate what I have to offer.

Involves self-awareness and self-efficacy

- Best thought of in terms of **competencies** (KSA's)
 - **K**nowledge, **S**kills and **A**ttitudes/Beliefs/Values
- A good starting place is to ask students to list and rank their “Top 5” in each, and periodically ask if they have new KSA's to add to their list, or if a new one has taken over one of the Top 5
- Most powerful teaching tool: Behavioural descriptive feedback!

#2: Environment Scanning

Ability to recognize opportunities and needs in the world around me.

Involves critical thinking

- One of the most under-rated and highly needed skill sets
- Use current events or items of interest to the students to have brainstorming discussions about roles or work associated with the current event
 - E.g., COVID – what are some of the things you can think of that need to be done to get us through the COVID crisis?
 - Note how explorations become linked to a need, and show a broad range of “roles” joined by a common need or interest

#3: Creative Bridging

Developing ideas, plans and activities that link what I have to offer with what is needed.

Involves creative thinking

- Actively engage students in taking any item from their Top 5 lists, and seeing how it might be needed in one of the opportunity/need topics
 - In the COVID example, a student interested in carpentry might use those skills to install plexiglass barriers. One interested in graphic design might create interesting “social distancing spots”.

#4: Documenting Impact

Demonstrating the effectiveness of my activities.

Involves analytical thinking.

- It is not enough to do something (such as making a creative bridge between what you have to offer and a need or opportunity around me) if you have no evidence of it.
- Start small with evidence gathering: “How do you know if that worked?”
 - Use simple language scales and/or simple feedback requests where tangible evidence is not available
 - ALWAYS record the results of the evidence-gathering

#5: Marketing/Promotion

Marketing/promotion: letting others know about my impact.

Involves interpersonal communication

- Being able to make a difference does not help much if no one knows about it.
- How to identify “who else should hear about this”
- Teach students to report their work in the same way that you give them good feedback:
 - The problem or need I saw; what I did (in chronological order using behavioural descriptive language), and the evidence I gathered of impact

Summary:

Teachers have always helped students develop “adaptability” skills.

Making the process overt, by naming it and linking it to career adaptability, develops student awareness of the skills, and helps them to recognize and practice them

The career survival skills provides a way to think about how you can support the career development of your students through everyday classroom activities.

Discussion:

When you think of the career course you are teaching, and the nature of the students that you will be teaching, how might you use curriculum components to foster adaptability skills?

Pick any two of the adaptability/survival skills, and describe how you could foster each within a component or section of your course. Remember to describe how you would make the process “overt” to increase student awareness.

This concludes Section 3.2

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