**Resources and Guidance provided to High School Students, which assist them in Making Career or Educational Choices**

Schools are required to provide resources that guide students on how to make effective career choices. From year seven onwards, schools should identify what students need in life and assist them towards achieving their goals. Career education and guidance should aim at assisting students to develop a sense of self-awareness. In other words, students should understand their potential weaknesses or strengths that would propel them towards achieving their dreams. Apart from self-awareness, career education should assist students to identify various opportunities at the end of their education. Moreover, students should also develop the ability to make decisions and take appropriate actions. This essay focuses on the resources and guidance provided to high school students, which assist them in making career or educational choices.

**Literature Review**

**Guidance for Career or Educational Choices**

According to Dr. Odette Peter-Adderly schools can provide resources or guidance needed by students to make suitable career choices. Resources are materials, events or programs that give more information about careers and assist students in making effective decisions. Guidance is usually provided by trained individuals who understand careers and choices that students should make. About guidance, Dr. Odette identifies two types of people who assist students in making career decisions. The first person is a guidance counselor who may be a teacher or a full-time employee of a school. One of the roles of a guidance counselor is to help students choose the rights subjects that are in line with their goals in life. Apart from selecting subjects, the guidance counselor also talks about careers and may also work with students in preparing them for interviews of developing curriculum vitae (Dr. Odette, 2018). The counsellor should inform students about the type of information that employers are looking for when they are reading resumes. In some cases, the guidance counselor may organize career events and invite other speakers to give inspirational talks. The guidance counsellor ensures that students understand how to identify and build their careers both inside and even outside schools.

Apart from careers, the guidance counsellor also provides vocational guidance to students who are interested in joining the job market or starting their businesses (Dr. Odette, 2018). The vocational guidance assists students to identify potential industries that where their talents can fit. Those who are interested in developing computer programs should be informed about various opportunities as well as challenges associated with the market. Guidance counsellor may invite professionals in various industries to guide students on how to identify potential opportunities that have not been exploited. Those who are interested in jobs should be informed about employer expectations and how to meet them.

However, not all students may be interested in pursuing careers or joining the job market. Some students may choose higher education to enhance their skills. Dr. Odette explains the role of College Adviser (CA) in assisting students to pursue their academic dreams in either colleges or universities. College advisers may begin by assisting students to identify suitable institutions where they can pursue their chosen profession. They may also clarify on specific program requirements, policies and procedures which students need to know before joining colleges (Dr. Odette, 2018). Moreover, the adviser also informs students on how to identify appropriate institutional resources to enhance their skills. Continuous monitoring of academic performance may also assist students to overcome various challenges associated with their chosen professions. Thus, the college adviser assists students by exploring their personal interests, academic and career choices.

Still on guidance, students may also learn how to make appropriate career choices through mentorships. Many schools in the United States have mentorship programs where students in Year 13 mentors fellow students in Year 9 (Patton & McMahon, 2014). The role of mentorship programs is to enhance smooth transition from junior schools to secondary or college levels. Mentors may use the opportunity to develop useful skills in communication and decision making. The program also assists schools to enhance diversification and understanding between senior and junior students. The government may also provide mentorship through the Youth Service Programs (Hertzman, Moreo & Wiener, 2015). Students who are interested in the Youth Service may learn important skills such as tailoring, carpentry, management, or mechanics. Apart from work-related training, the Youth Service also prepares students for higher education in graduate or post-graduate studies.

Therefore, the role of guidance is to develop a sense of self-awareness that students need to make appropriate decisions. When left on their own, students may not understand various challenges associated with their career paths. Some students may end up in wrong careers leading to frustrations and despair. Guidance counsellors, college advisers and mentors play a crucial role towards enlightening students in making effective career choices.

**Resources for Career or Educational Choices**

Apart from guidance, students may also use various resources such as gateway, STAR programs, trade and service academies, work inspiration, career expos and events. Gateway programs provide an opportunity for students to study and also spend time in a workplace (Carlson, 2015). Most students taking science, technology and mathematics may find gateway programs useful because it exposes them to actual machines that they will be using at the workplace. While in the workplace, students may try out various jobs and select one that satisfies their interests. For example, those who are studying electronic engineering may try out various jobs to discover where their talent lies. Many employers may not offer similar opportunities because their interest is to generate income as opposed to training workers (Samide, Patrick, Eliason & Eliason, 2014). Besides, many employees join the workplace after selecting specific jobs that they would like to perform. However, gateway programs are usually managed by gateway coordinators who may be employees or teachers. The coordinators need to conduct interviews to identify students who are suitable for the gateway program (Milgram, 2018). The coordinators are also expected to engage potential employers and book opportunities for their students. The gateway programs may cover a period of six months or even longer depending on the arrangement between schools and selected factories or companies.

The Secondary Tertiary Alignment Resource (STAR) program, according to Hertzman, Moreo & Wiener (2015), contributes towards successful career selection by providing funds needed by schools to support various activities in line with the careers. For instance, the funds provided under the STAR program may be used by students to try out possible careers before selecting the most appropriate. Funds may also be used by schools to hire trainers or counselors needed for career development (Guraya & Almaramhy, 2017). Some schools also use the funds to introduce new courses that can assist students in building their careers. While giving the funds, the government is mainly interested in assisting schools to prepare their students not just for joining the job market but also creating jobs. This explains why the government encourages schools to enroll their students in tertiary institutions where they can enhance their skills as their learning progresses. Tertiary institutions have various equipment or machines that students need to develop work-based experience before joining the job market. The skills acquired through tertiary institutions may also assist students to start their own businesses. According to Carlson (2015), the resources that government give under the STAR program provide more opportunities that students need to make informed decisions. Moreover, students are more likely to succeed in their careers if they have adequate preparations right from junior levels to high school or colleges.

According to Samide, Patrick, Eliason & Eliason (2014), many schools use career expos and events to train students at minimal costs. For instance, the cost of maintaining a fully-fledged career department with guidance counsellors, college advisers and mentors may be too high for many schools to afford. On the other hand, career expos or events take a few days or weeks to achieve the same results. Before the events occur, schools usually make announcements on their websites or social media channels for more accessibility. The expos or events may involve student sessions with professionals drawn from various industries across the nation. According to Hertzman, Moreo & Wiener (2015), parents may also have an opportunity to discuss the progress of their children with the teachers. The parent-teacher evenings may provide more background information needed by counsellors to understand the students better. The subject choice evenings also provide an opportunity for parents to discuss various career choices with their children. In many schools, the subject choice evenings may also involve guidance counsellors to give more information on various career programs (Callanan, Perri & Tomkowicz, 2017). The contributions from the guidance counsellors may supplement the knowledge that parents may have on careers. The counsellors may provide more clarity on areas that parents or teachers have inadequate information.

After the career expos and events, schools may also take students to various companies where they can visualize what they had been taught in the classroom. This session is known as work-inspiration and usually occur over a minimum of three days (Barnett, 2015). The three day training is designed for exposure and not doing the actual work. Students are expected to observe what workers are doing and ask necessary questions at the end of their observations. Companies with flexible working hours may also give some students a chance to try out their skills. However, the main idea behind work inspiration is for observation of what has been taught in class. Aspiring lawyers, for instance, may use the opportunity to learn basic office work such as arrangement of files, sorting of information, recording cases and making follow-ups with the clients (Suryadi, Hamidah & Hanifa, 2018). Giving exposure to a work environment may motivate students to put more efforts in their careers and earn good grades. Moreover, students also get an opportunity to experience various challenges so that they prepare adequately before joining the workplace.

Although not common in the United States, schools may also use trade and service academies to assist their students in making informed career decisions. A trade and service training may occur at the polytechnics or workplaces. Students may study to gain skills or earn more GPA credits (Barnett, 2015). The trade and service academies are suitable for students interested in leadership positions, physical fitness or goal setting careers. The academies are designed in such a way that they give students an opportunity to practice their careers real-life simulations. For instance, those who would like to become leaders may be placed in charge of virtual organizations where they are required to make decisions and observe the outcomes. According to Carlson (2015), the simulations provide a hands-on experience that students need to enhance not just decision-making but also communication skills. The simulation tasks may enhance the culture of discipline among students.

**Conclusion**

Therefore, schools may provide guidance and resources needed by students to make informed decisions regarding their careers. The guidance may be provided by guidance counsellor, college advisers or mentors. Guidance counsellors may be permanent employees of the school or teachers. Both counsellors and college advisers are required to explore personal interests of students, academic performance and career choice before giving appropriate advice. The mentorship program is usually designed by many schools to enhance smooth transition from the junior to high school levels. The program usually involve year 13 students providing mentorship to year 9 students. The resources that schools may offer to assist students include gateway programs, career expos and events, STAR programs, trade and service academies, and work inspiration. Gateway programs are designed in such a way that the provide opportunities for students to study and spend time in a workplace of their choices. The STAR program supports career development by providing funds needed by schools to hire staff or introduce more career courses. Eventually, both guidance and resources aims at enhancing a sense of self-awareness as well as empowering students to make informed choices.

**References**

Barnett, B. (2015). *The Strategic Career: Let Business Principles Guide You*. Stanford, California: Stanford Business Books.

Callanan, G. A., Perri, D. F., & Tomkowicz, S. M. (2017). Career Management in Uncertain Times: Challenges and Opportunities. *Career Development Quarterly*, *65*(4), 353-365.

Carlson, J. P. (2015). *101 Careers in Education*. [N.p.]: Springer Publishing Company.

Dr. Odette P. (2018). Guidance Counselor at Westland Hialeah High School, Hialeah, FL 33012. Phone # 305-818-3000.

Guraya, S. Y., & Almaramhy, H. H. (2017). Original article: Mapping the factors that influence the career specialty preferences by the undergraduate medical students. *Saudi Journal Of Biological Sciences*, doi:10.1016/j.sjbs.2017.03.019.

Hertzman, J. L., Moreo, A. P., & Wiener, P. J. (2015). Career Planning Strategies and Skills of Hospitality Management Students. *Journal Of Human Resources In Hospitality & Tourism*, *14*(4), 423-443. doi:10.1080/15332845.2015.1002071.

Milgram, L. (2018). DEVELOPING CAREER PATHWAYS THAT WORK: A Conversation with Chris Ohshita. *Techniques: Connecting Education & Careers*, *93*(1), 24-26.

Patton, W., & McMahon, M. (2014). *Career Development and Systems Theory: Connecting Theory and Practice*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Samide, J. L., Patrick, J., Eliason, G., & Eliason, T. (2014). *Career Development Across the Lifespan: Counseling for Community, Schools, Higher Education, and Beyond*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Suryadi, B., Ratna Sawitri, D., Hamidah, & Hanifa, F. (2018). Career orientation of senior secondary school students. *SHS Web Of Conferences, Vol 42, P 00005 (2018)*, 00005. doi:10.1051/shsconf/20184200005.