

AL HERMAN,
*Faculty of Education,
 University of Calgary.*

MORE THAN LIP SERVICE IS NEEDED

ABSTRACT: One hundred and forty-four students from grades four, five, and six were asked to write paragraphs describing their vocational plans. Six judges classified the paragraphs according to Ginzberg's stages of vocational development. Results showed that certain characteristics are functional in decision-making processes earlier in life than had been hypothesized by Ginzberg, indicating the desirability for provision of information concerning vocations and the world of work at the elementary school level. Advancement through the stages correlated positively with age and grade. Maturity of choice correlated with the female sex. Intelligence had no significant bearing upon Ginzberg's stages of development of youth.

With the ever-increasing number of occupational possibilities, young people today require more information and help in decision making regarding their vocational opportunities. In times when there was less specialization in the occupational world, parents were able to assume much of the responsibility for informing their children about careers. Today, however, parents find themselves severely limited in dealing with possible vocational opportunities and hence a growing demand for this service is made on the school.

Slocum (1969) concluded, after surveying secondary schools, that occupational guidance was handled in a haphazard manner and that few students had a realistic knowledge of the world of work. Small (1966) found that many young people, upon entering the world of work, were not prepared for making adjustments to the work situation even though most had the abilities to acquire the skills needed. They simply had not had an opportunity to learn them.

Today many writers in the area of vocational development believe that occupational decision making is a continuous process which begins as a tentative search very early in life and continues until termination of one's active work life. Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951) suggested that occupational choice develops over three stages: Fantasy, to age 11; Tentative, between ages 12 and 17; Realistic, age 17 to adulthood. They further divided these three stages into sub-stages. The stage of great relevance to the school is the Tentative stage, since during this time the development of interests, capacities, and values of the individual begin to be factors affecting vocational choice.

Super (1957) also hypothesized stages of vocational development and indicated that this development becomes an integral part of the growing youth's self-concept. When Super and Overstreet's (1960) study of ninth-grade boys was considered in light of vocational

maturity, it was found that not everyone emerged from the Fantasy stage at the same time or at the same rate. Super stated that ninth graders tended to be psychologically ready for vocational exploration but their self-knowledge was lacking.

TABLE 1
Classification of Ss by Grades, Sex, and
Vocational Development Stages

Grade		N	Fantasy	Interest	Capacity	Value
VI	Male	26	6	12	6	2
	Female	24	2	8	4	10
V	Male	20	6	8	4	2
	Female	26	10	10	4	2
IV	Male	28	22	4	2	0
	Female	20	10	8	2	0
TOTALS		144	56	50	22	16

Upon examining research regarding vocational development, McDaniels (1968) stated emphatically that "youth is not too young to choose, only too poorly prepared to make choices (p. 242)." His conclusion suggests that since vocational development is a continuous process, more planning for preparation may be desirable in the elementary school.

In reference to the vocational maturation of youth, this study attempted to investigate the validity of Ginzberg's theory. The specific purposes were twofold:

- a) to investigate whether the age categories as assigned by Ginzberg to occupational stages were constant;
- b) to investigate whether grade, age, intelligence, or sex had any effect on vocational maturity.

Method

Two classes of each of Grades 4, 5 and 6 were chosen to participate in the study. At the beginning of the school term, administrators of the school had divided these classes alphabetically rather than by achievement, intelligence, sex, or other criteria. The Ss were asked to write a paragraph explaining what they thought they would be when they grew up and why they made that particular choice.

Six graduate students enrolled in a counselor-education program acted as judges in rating the students' paragraphs. They were asked to place each paragraph into one of four vocational stages as defined by Ginzberg. The stages used in this study included the Fantasy stage and the three sub-stages of the Tentative stage, namely, the Interest, Capacity, and Value stages. Definitions of the four accepted stages, as provided by Ginzberg, were given to each of the six judges who were

asked to rate, independently of one another, the paragraphs written by the Ss. Agreement among four of six was required for acceptance. This by probability implied significance at the 3 percent level (Ferguson, 1966, pp. 79-94).

Nine paragraphs were rejected because of non-concurrence among the judges. A total of 144 Ss were included in the study. Information regarding age and intelligence was obtained from the students' cumulative folders.

Results

Distribution through the four stages of vocational development is shown in Table 1. A marked trend from the Fantasy stage toward the higher stages of Interest, Capacity, and Value occurs with advance of grade. Although the male:female ratio is similar (74:70), proportionately more males than females are seen to be in the Fantasy stage while more females than males appear in the Value stage. However, a chi-square analysis to determine relationships between male and female with regard to stages showed that the difference was not significant.

TABLE 2
Age and I.Q. of Ss Classified by
Vocational Development Stages

Stages	Median Age	Mean I. Q.
Fantasy.....	9 yrs. 10 months	107.8
Interest.....	10 yrs. 10 months	110.7
Capacity.....	10 yrs. 10 months	112.5
Value.....	11 yrs. 4 months	111.0

Table 2 shows a progression through the stages with regard to age and intelligence. The age differences between the stages are not of equal dimension. Approximately one and one-half years separate the Fantasy stage from the Value stage. Although some variations exist in I.Q. between the stages, *t* tests indicate that none of the differences is significant.

Table 3 shows that the median age for boys and girls is almost identical. The mean I. Q. of girls was 10.7 I.Q. points higher than for boys. A *t* test indicates that this difference is significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 3
Age and I.Q. of Ss Classified by Sex

Sex	Median Age	Mean I. Q.
Males.....	10.7	103.0
Females.....	10.6	113.7
Total Group.....	10.7	108.2

Discussion

The data indicate that students in elementary schools are able to make decisions utilizing those characteristics of the Interest, Capacity, and Value stages at a younger age than suggested by Ginzberg. Although Ginzberg (1951) stated that the Value stage develops in youth between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, in this study 11 percent of the Ss with a median age of 11 years 4 months chose their vocations as a result of consideration of values.

A definite trend of advancement through the stages is noted with an increase in age and grade; however, intelligence shows no significant bearing upon the stages. There is a definite trend for females to progress more rapidly through the stages of vocational maturity than males. These findings are in keeping with general developmental principles and have been substantiated by Gribbons and Lohnes (1965) and earlier by O'Hara (1962) who suggested that girls, because of the nature of their childhood experiences at home and in school, seem to have a more realistic understanding of their future work world than do boys.

It is of some importance to note that Ginzberg's hypotheses pertaining to vocational stages of development stated what occurred more than twenty years ago. This was before any well-organized guidance program or articulated school curriculum relevant to the world of work and people in occupations was available to students. A great deal of evidence has been presented since that time which questions the validity of some aspects of Ginzberg's conclusions. Davis, Hagan and Strouf (1962) found that over 60 percent of twelve-year-old sixth graders made tentative choices rather than fantasy choices and that the more mature choices correlated with the female sex. Tennyson and Monnens (1963) and Wellington and Olechowski (1966) found that teachers could assist elementary-school children to develop a more realistic understanding of the world of work as well as an appreciation and respect for work being performed. Kaback (1968) concluded that there is great interest on the part of children of early elementary-school age in vocations. They express strong interest in knowing more about the nature of work as it exists in the world about them. Nelson (1963) found that children as early as grade 3 had well developed attitudes regarding occupations and levels of education.

Accumulation of evidence indicates that elementary-school children can profit from and learn an appreciation for vocational and educational planning. Providing children with an initial orientation to the world of work lays the foundations for later vocational choices.

The rationale of the psychology of work for each individual suggests that each person will have an understanding of himself and of his needs. Since formation of the self-concept begins early in life, teachers and counselors should assist children in elementary schools to gain an understanding of work as it relates to the individual. Counselors can be instrumental in helping teachers develop those areas of the curriculum which can provide an opportunity for elementary-school students to explore, discover, develop, and come to grips with

their abilities, interests, and personalities so that each student may gain an objective appraisal of his strengths and limitations. These curriculum units can be implemented on a developmental and sequential basis for all children rather than having this important area of study treated incidentally as it has been in the past (Hamilton & Webster, 1971). The outcome should be an awareness by each child of his unique self, strengthened by having had opportunities for decision-making and interaction with life's challenges.

RESUME: Cent quarante-quatre élèves de quatrième, cinquième et sixième années rédigèrent de courts écrits décrivant leurs projets occupationnels. Les écrits furent classifiés par six juges, selon les étapes du développement professionnel de Ginzberg. Les résultats démontrent que certaines caractéristiques affectent le processus de prise de décision beaucoup plus tôt que ne l'a formulé Ginzberg. Dès lors, il apparaît désirable de prendre des dispositions appropriées concernant l'information professionnelle et le monde du travail au niveau élémentaire. Le passage d'une étape à une autre est en corrélation positive avec l'âge et le niveau scolaire. L'intelligence ne semble pas avoir d'influence significative.

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