MEASURING THE EFFICACY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES: AGENCY AND SERVICE PROVIDERS PERCEPTIONS

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Dedication

To my wife, Jennifer,

To my children, Caleb, Madison, Taylor, Liam and Asher,

And to my mom and dad, Willem and Barbara Slomp.

Abstract

This study examined the perspectives of agencies providing career development services in Canada concerning the current state of efficacy assessment. The central question guiding this research was: How do representatives of career services agencies perceive their evaluation practices and the results they are obtaining? A total of 147 (n=147) agency representatives participated in an on-line survey. The data obtained through the use of this survey were analyzed using a mixed methods design – methods included frequency analysis, Chi square analysis and qualitative methods (to conduct content analysis). A number of conclusions were drawn from this study. It appears that the vast majority of agencies value reporting on the outcomes of the services they provide and do engage in efficacy measurement. However, it is also apparent that certain types of career development agencies do not value and do not engage in efficacy measurement to the same extent as other types of career development agencies. In addition, it appears that a strong emphasis is currently being placed on tallying the number of clients who secure employment or return to school with a lack of emphasis being placed on other outcomes. Finally, according to the sample in this survey, agency representatives are encountering many obstacles in their attempts to measure the effectiveness of the services they provide. The results of this study have many implications for the field of career development. In order to provide a sound body of evidence attesting to the efficacy of career development services much work will have to be done to build a strong framework to ensure accountability.

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My parents, whose model of caring and compassion led me to pursue a career in the

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In recent years, the counselling psychology profession has had to address accountability issues (Wampold, Lichtenberg, & Waehler, 2002). In the past, counsellors selected treatments based on subjective criteria. Evidence of effectiveness was rarely demanded – beyond client self-reports of treatment effectiveness in alleviating distress (Feltham, 2005). However, in recent years the counselling profession's commitment to the scientist-practitioner model and the need to provide empirical support for its interventions has been significantly strengthened. In part, this renewed commitment has come from within the profession itself. Within the profession there is a growing awareness of the idea that "evidence-based practice is the heart and soul of the scientist-practitioner model and what it means to be 'professional'" (Lichtenberg & Wampold, 2002, p. 310). However, increasingly the pressure to demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions is also coming from external sources. Stakeholders are demanding more and better evidence concerning the efficacy of psychological interventions. Without sound evidence attesting to the efficacy of interventions the profession risks losing credibility with consumers and other stakeholders (Hiebert, 1997; Whiston, 2002).

As a subset of the counselling profession the career development field is also currently facing increasing pressure to address accountability concerns (Whiston, 2003). Initiatives are already underway to address accountability concerns in career development services. In the UK, for example, efforts are being directed towards building a case for career development services (Hughes, 2004). A similar initiative has been started in Canada as well. Recently, in response to the growing demands in Canada for better evidence attesting to the effectiveness of career counselling interventions, the Canadian

Research Working Group for Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development (CRWG) was established, with the mandate of creating a framework for the generation, collection, and dissemination of efficacy research in the field of career counselling. This group has begun an ambitious initiative to address accountability issues in Canadian career development services. This initiative will unfold in four stages. The first stage examined the perceptions of policy makers, practitioners, employers and agencies regarding the current state of efficacy measurement in career development services in Canada. The second stage will examine the factors contributing to the current state of practice. The third stage will propose strategies to improve the current practice of efficacy measurement. The fourth stage will examine the effectiveness of these proposed strategies to ensure that they are successfully addressing the concerns identified in the first stage.

Purpose of Present Study

The present study was part of the first step described above. In order to get a "lay of the land" with respect to the measurement of the impacts/outcomes of career development services in Canada the CRWG commissioned four preliminary studies to determine the current state of practice of efficacy assessment. Surveys were conducted with practitioners (in both official languages) and with agency representatives (in both official languages). As well, telephone interviews were conducted with policy makers and employers. This present study examined the perspectives of representatives of agencies providing career development services in Canada concerning the current state of efficacy assessment. The central question guiding this research was: How do career services agencies perceive their evaluation practices and the results they are obtaining?

This chapter provided a brief introduction concerning the growing need for evidence attesting to the effectiveness of career development services and a context for understanding this study. Chapter 2 will examine the literature concerning the need for efficacy assessments and will examine the current research base regarding the effectiveness of career development services. Chapter 3 will provide a description and rationale concerning the research methods utilized in this study. Chapter 4 will discuss the results of this research. Chapter 5 will examine the implications of this study and recommendations for future practice and research. As well, it will discuss the strengths and limitations of this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The central goal of this research was to determine the perspectives of agency

representatives regarding the current state of practice concerning efficacy assessment in

career development services in Canada. This review of the literature will begin by

defining the nature of the services provided by this field. Then this review will examine

the need for more and better data supporting the effectiveness of career development

services. Next, this review will examine how other allied fields (clinical and counselling

psychology) have addressed similar accountability concerns. Finally, this review will

examine the steps being taken to address accountability issues by the career development

field and how this present research fits into these initiatives.

Defining Career Development Services

Career development services (also termed "guidance") encompass a wide range of

services. Spokane and Oliver (1983) defined career interventions as any treatment or

effort intended to enhance an individual's career development or to enable the person to

make better career-related decisions. This is a broad definition that encompasses a wide

range of interventions, such as individual counselling, group activities, computer

applications and self-administered inventories.

Another definition that has been provided by the Council of the European Union

defines guidance (or career development services) in the context of lifelong learning:

...a range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their

lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational,

training and occupations decisions and to manage their individual life paths in

learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are
learned and/or used. (Bimrose, 2004)

Similarly, The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
defines "career guidance" as being described by terms such as information, advice and
guidance, vocational guidance, vocational counselling, career counselling and career
development. It further defines these as follows:

> Services intended to assist people of any age and at any point throughout their
> lives to make educational, training and occupational choices to manage their
> careers. Career guidance helps people to reflect on their ambitions, interests,
> qualifications and abilities. It helps them to understand the labour market and
> education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves.
> Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions
> about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour
> market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organizing it,
> systematizing it and making it available when and where people need. (Bimrose,
> 2004)

Canadian definitions of career development services are similar. Bezanson
(2004b) defines career development services as providing information, advice and
guidance to assist individuals to: (1) Know where – understand labour markets, skill
requirements and location of these markets; (2) Know when – understand "timing"
issues, surpluses and shortages, current and future career opportunities and how to take
advantage of them; (3) Know why – understand their own interests, values and
motivations to help set a meaningful career direction; (4) Know how – acquire the

knowledge, skills and experiences required to manage work and learning decisions and transitions; and (5) Know whom – make the most of contacts and networks to help improve chances of success.

As these definitions suggest, career development services encompass a wide range of activities such as informing, advising, counselling, assessing, enabling, advocating, and feeding back to help clients navigate through a wide range of concerns and issues.

The Nature of the Accountability Problem in Career Development Services

The definitions provided above also suggest that career development services are primarily concerned with facilitating change in the lives of clients. Individuals who seek career development services, as well as agencies that fund these services, expect change to occur. These changes relate to gains on personal, familial, social, educational, economic, financial, social, and educational levels (Bernes & Bardick, 2006) and include changes in client competence (knowledge change, skill change, attributes change), client behaviours (e.g., increased job search behaviours), client situation (e.g., employment status, education status) and broad changes for the client and/or community (e.g., client financial situation, community economic development). Increasingly, consumers and funding agencies are demanding that the career development profession provide evidence attesting to the effectiveness of its services in producing these changes in order to justify continued support.

However, the current research base is not sufficient to provide the level of evidence being demanded by consumers and funding agencies. There is a compelling need for more and better evidence attesting to the effectiveness of career development

services (Bernes & Bardick, 2006; Bezanson, 2004; Flores et al., 2003; Flynn, 1994; Herr, 2003; Hiebert, 1994; Kellett, 1994; Whiston, Brecheisen, & Stephens, 2003). This need was identified by two recent symposia in the field of career counselling – the international symposium, "Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap" held in Toronto in October of 2003, and the Canadian symposium, "Working Connections: A Pan-Canadian Symposium on Career Development, Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development" held in Toronto in November of 2003 (Magnusson & Roest, 2004). The current research base in career development has aptly been described as piecemeal, spotty, fragmented and unsystematic (Harris-Bowlsbey, 2003; Magnusson & Roest, 2004). French, Hiebert and Bezanson (1994) summarize concerns regarding the current evidence base by commenting that although there are a large number of approaches, models and strategies that exist relative to career development there is a lack of evaluative data, and a lack of clarity, concerning the nature of approaches, techniques and strategies that might help identify the essential characteristics of effective, caring, and efficient career development programs and services. According to these authors, little is known about the effectiveness, efficiency, and appropriateness of career development services in producing the changes desired by clients and funding agencies.

The fundamental weakness in the current research base is that not enough is known about what interventions work best with which clients under what circumstances (Whiston, 2003). Whiston (2002) points out there is not much evidence to establish the effectiveness of major approaches or modalities applied to specific areas or populations (with the possible exception of the effectiveness of career interventions with college students). Furthermore, there are very few studies from which to draw definitive

conclusions concerning specific approaches in specific areas with specific populations.

As an example, although there is a substantial body of knowledge related to the career

needs of various groups (women, members of racial and ethnic minorities, etc.), there has

been surprisingly little research examining the differing effects of career interventions

with these groups. Whiston comments that, "Although there is an assumption that these

groups have unique needs and that traditional career interventions will not be as helpful

to these groups, very little research has investigated group differences and whether

specialized treatment approaches are significantly more effective" (p. 221). According to

Whiston (2002) one major contributing factor to this problem is the fact that since 1950

49% of the research studies in the field of career development have been with college

students (and often not actual clients but rather students in classes such as introductory

psychology).

Magnusson and Roest (2004) argue similarly that the career development field

still has very little idea about what works, for whom, and under what circumstances. For

example, they also identify that the current evaluative data available primarily describes

students in educational settings. For this reason, they claim that we have very little

knowledge about the differential effects of career services on groups such as women,

members of various socio-economic populations, members of varying ethnic or cultural

groups, or people from differing educational populations. Also, they claim that we have

very little understanding of the comparative value of different interventions that share

similar goals.

Another major weakness in the current research base is that there is currently very

little evidence to support the cost effectiveness of career interventions. Whiston (2002)

claims that the benefits of career counselling have not been clearly identified nor has the field definitively established personal or economic gains that are a result of career counselling. This assertion is supported by Hughes et al. (2002), who argue that the failure of the career development field to substantiate the economic benefits of career development services results from a lack of research and evaluation studies that focus on this dimension. According to Whiston, there may be increased interest and support for career counselling interventions if researchers can demonstrate that there are economic benefits to career interventions.

The lack of comprehensive efficacy data is complicated by the fact that outcome studies in the field of career development have declined in past years. According to Sexton (1996) and Whiston (1996, 2003), there is little research being conducted in recent years examining the efficacy of career interventions. Career development research continues to focus on career development and career choice rather than on the process and efficacy of career development services (Dagley & Salter, 2004; Guindon & Richmond, 2005). Two recent reviews of research and practice in career counselling and development (Dagley & Salter, 2004; Guindon & Richmond, 2005) both made strong recommendations emphasizing the need for more research regarding career interventions and techniques.

The lack of comprehensive efficacy data poses a number of problems for those in the career development field. Since career services are often funded by government agencies funding may be at increased risk if the funding agencies have little or no evidence attesting to the efficacy of career development services. French et al. (1994) contend that many will wonder about the rationality of continuous funding in the absence

of sound data confirming the efficacy of career development services. Whiston (2001) and Riddle (2000) argue that in order to retain funding, agencies need to demonstrate the effectiveness of their service. They point out that there is an increasing demand for accountability information in order to justify and retain funding support. Similarly, Magnusson and Roest (2004) comment, "Given that most agencies and services find themselves in an era of fiscal restraint, research into global outcomes is essential for sustaining existing programs and for providing evidence for the development of new ones" (p. 10). Evaluation can provide powerful data for agencies to document what is being achieved with the funding allocated to them.

In addition to losing funding, the career development field risks losing professional credibility. It is possible that the long-term viability of career development services may be in jeopardy without more comprehensive efficacy data. Whiston (2002) claims that without renewed interest in career counselling outcome research career services may miss being considered an empirically supported psychological intervention. Likewise, Hiebert (1997) suggests that without renewed interest in more effectively making evaluation and the acquisition of efficacy data part of the career counselling process, the future of career development services is questionable.

One of the consequences of losing professional credibility is that counselling may lose credibility with "consumers." For example, according to Bezanson (1995), the general public is becoming more informed about what to expect from career counseling service providers and, as a consequence, more critical. These factors are increasing the pressure on counseling agencies to have policies, standards, and benchmarks for service that "customers" can understand so that they can make comparisons and judgments as to

what services to select. Certainly, in a market-driven economy consumers will look elsewhere for solutions to their career and personal concerns if the effectiveness of the services being offered by career development professionals and counsellors cannot be substantiated. An example of this is the growing availability of career development services on the internet. Whiston (2003) argues that unless career development professionals do a better job of demonstrating the efficacy of career counselling (and communicating that information) counsellor-free services (via the internet) may replace interventions offered by career development professionals. Consumers may view these services as a less expensive alternative to career counselling.

In conclusion, the career development profession is currently facing pressure to provide comprehensive evidence attesting to the impacts of the services it provides. It is imperative that the profession successfully addresses these concerns. Specifically, it is important that the career development field develop a strong research base that supports the effectiveness of its interventions in addressing a wide range of career development issues, with a wide range of client populations under a wide range of circumstances. The consequences of not addressing these concerns potentially include a loss of funding and credibility with funding agencies and consumers.

Addressing Accountability Concerns in Counselling Psychology

Clearly, the career development field needs to address accountability concerns. It is instructive to examine the ways in which allied professions have addressed concerns similar to the ones being faced by the career development field. Approximately a decade ago the counselling psychology profession also came under increased pressure to demonstrate the effectiveness of its interventions. According to Dobson and Craig

(1998), parties that pay for psychological services became increasingly strident in their demands for proven treatments. As a result of the Managed Care (MHC) movement in the United States those providing counselling services were beginning to require empirical validity of treatments in order to be reimbursed for their services (Beutler, 1998; Chwalisz, 2003; Hayes, 1998). Barlow (1996) summarized the challenges faced by the counselling psychology profession a decade ago by stating that without the promotion and dissemination of evidence attesting to the efficacy of psychological interventions the profession would risk a substantial de-emphasis if not elimination of its interventions in the health care delivery system.

Wampold, Lichtenberg, and Waehler (2002) indicate that the counselling psychology profession responded to the pressures described above by reaffirming its commitment to the scientist-practitioner model of professional practice. From its inception in the 1950's, the counselling psychology profession has been based on the model of the scientist-practitioner. However, although the profession has endorsed the scientist-practitioner model for a long time, it was not until the 1990's that the profession fully engaged in the application of this model (Chwalisz, 2003). According to Wampold et al., "The 1990's may well be remembered in psychology as a time when more activity took place toward integrating psychotherapy science and practice than during any prior decade in the profession's rich and storied history" (p. 200).

The re-affirmation of the scientist practitioner model of professional practice by the counselling psychology profession has been called the "evidence-base practice" (EBP) or "empirically supported practice" movement (Feltham, 2005). It has also been termed the Empirically Validated Treatments (EVT) or Empirically Supported

Treatments (EST) movement. For the sake of clarity, the term empirically supported

treatments (EST) will be utilized in this discussion. The EST movement has been

defined as the "conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in

making decisions about the care of individuals" (Sackett, Rosenburg, Gray, Haynes, &

Richardson, 1996). Feltham (2005) comments:

> Associated with EBP is a move further towards the conventional and professional,
>
> and away from the peripheral and dubious .... The evidence-based practice thrust
>
> inevitably helps to distance spurious practices from uncritical acceptance and
>
> growth. Many consumers are likely to be dissuaded from entering into therapies
>
> that cannot show any documentation of empirical support. (p. 134)

This movement was initiated by the establishment of the task force on the

Promotion and Dissemination of Clinical Procedures by the American Psychological

Association's Division of Clinical Psychology (Division 12) in the early 1990's. During

the early 1990's the clinical psychology profession was also under pressure to provide

evidence attesting to the effectiveness of its interventions. The profession responded by

establishing a task force to define EST's and to make recommendations in relation to

methods for educating mental health professionals, third party payers and the public

about effective psychotherapies (Neville & Heyne, 2000).

To fulfill their mandate the Task Force developed a scheme for determining

whether an intervention has legitimately demonstrated efficacy in dealing with specific

problems or disorders. It argued that it is necessary for a given intervention to

demonstrate whether the treatment has been beneficial in controlled research, whether the

treatment has demonstrated itself to be useful in applied clinical settings (and, if so, with

what patients and under what circumstances?) and whether the treatment is efficient in the sense of being cost-effective relative to other alternative interventions. Under the protocol developed by the Task Force treatments need to demonstrate efficacy (including clinical significance), effectiveness (or clinical utility), and efficiency (or cost-effectiveness). According to Chambless and Hollon (1998), empirically supported therapies are "clearly specified psychological treatments shown to be efficacious in controlled research with a delineated population" (p. 7).

Shortly after developing criteria for determining EST's, the Task Force on the Promotion and Dissemination of Psychological Interventions also published a list of Well-Established Treatments and Probably Efficacious Treatments. According to the criteria they had established, they identified a number of examples of Empirically Validated (or Supported) Treatments. For example, they identified cognitive-behaviour therapy for generalized anxiety disorder, exposure treatment for agoraphobia, and cognitive-behaviour therapy for social phobia as well established treatments for anxiety and stress disorders (Crits-Christoph, 1998). The Task Force also, identified brief dynamic therapy, cognitive therapy for geriatric patients, and self-control therapy as probably efficacious treatments for treating depression.

The counselling psychology profession (APA's Division 17) followed this lead and also advocated for a review of the current empirical status of its intervention practices and the dissemination of the findings to the profession and the public (Wampold et al., 2002). To accomplish this, the APA's Division 17 (Counselling Psychology) commissioned a Special Task Group (STG) on EST's in counselling psychology. It was commissioned to make counselling psychologists and students aware of the current

empirical status of interventions in counselling psychology, to increase predoctoral and postdoctoral training in psychological interventions that have been supported by empirical research, and to foster public understanding and appreciation of empirically supported interventions offered by counselling psychologists (Wampold et al, 2002, p. 199).

However, the Division 17 STG took a different approach than the Division 12 Task Force when it began the process of identifying empirically supported interventions. Wampold et al. (2002) state that as the STG began its work it became apparent that the traditions of counselling psychology, the nature of the interventions that counselling psychologists deliver, and the state of the empirical literature precluded developing a set of criteria in the manner of Division 12 that would lead to a list of EST's. Therefore, rather than develop a list of empirically supported treatments, the STG decided instead to enunciate principles that would guide the collection and presentation of research as well as scientifically informed practice rather than stipulate criteria and constricted interventions (p. 204).

In contrast to the approach taken by the Division 12 Task Force, when the STG began to develop its principles it attempted to give appropriate consideration to a number of issues such as: (a) the diversity of settings in which interventions are delivered, (b) the diversity of counselling psychology service providers and the diversity of needs and responsiveness of recipients of those interventions, and (c) the diversity of empirical methods by which support for interventions can be established (Wampold et al., 2002, p. 199).

The principles developed by the STG highlight a number of important points. First, the STG emphasized the need to determine the effectiveness of an intervention at several levels. According to the STG there are a number of levels of efficacy assessment. The first level of efficacy assessment is concerned with determining the effectiveness of general categories of action (e.g., psychotherapy, supervision, vocational counselling, classroom guidance, and prevention). The second level of efficacy assessment is concerned with determining the effectiveness of major approaches to or modalities of general categories of action (e.g., cognitive-behavioural psychotherapies, career exploration, and group counselling). The third level of efficacy assessment is concerned with determining the effectiveness of major approaches or modalities applied to specific areas or to specific populations (e.g., cognitive-behavioural treatment of depressesion, drug-use prevention in elementary schools). Finally, the fourth level of efficacy assessment is concerned with determining the effectiveness of specific approaches in specific areas for specific populations (e.g., a well-specified Prevention Program for persons with Risk Factor B and Cultural Characteristics C) (Wampold et al., 2002, p. 206).

Second, the STG recognized the need to consider many client variables when categorizing clients. The STG recognized that although formal diagnosis (e.g. a DSM-IV diagnosis) provides one way of categorizing clients there are many other client variables that are important to consider, including ethnicity, gender, attitudes and values, preferences for type of treatment, willingness to receive treatment, purity of disorder or problem, etc. (Wampold et al., 2002, p. 206).

Third, the STG recognized the need to determine evidence for absolute and relative efficacy. According to the STG, the most basic evidence for effectiveness of the intervention is comparison of the intervention to the absence of treatment (e.g., Is intervention X more effective than doing nothing?) If this can be answered affirmatively the intervention becomes viable. If two interventions have been shown to be viable the question then becomes, "Is Intervention X more effective than Intervention Y"? According to the STG, relative superiority must be established by examining the accumulation of evidence comparing the two interventions (Wampold et al., 2002).

Fourth, the STG emphasized the need to assess outcomes broadly and appropriately. According to the STG, assessments of outcomes should take into account general life functioning (for example, an intervention that is designed to reduce stress in the workplace also could affect depression, marital satisfaction, and physical health), perspectives (not just of the client, but also the program provider, and third-party payers), and cost/benefits (cost of services, changes in productivity, or use of physical health services) (Wampold et al., 2002).

Fifth, the STG identified the need to assess outcomes locally. According to the STG, because of the ambiguity in local applications of interventions, counsellors should be allowed to tailor interventions guided by the evidence for effectiveness. At the same time, the scientifically informed practitioner, practicing reflectively, will need to ensure that programs delivered are achieving their objectives. Thus, practitioners, whether providing psychotherapy, career counselling, etc., need to collect data of various types to assess the effectiveness of their program (Wampold et al., 2002).

The EST movement is not universally supported within the counselling psychology profession. Generally speaking, there are two main criticisms of the EST movement. These are: arguments against the dissemination of a list of EST's and arguments against the criteria used to designate treatments as validated (Elliot, 1998). Wampold et al., (2002) suggest that the development of a list of EST's has the potential to result in stifling of clinical innovation and the misuse of validation information (e.g. treatments not on the list may be perceived as invalid, or managed care companies may "cherry pick" the cheaper treatments). Wampold et al., (2002) also point out that utilizing random controlled trials as the "gold standard" of evidence is a flawed approach since they do not allow for the generalizability of the results to actual conditions of practice. In addition, random controlled trials assume diagnostic specificity and specify treatment manual adherence, which hinders effectiveness and has the potential to lead to the "MacDonaldization" of therapy (Feltham, 2005). A review of The Principles of Empirically Supported Interventions suggests that the field of counselling psychology has successfully addressed these criticisms while at the same time advancing the cause of evidence-based practice.

In summary, like the career development field other allied fields such as counselling and clinical psychology profession have also had to address accountability concerns. These professions have addressed these concerns by reaffirming their commitment to the scientist-practitioner model as the preferred model for training and professional practice. Although they have articulated different strategies for dealing with accountability concerns, both professions have made significant progress towards bridging the gap between research and practice.

Current Initiatives to Address Accountability Concerns in Career Development

The major lesson that can be learned from examining the efforts taken by other allied fields to address accountability concerns is the need to integrate research and practice. Whiston (1996) notes that, "Other related professions, for example clinical psychology, have formally acknowledged the benefits of union between practice and research by endorsing the scientist-practitioner model" (p. 622). She argues that the career development field needs to take similar steps.

It is encouraging to note that a number of initiatives are currently underway to facilitate the integration of research and practice in career development services. In the United Kingdom, for example, a new National Guidance Research Forum (NGRF), supported by their governments' Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has recently been created to raise the profile, application and development of career research. Its mandate is to support the creation of a much stronger evidence-base for careers work. Some of the initiatives they have begun include the creation of a website forum and establishment of a strategic forum.

The purpose of the website forum is to facilitate and support collaboration, knowledge combination and the creation of a dynamic "community of interest" for career guidance research and practice. This website forum contains three main strands: future trends (consisting of labour market information focusing on labour market changes and skill needs that have been synthesized by research experts for practitioner use), research database (which acts as a repository for storing and retrieving research findings), and effective guidance (which attempts to create dialogue between researchers, policy makers, practitioners, trainers and managers to produce gathered evidence to inform

policy and practices in areas such as equal opportunities, improving practice, using research in practice, impact analysis, international perspectives, and lifelong learning) (Hughes, 2004).

The purpose of the strategic forum is to attract high profile ambassadors for career work drawn from a wide range of educational and occupational sectors to set critical questions to help extend the thinking of policy makers, practitioners, managers, researchers and trainers. The intention of this process will be to create and maintain a stimulus for building a critical mass of evidence to support the need for career development services both now and in the future (Hughes, 2004).

Hughes (2004) summarized the goals of this initiative as gathering "sound" evidence to inform policies and practices particularly in relation to what works, what does not work, and why: "The challenge is seeking to find easier ways for people to locate knowledge and evidence; reduce it to relevant and manageable proportions; and make it readily accessible" (p. 3).

In Canada, an initiative is also underway to encourage the integration of research and practice in the field of career development services. Recently, the CRWG was created with the mandate to create a framework for the generation, organization and dissemination of research demonstrating the efficacy of career development interventions. Membership in this group includes representation from universities across Canada, the federal government, and independent career foundations.

The research being presented in this present study stems from the agenda developed by this Working Group. Before creating a research framework the Working Group recognized the need to engage in some preliminary work. Currently, very little is

known about the state of either formal or informal evaluation practice among agencies that provide career development services in Canada – that is, the degree to which research and practice are integrated. The Working Group decided that before building an evaluation framework, it would be helpful to ascertain what agencies and service providers are currently doing. Such a "state of practice" review will help to identify elements of good practice, and also to delineate where gaps or developmental needs exist. Furthermore, an inclusive examination of current practice also will help to ensure that various stakeholders have input into the structure of an evaluation framework, and thereby increase the likelihood that they will engage in subsequent evaluation practices (that is, there will be increased "buy-in" among the stakeholders).

As part of this initial step, this present study sought to determine how agencies and/or career service providers are currently evaluating the effectiveness of their services, to determine the types of measures that they are employing, and to determine the sorts of results they are obtaining about the effectiveness of their work. This research also intended to determine the perceived obstacles and frustrations experienced by career development professionals impeding the evolution of efficacy evaluations. Through this study, it was hoped that the cause of creating sound systems for evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of career development services would be advanced.

A parallel research project, which is also part of the national initiative, was also coordinated by other members of the Working Group, and examined how practitioners evaluate the effectiveness of their services, the measures they are employing, and the outcomes they are noticing resulting from the provision of their services. Taken together, the two research projects formed part of a larger initiative designed to determine the

perceptions of agencies and practitioners regarding the outcomes and issues they view as most salient in front-line practice regarding efficacy evaluation of career development services. It was hoped that the results obtained from these small-scale studies would contribute to the development of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant (SSRHC) proposal requesting funding for a large-scale study (Measuring the Impact of Career Services: State of Practice) analyzing career intervention evaluation.

Conclusion

The career development field provides a wide range of services designed to help clients achieve personal, social, educational, economic and financial goals. Increasingly, the field is under pressure to provide evidence attesting to the effectiveness of these services in helping clients achieve their goals. Other allied fields have come under similar pressures and have responded by building systems to generate comprehensive efficacy data. Unless the career development field also takes action to address accountability concerns it risks losing funding and credibility. The profession needs to follow the lead of other allied fields and make a concerted effort to integrate research and practice. This present study attempted to facilitate this process by attempting to understand the current practice of efficacy assessment of agencies providing career development services in Canada. The next chapter examines the methods utilized in this study.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to determine the perceptions of agency

representatives concerning the current state of practice in measurement and evaluation of

career development services in Canada. The central question guiding this research was

this: How do career services agencies perceive their evaluation practices and the results

they are obtaining? For the purposes of this research, "career services agencies" was

defined as any agency, organization, or service provider offering career development

services in Canada. "Career development services" was defined as any intentional

activity that is implemented in the hopes of fostering client change with regard to career

development. This chapter discusses the research questions, sample, survey instrument,

confidentiality, data collection and methods utilized in analyzing the data.

Research Questions

To address the central research question, the following questions were posed:

1. How do representatives of career development organizations/agencies

   perceive the importance of measuring the impact of their services?

2. Do agencies measure outcomes/impacts and report on outcome data?

3. What is the relationship between agency demographics (type of agency and

   agency size) and the perceived value of measuring the impact of career

   services?

4. What is the relationship between agency demographics (type and size of

   agency) and the frequency with which they engage in measuring the impact of

   their career services?

5. What outcomes are agencies currently reporting as a result of the provision of their services (if any), and how are they measured?

6. What outcomes do agencies identify resulting from the provision of their services but are currently not reporting (if any), and how are they measured?

7. What difficulties do agencies face when trying to measure the outcomes/impacts of their services?

8. What outcomes would agencies like to measure if they were able?

9. What are agency perceptions as to better ways to measure the impact/outcomes of career development services?

Sample

The Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) was responsible for contacting potential participants and inviting them to participate in the research. Initial contacts were made by the CCDF through email. In addition, those who received an invitation to participate were encouraged to make other agencies aware of this research so that a large number of agencies providing career development services could contribute their input to this research. This encouraged a fan-out process that resulted in several requests by individuals who oversee career development services to make the survey available to agencies not originally solicited by the CCDF. The researcher gave permission to these requests provided that the individuals who requested participation in the survey were responsible for overseeing, managing or directing the delivery of career development services in agencies/organizations in Canada.

The CCDF utilized a master list of Canadian career development service providers to access participants for this study. This list included symposium participants

(n = 150), the Career Circuit Network (n = approximately 3000), Standards and

Guidelines (n = 65), and the CCDF Board of Governors (n = 11). Although the survey

was made available to over 3000 potential participants, only 147 individuals responded,

possibly because the criterion for participation was employment as a manager or program

administrator of career development services. For this reason, this survey was likely only

appropriate for some of the individuals who received invitations to participate.

The majority of the respondents in this survey represented not-for-profit agencies

(44.5%) and provincial government agencies (27.0%) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Agency Type

Kind of Agency	N	%
Federal government agency	4	2.9
Provincial government agency (non-school)	37	27.0
School within the K-12 system	13	9.5
Post-secondary institute (college, technical institute or university)	14	10.2
Career services or human resource unit within a larger company or organization providing services for the benefit of employees	0	0
Not-for-profit agency	61	44.5
Private (for-profit) career services provider	6	4.4
Private practice/consultancy (self-employed)	2	1.5
Total	137	100

The vast majority of survey respondents also represented agencies that employed

more than one career development service provider (89.3%) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Agency Size

Agency Size	n	%
10 or more career development service providers	51	37.2
More than 5 but less than 10 career development service providers	28	20.4
2 to 5 career development service providers	44	32.1
One-person	14	10.3
Total	137	100

The agencies represented in this study provide a wide range of career development services to their clients. They reported providing the following services "Sometimes" or "Often": individual career counselling (90.8%), group career counselling (84.3%), career education programs (100%), assessment services (82.2%), career and labour market information services (93.7%), employment counselling (88.5%), job search information and/or resources (99.3%), work development (79.7%), and "other" (90.6%) (see Table 3).

Table 3. Career Services Provided (n = 147)

Service Provided	Never	Sometimes	Often	Total
Individual career counselling	13 (9.2%)	30 (21.3%)	98 (69.5%)	141
Group career counselling	22 (15.7%)	76 (54.3%)	42 (30.0%)	140
Career education programs	0 (0%)	57 (46.3%)	66 (53.7%)	123
Assessment services	25 (17.9%)	40 (28.6%)	75 (53.6%)	140
Career and labour market information services	9 (6.4%)	38 (27.0%)	94 (66.7%)	141
Employment counselling	16 (11.5%)	32 (23.0%)	91 (65.5%)	139
Job search information/resources	1 (0.07%)	29 (20.7%)	110 (78.6%)	140
Work development	28 (20.3%)	49 (35.5%)	61 (44.2%)	138
Other	5 (9.4%)	9 (17.0%)	39 (73.6%)	53

The agencies represented most often do not target specific ethnic, cultural or gender groups with their services. The majority of respondents (79.6%) indicated that they provide their career development services with no specific cultural or ethnic groups in mind (see Table 4).

Table 4. Target Population of Career Development Services: Culture (n = 137)

Cultural Focus of Services	n	%
Programs/services designed with no specific cultural or ethnic group in mind	109	79.6
Programs/services designed for recent immigrants	3	2.2
Programs/services designed for First Nations people	25	18.2
Programs/services designed for other specific cultural groups	0	0
Total	137	100

The majority (97.9%) of agencies in this sample most often do not target specific gender groups with their services (see Table 5).

Table 5. Target Population of Career Development Services: Gender (n = 140)

Gender Focus of Services	n	%
Programs/services specifically designed for women	3	2.1
Programs/services specifically designed for men	0	0
Programs/services open to women and men	137	97.9
Total	140	100

The agencies in this sample appear to target unemployed individuals (55.8%) and social allowance recipients (42.9%) more frequently than other groups (see Table 6).

Table 6. Target Population of Career Development Services: Employment Status (n = 147)

Employment Status	n	%
Programs/services designed for unemployed individuals	82	55.8
Programs/services designed for social allowance recipients	63	42.9
Programs/services designed for people in educational settings	59	40.1
Programs/services designed for people employed in specific work settings	19	12.9
Programs/services designed for any member of the community regardless of employment status	53	36.1
Other	31	21.1

Also, adults in early to middle age (68.7%) and older adults (57.8%) appear to be targeted more frequently than individuals in other age categories (see Table 7).

Table 7. Target Population of Career Development Services: Age (n = 147)

Age Group Served	n	%
Students in grade 9 or less	29	19.7
Students in grades 10 to 12	54	36.7
Students in post-secondary settings	60	40.8
Young people (i.e., 19 years old or less) who are not in school settings	71	48.3
Adults in early to middle age (25 to 45 years old)	101	68.7
Older adults (i.e., more than 45 years old)	85	57.8
Other (please specify)	50	34.0

Instrument

Data were collected through the use of an on-line survey (see Appendix A). The survey was divided into three parts.

Part I: Context of Services and Agency Profile

Part I of the survey, which encompassed Survey Items 1-3.2 (see Appendix A), asked respondents to provide descriptive information concerning the frequency with which they engage in various types of career services, the population(s) they target with their services, the types of agencies they represent, and the size of the agency they represent.

The survey items employed in this section were forced-choice (some items were also paired with the provision to add responses that were not included in the list provided). In some cases the forced-choice items gave respondents an opportunity to provide multiple responses. Other forced-response items embedded in this section only provided respondents with the opportunity to select one item from a list of alternatives.

Part II: Outcomes of Your Services

Part II of the survey, which encompassed Survey Items 4.1-10 (see Appendix A), asked respondents to provide information regarding the state of their current practice of efficacy assessment. This section mostly utilized open-ended questions. The only exceptions were Survey Items 4.1 and 4.2.

Survey Item 4.1 (see Appendix A) asked respondents to indicate the importance they placed on measuring the impacts/outcomes of their services. This was a forced-choice item that provided the alternatives: "Not at all important," "Somewhat important," and "Very important."

Survey Item 4.2 (see Appendix A) asked respondents to indicate whether they report on the impacts/outcomes of their services. This was also a forced-choice item that provided the alternatives of "Yes" or "No." Survey items 4.1 and 4.2 were used as the criteria variables in subsequent tests of association together with the demographic variables.

All of the other Survey Items in this section (Survey Items 5-10; see Appendix A) utilized open-ended questions. Respondents were provided with a question and were asked to provide a written response. These survey items were intended to gather information about the current state of efficacy measurement. The responses provided for all of the survey items were electronically stored in a corresponding field in a database linked to the survey.

Part III: Follow Up

The survey was also used for purposes beyond the scope of this research. As stated in Chapter 2, the research described in this project is part of a larger initiative being conducted by the CRWG to gather the evidence base for career development services and to facilitate the development of a framework to guide data collection, analysis and reporting. In their initial meetings the Working Group decided that it was important to engage in some preliminary work to understand the current state of practice of efficacy assessment of career development services in Canada as a beginning step in this larger endeavor. This preliminary work took the form of a three-pronged approach – a survey to determine the perceptions of representatives of agencies providing career development services in Canada (described in this research project), a survey to determine the perceptions of practitioners who are engaged in front-line delivery of

career development services (conducted by several members of the Working Group), and focus group meetings to flesh out the findings of these two surveys.

The surveys that were utilized for these purposes were identical (except that one requested responses from the perspective of agency representatives and the other requested participation from practitioners). To facilitate the completion of the third part of this preliminary work both surveys contained a section to gather contact information. Respondents were given an opportunity in this section to indicate their willingness to participate in follow-up meetings. Respondents who were willing were asked to provide contact information to facilitate these meetings.

The resulting focus group meetings took place at The National Consultation on Career Development's (Natcon) annual meeting in Ottawa in the spring of 2005 and were used to obtain clarification and expansion of the responses provided through the on-line surveys. In this way, the three-pronged approach (agency survey, practitioner survey, and focus groups) provided the Working Group with the opportunity to conduct a comprehensive examination of the current state of practice of efficacy measurement and reporting of career development services in Canada.

Therefore, although Section III was useful for the Working Group to carry out their research agenda, it was not necessary for the purposes of this research project. For this reason, the researcher did not use any of the information provided in this section.

Instrument Development and Reliability

The survey utilized in this research was developed with input from a number of people. The purpose of the survey emerged from discussions amongst members of the Working Group described in Chapter 2. When the survey was being developed members

of the Working Group were provided with opportunities to have input on the items included in the survey. This was done to ensure that the items that were included reflected the intention of the research.

After the survey was developed, the survey was mounted on a web site. After the survey was mounted on the web site, members of the CCDF were invited to examine the survey to ensure functionality and readability. The survey was edited and redesigned a number of times until the survey was error free and the items reflected the purpose of the survey. A practice run was also conducted to ensure that the survey was properly linked with the corresponding database and that that the items were collected and organized properly. After all of this was done, the survey was opened to the public.

Confidentiality

Participants were required to read a Participant Consent Form (see Appendix B) prior to their participation in this survey. The survey was designed so participants could not complete the survey unless they clicked on a button at the end of the Consent Form labeled "Accept" to indicate that they consented to their participation. Through this consent form, participants were informed of the nature and purpose of their involvement in this research, as well as their rights as participants. For example, participants were made aware that their involvement in this survey was entirely voluntary and completely confidential. They were also made aware that they did not have to identify themselves in any way. Also, participants were informed that they would be given the chance to access the results of the study on-line if they chose to do so. These results are currently available on the Canadian Career Development Foundation's website at www.crccanada.org. In addition, participants were informed that the data they submitted would be stored in a

database linked to the website and that the data were only accessible by the researcher and his supervisor.

In Part III of the survey participants were asked to express their interest in participating in post-study focus groups. However, they were only able to provide contact information if they indicated their willingness to do so. Participants indicated their willingness by clicking on a button labeled "Yes" which followed the question: "Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview?"

Data Collection

When the respondents completed the survey on-line they were instructed to submit their responses by clicking on a button labeled "Submit." The submitted data were stored in a database linked to the website. The data were then retrieved and organized in Microsoft Excel. The data were only accessible to the researcher and his supervisor.

Data Analysis

The data obtained through the use of the survey were analyzed using a mixed methods design – methods included frequency analysis, Chi square analysis and qualitative methods (to conduct the content analysis).

Demographic Data

Frequency analyses were utilized to analyze the responses to Survey Items 1 through 4.2 (See Appendix A). Frequency analyses were conducted through the use of raw counts and percentages. Frequency analyses allowed the researcher to understand the demographic data obtained through the survey. In addition, frequency analyses allowed the researcher to analyze data related to Research Questions 1 and 2.

While Survey Items 4.1 and 4.2 were analyzed using raw counts and percentages they were also used as the main criteria variables for subsequent tests of association.

Tests of Association

Chi square analyses were used to determine whether there were significant relationships between demographic variables and the two main criteria variables. In particular, Chi square analyses were used to test whether not there was a relationship between the type and size of the agency and the perceived value of measuring the outcomes/impacts of service provision. Also, Chi square analyses were used to test whether there was a relationship between the type and size of the agency and whether or not they measured and reported on the outcomes/impacts of their services. The results obtained from the Chi square analyses conducted in this study provided information related to Research Questions 3 and 4.

Research Question 3 asked, "Is there any relationship between agency demographics (type of agency and agency size) and the perceived value of measuring the impact of career services?" Data were collected through the use of Survey Items 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1 on the survey (see Appendix A). The specific sub-questions asked were: "Is there a relationship between the type of agency/service provider and the perceived value of measuring the impact of career services?" And, "Is there a relationship between the size of an agency/service provider and the perceived value of measuring the impact of career services?" The null hypothesis stated that there would be no significant relationship between the type, or the size, of an agency and the perceived value of measuring the impact of career services. The specific null hypotheses employed in this analysis were: Ho_1: There will be no significant relationship between agency type and the perceived

value of measuring the impact of career services, and, H_{O2}: There will be no significant relationship between agency size and the perceived value of measuring the impact of career services. For each of hypotheses 1 and 2, a Chi-square analysis, with alpha less than or equal to 0.05, was applied. The null hypothesis was rejected if the probability of error of the calculated Chi value was less than or equal to 0.05.

Research Question 4 asked, "Is there any relationship between agency demographics (type of agency and agency size) and whether they engage in measuring and reporting on the impact of their career services?" Data were gathered through the use of Survey Items 3.1, 3.2 and 4.2 on the survey (see Appendix A). The specific sub-questions asked to determine the answer to this question were: "Is there a relationship between the type of an agency and whether they evaluate and report on the outcomes/impacts of their services" and "Is there a relationship between the size of an agency and whether they evaluate and report on the outcomes/impacts of their services. The null hypothesis stated that there would be no significant relationship between the type, or the size, of an agency and whether they evaluate and report on the outcomes/impacts of their services. The specific null hypotheses employed in this analysis were: H_{O3}: There will be no significant relationship between agency type and the whether they evaluate the outcomes/impacts of their services, and, H_{O4}: There will be no significant relationship between agency size and whether they evaluate the outcomes/impacts of their services. For each of hypotheses 3 and 4, Chi-square analyses, with alpha less than or equal to 0.05, was applied. The null hypothesis was rejected if the probability of error of the calculated Chi value was less than or equal to 0.05.

Content Analysis

In addition to frequency analyses and Chi square analyses, content analysis methods were also utilized in this study to analyze the responses provided to the open-ended questions in the survey (Survey Items 5-10; See Appendix A).

Content analysis methods were used because of their ability to derive meaning from qualitative data (Patton, 1987; Weber, 1985). Qualitative methods, such as content analysis, are useful in trying to understand a phenomenon that has not been extensively examined. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) comment, "Qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known" (p. 19).

Also, qualitative methods were used because of their usefulness in capturing the unique perceptions and experiences of respondents. According to Patton (1987), in collecting qualitative data, the researcher seeks to capture the richness of people's experiences in their own terms. Understanding and meaning emerge from in-depth analysis of detailed descriptions and verbatim quotations. Patton comments:

> The open-ended response permits one to understand the world as seen by the respondent. The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended responses is to permit the evaluator to understand and capture the perspective of program participants without predetermining their perspective through prior selection of questionnaire categories. (p. 11)

According to Weber (1985), "There is no simple right way to do content analysis. Instead each investigator must judge what methods are appropriate for her or his substantive problem" (p. 13). Patton (1985) describes content analysis as identifying

coherent and important examples, themes and patterns in the data. Elsewhere Patton

(2002) describes content analysis simply as "searching text for recurring words or

themes" and as, "any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a

volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings"

(p. 453). In content analysis, these core consistencies and meanings, or themes and

patterns, are arrived at through a process of inductive analysis. That is, findings emerge

out of the data, through the researcher's interactions with the data – in contrast with

deductive analysis where the data are analyzed according to an existing framework.

This process begins with coding of the data, often called "open coding" (Strauss

& Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) define open coding as, "The analytical

process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are

discovered in data" (p. 101). This stage is followed by "axial coding," defined by Strauss

and Corbin (1998) as, "The process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed

'axial' because coding occurs around the axis of the category, linking categories of the

level of properties and dimensions" (p. 123). Both open and axial coding methods were

utilized in the analysis of the qualitative data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) point out that the

lines between each type of coding are artificial. The different types do not necessarily

take place in stages but often occur simultaneously. Also, throughout the process of open

and axial coding constant comparative methods were employed. Maykut (1994) describes

this in the following manner:

> As each new unit of meaning is selected for analysis, it is compared to all other
>
> units of meaning and subsequently grouped (categorized and coded) with similar
>
> units of meaning. If there are no similar units of meaning, a new category is

formed. In this process there is room for continuous refinement; initial categories

are changed, merged, or omitted; new categories are generated; and new

relationships can be discovered. (p. 134)

Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe this as involving two analytical procedures that are

basic to the coding process: the making of comparisons, and the asking of questions.

In the case of this study, the researcher began the analysis of the responses to the

open-ended survey items by randomly selecting 20 responses. These responses were then

coded – that is, each unit of meaning was given a label. The researcher began to

immediately look for similarities and differences in responses as well as to formulate

initial categories. The researcher began drawing diagrams while coding responses. When

this was done the researcher selected 20 more respondents and went through the same

process. Sometimes emerging categories were merged or new categories were

formulated. The researcher also began to create sub-categories when it became clear that

there were a variety of responses that could be categorized under a larger theme. Through

this process the researcher continued to refine the categories and sub-categories that were

emerging from the data analysis. The researcher also frequently went back and re-

examined sets of responses that had already been coded to ensure that they were properly

coded and accurately reflected the content and intention of the response.

The researcher continued the process (of selecting 20 responses and examining

each response to determine whether it fit with existing responses and categories) until no

new categories emerged. Data analysis was considered complete when 'redundancy' was

reached (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Maykut (1994), it is desirable to end data

analysis when no new or relevant information is being uncovered. Similarly, Strauss and

Corbin (1990) recommend that data collection and analysis continue until the categories and relationships between categories are well supported. When the researcher stopped uncovering new themes or categories, and when the existing categories were well established (that is, they were frequently represented in the data) the data was considered saturated. The researcher encountered redundancy after analyzing three sets of responses (20 responses in each set). To be sure that that the data was saturated the researcher selected an additional 10 responses (after saturation had been determined). When these additional responses did not yield any new themes, the analysis was considered finished. Also, to be sure that the analysis was done thoroughly, the researcher also went back to the data two months later and re-examined the responses in light of the conceptual framework that had been developed. Some minor refinements were made to categories and subcategories to better reflect the data.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a description of the sample, the survey instrument, methods for ensuring confidentiality, data collection, and the methods utilized in the data analyses. The next chapter describes the results of the data analyses.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This study utilized a mixed methods design comprised of quantitative analysis

(raw counts, percentages and Chi square analysis), and content analysis. This chapter will

be structured around presenting an analysis of the data according to the research

questions described in Chapter 3.

Research Question 1

The first research question posed by this study asked: "How do representatives of

career development organizations/agencies perceive the importance of measuring the

impact of their services?" The vast majority of respondents (97.8%) indicated that the

believed the evaluation of service efficacy to be either "Somewhat Important" or "Very

Important." Therefore, in this sample, it appears that a high degree of value is placed on

the importance of measuring service efficacy (see Table 8).

Table 8. Level of Importance Placed on Evaluation of Service Efficacy

Importance	n	%
Not at all important	3	2.2
Somewhat important	34	24.6
Very important	101	73.2
Total	138	100

Research Question 2

The second research question posed in this study was: Do agencies measure and

report on the outcomes that result from the provision of their services? The majority of

respondents (83.2%) indicated that they do report on the outcomes of the services.

According to the sample in this study, it appears that most agencies report on the outcomes/impacts of their services (see Table 9).

Table 9. Agencies That Report on Outcomes

Report on Outcomes	n	%
Yes	114	83.2
No	23	16.8
Total	137	100

Research Question #3

The third research question posed by this study asked: "What is the relationship between agency demographics (type of agency and agency size) and the perceived value of measuring the impact of career services?" A significant relationship ($X^2 = 26.403$; p = .009; df = 12) was found suggesting that there is a relationship between the type of agency and the perceived importance of measuring career service impact (see Table 10). Respondents associated with schools were less likely than expected to select "Very Important." Also, post-secondary schools favored the response "Somewhat Important" over "Very Important" more often than expected. Similarly, schools within the K-12 system selected "Somewhat Important" over "Very Important" more often than expected. Conversely, provincial government agencies and not-for-profit agencies appear to place more importance on reporting on the impact of their services. Provincial government agencies and not-for-profit agencies selected "Very Important" more frequently than expected (see Table 10).

Table 10. Relationship Between Type of Agency/Organization/Service Provider and

Perceived Value of Measuring Impact of Career Services

			How Important is it to measure the impact/outcomes of your services?			
			Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Total
Please indicate which of the following best describes your agency, organization ,, or service.	Federal government agency	Count	1	1	2	4
		Expected Count	.1	1.0	2.9	4.0
	Provincial government agency (non-school)	Count	0	7	30	37
		Expected Count	.8	9.2	27.0	37.0
	School within the K-12 system	Count	0	8	5	13
		Expected Count	.3	3.2	9.5	13.0
	Post-secondary institute	Count	0	6	8	14
		Expected Count	.3	3.5	10.2	14.0
	Not for profit agency	Count	2	11	48	61
		Expected Count	1.3	15.1	44.5	61.0
	Private (for profit) career services provider	Count	0	1	5	6
		Expected Count	.1	1.5	4.4	6.0
	Private practice/consultancy	Count	0	0	2	2
		Expected Count	.0	.5	1.5	2.0
Total		Count	3	34	100	137
		Expected Count	3.0	34.0	100.0	137.0

A significant relationship ($X^2 = 17.007$; $p = .009$; $df = 6$) was also found

suggesting that there is a relationship between the size of an agency and the perceived

importance of measuring career service impact (see Table 11). Representatives of smaller

service providers selected "Somewhat Important" more frequently than expected to

describe the value they place on measuring the impacts of their services. Similarly,

agencies with one career development service provider selected "Not at All Important"

more frequently than expected to describe value they place on measurement. Agencies of

ten or more service providers responded to the selection "Very Important" more frequently than expected. According to the data presented in this table, the perceived value of measuring the impacts/outcomes of service provision appears to increase in relation to the size of the agency/organization/service provider (see Table 11).

Table 11. Relationship Between Size of Agency/Organization/Service Provider and Perceived Value of Measuring Impact of Career Services

| | | | How important is it to measure the outcomes/impact of career services? | | | |
			Not at all Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Total
How many people in your agency/organi zation/service provision are responsible for providing career services?	10 or more career development service providers	Count	0	10	41	51
		Expected Count	1.1	12.7	37.2	51.0
	More than 5 but less than 10 service providers	Count	0	5	23	28
		Expected Count	.6	6.9	20.4	28.0
	2 to 5 career development service providers	Count	1	13	30	44
		Expected Count	1.0	10.9	32.1	44.0
	One person	Count	2	6	6	14
		Expected Count	.3	3.5	10.2	14.0
Total		Count	3	34	100	137
		Expected Count	3.0	34.0	100.0	137.0

Research Question 4

The fourth research question asked: "Is there any relationship between agency demographics (type of agency and agency size) and the frequency with which they engage in measuring the impact of their career services?" A significant relationship (X^2 = 30.362; p = .001; df = 6) was found suggesting that there is a relationship between agency type and the frequency with which they engage in measuring the impact of their services (see Table 12). Representatives from schools within the K-12 system selected "No" more frequently than expected indicating that they are less likely to report on the

outcomes/impacts of their services. Conversely, not-for-profit agencies selected "Yes" more frequently than expected indicating that they are more likely to report on the outcomes of their services (see Table 12).

Table 12. Relationship Between Type of Agency/Organization/Service Provider and Evaluation of Outcomes/Impacts of Services

			Question 4.2: Does your agency/organization report on the impact/outcomes of its services?		
			Yes	No	Total
Question 3.1: Please indicate which of the following best describes your agency, organization or service provider	Federal government agency	Count	3	1	4
		Expected Count	3.3	.7	4.0
	Provincial government agency (non-school)	Count	31	6	37
		Expected Count	30.7	6.3	37.0
	School within K-12 system	Count	4	9	13
		Expected Count	10.8	2.2	13.0
	Post secondary institute	Count	12	2	14
		Expected Count	11.6	2.4	14.0
	Not-for-profit agency	Count	55	5	60
		Expected Count	49.9	10.1	60.0
	Private-for-profit career services provider	Count	6	0	6
		Expected Count	5.0	1.0	6.0
	Private practice	Count	2	0	2
		Expected Count	1.7	.3	2.0
Total		Count	113	23	136
		Expected Count	113.0	23.0	136.0

A significant relationship ($X^2 = 10.666$; $p = .014$; $df = 3$) was also found suggesting that there is a relationship between the size of agency/organization and the degree to which they report on the impacts/outcomes of their services (see Table 4). Agencies with more than ten career development service providers selected "Yes" more frequently than expected indicating that they are more likely to report on the outcomes of their services. Conversely, agencies with only one career development service provider and agencies with two to five service providers selected "No" more frequently than

expected indicating that they are less likely to report on the outcomes of their services (see Table 13).

Table 13. Relationship Between Size of Agency/Organization/Service Provider and Evaluation of Outcomes/Impacts of Services

| | | | Does your agency/organization report on the outcomes/impact of its services? | | |
			Yes	No	Total
How many people in your agency/organization/service provision unit are responsible for providing career services?	10 or more career development service providers	Count	48	2	50
		Expected Count	41.5	8.5	50.0
	More than 5 but less than 10 career development service providers	Count	23	5	28
		Expected Count	23.3	4.7	28.0
	2 to 5 career development service providers	Count	32	12	44
		Expected Count	36.6	7.4	44.0
	One person	Count	10	4	14
		Expected Count	11.6	2.4	14.0
Total		Count	113	23	136
		Expected Count	113.0	23.0	136.0

Research Question 5: Part A

The fifth research question asked: "What outcomes are agencies currently reporting as a result of the provision of their services (if any)?" Data were collected through the use of Survey Item #5 (see Appendix A) which asked: "Please list up to three of the most important outcomes that you report. For each outcome, please describe how the outcome is being measured (e.g. what evidence do you have/collect that each outcome is being achieved)." It is important to note that 43/147 (29.3%) did not provide a response when asked to list the three most important outcomes they reported.

The analysis of the responses to Survey Item #5 yielded four major themes. The major categories that emerged were "Changes in the Client," "Changes in the Client's

Situation," "Service Delivery," and "Client Satisfaction." The following section will describe each category.

Changes in the Client

The first major theme that emerged in response to Survey Item #5 was "Changes in the Client" (personal growth). The theme "Changes in the Client" encompassed a number of sub-themes. These include "skill development," "attitudinal changes" and "knowledge change."

Skill development. The sub-theme "skill development" includes increased skill in job searching, career decision-making and employment readiness. This sub-theme was reflected in responses such as, "job search skills," "self-sufficiency in job search," "gaining new job search and job related skills," and "clients have tools to find work." The sub-theme "skill development" also pertains to increased skill in career decision-making as reflected in responses such as, "career decision-making skills," "improved career decision-making skills," and "clients able to make plans and decisions." In addition, this sub-theme includes enhanced readiness of clients to participate in the labour force as described by responses such as, "job readiness" or "employment readiness."

Attitudinal changes. The second sub-theme that emerged within the theme "Changes in the Client" was "attitudinal changes." Responses categorized under this sub-theme described changes in clients' perceptions of themselves (increased self-esteem) and of their futures (optimism, hope, etc.) Sample responses of this sub-theme include, "increased confidence, self-esteem and personal growth outcomes," "increase in self-esteem/self-confidence," and "clients feeling of self-worth and increased self-esteem/confidence."

Knowledge change. The third sub-theme that emerged under the theme "Changes in the Client" was "knowledge change." Respondents mentioned that they measured and reported on changes in clients' awareness of labour market realities. For example, one respondent described this outcome as, "increased awareness in labour market and job search necessities." Another respondent simply described this outcome as "knowledge change."

Impacts on the Client's Situation

Another major theme identified in response to Survey Item #5 was "Impacts on the Client's Situation." Six sub-themes emerged under this larger theme including: "changes in client occupational/educational status," "maintenance of client status change," "increased financial independence," "increased connectedness," "completion of programs," and "development of action plans."

Changes in client occupational/educational status. The first sub-theme that emerged within the main theme "Impacts on Client's Situation" was changes in employment/employment status. Respondents described changes in employment status as "employment totals," "number of clients obtaining a job", "change in employment status," "person with intellectual disability is employed," "employment totals," and "transfer to employment."

Respondents described changes in educational status as, "[client] returns to school," "[client] entered further education," "[client] placement in job readiness/skill training intervention," and "[client] going to post-secondary."

Maintenance of status change. The second sub-theme that emerged under the major theme "Impacts on the Client's Situation" was "maintenance of status change." In

addition to measuring/reporting on the impacts of service provision on the status/situation

of clients, many respondents indicated that they also reported on the degree to which

clients were able to maintain the changes in their circumstances/status. Specifically, they

reported on whether or not clients maintained their employment status or their

educational status. Examples mentioned include, "length of time job is held once found,"

and, "[client] employed at three months and at six months." Respondents indicated that

they also measured and reported the degree to which clients are able to maintain their

educational status. For example, one respondent described this outcome as, "[client] in

training program at three months and at six months."

Increased financial independence. The third sub-theme identified was "increased

financial independence." Respondents described this outcome as, "client achieving

financial independence," "client no longer receiving Social Assistance," "independent of

social assistance," and "independence from income assistance."

Increased connectedness. The fourth sub-theme was labeled "increased

connectedness" and describes changes in the levels of connectedness that clients

experience as a result of service provision – specifically, increased connectedness with

the workforce and the community. Examples mentioned include, "link between employer

and clients," and, "connections with employers, alumni and other professionals." Other

responses include, "increased connectedness with community" and, "peer support."

Program completion. The fifth sub-theme that emerged pertained to the

completion rates of clients in job training or education programs. An example mentioned

was "completion of educational program."

Development of action plans. The sixth sub-theme was labeled "development of actions plans." Respondents simply described "development of action plans" as a measured outcome.

Service Delivery

In addition to "Changes in the Client" and "Changes in the Client's Situation," respondents also indicated that they measured aspects related to the delivery of their services. For this reason, "Service Delivery" emerged as a major category during data analysis. Three sub-themes emerged within the larger theme "Service Delivery" – "number of clients served," "increased demand for services," and "production of resources."

Number of clients served. The first sub-theme that emerged within the larger theme "Service Delivery" was "number of clients served." Respondents indicated that they regularly track and report on the number of clients that they provide services to in a day/week/month/year. Most often respondents simply stated "number of clients served" to describe this reported outcomes. Responses such as "website traffic" were also included under this sub-theme.

Increased demand. The second sub-theme that emerged within the larger theme "Service Delivery" was "increased demand." In addition to "numbers served," respondents also indicated that they measured and reported on increased demand of their services. Examples mentioned include, "number of new clients served," "increase in volume of people using centre," and "increased client demand."

Delivery of services (production of resources). The third sub-theme was labeled "delivery of services." Respondents indicated that they frequently reported on successful

service provision (how often they successfully provided a service such as an employment workshop) or development of their services/programs (development of programs and program resources). Examples mentioned include "production of resources," "employment group workshops," "delivery of programs and services to utilize potential assets and address potential barriers," and "delivery of employment workshops."

Client Satisfaction

The fourth major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data provided in response to Survey Item #5 was "Client Satisfaction." Respondents described this outcome as, "career goals met," "overall satisfaction with program/services," "client satisfaction - needs were met," and "client testimonials."

In summary, it appears that a wide range of outcomes is being measured in career development services in Canada. These outcomes include changes in client skills, knowledge and attitudes. These outcomes also include changes in clients' situations (occupational and educational status), maintenance of status change, increased connectedness, financial independence as well as client satisfaction and service totals. However, when conducting the data analysis it appeared that a number of outcomes are prioritized. Responses frequently related to successful service delivery (number of clients served, successful delivery of services, and increased demand) and change and maintenance of educational/employment status.

Research Question #5: Part B

Survey Item #5 also asked respondents to provide the evidence they utilize for determining the outcomes of their service provision. It is important to note that 42/147 (28.6%) of the possible respondents did not provide any response to this request. The two

major themes that emerged from an analysis of the data were "Frequency Counts" and "Other Measures."

Frequency Counts

The first major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data pertaining to the evidence used to measure reported outcomes was "Frequency Counts." Eleven sub-themes emerged within this major theme: "number of clients served," "number of clients who find employment," "number of action plans completed," "number of clients who maintain their employment status," "number of contacts/opportunities generated," "number of clients enrolled in training programs," "number of clients leaving social assistance," "number of clients who complete educational/training programs," "number of jobs with benefits secured," "number of referrals," and "other unspecified statistics."

Numbers of clients served. The first sub-theme that emerged under the larger theme "Frequency Counts" was "number of clients served". Sample responses include, "volume of people using center has increased by 2,000 for the past three years from referral and word of mouth," "numbers accessing service," and "career center tally sheets and monthly reporting."

Number of clients who find employment. The second sub-theme that was identified was "number of clients who find employment." Sample responses include "placement statistics," "number of clients successfully employed" and "per cent employed."

Number of action plans created. The third sub-theme, "number of actions plans created" was often simply described as "number of action plans created."

Number of clients who maintain their employment status. The fourth sub-theme that emerged within the larger theme "Qualitative Evidence" was the "number of clients who maintain their employment status." Respondents indicated that they gather statistical information on the number of clients who are able not only to obtain employment but also to retain employment.

Number of contacts/opportunities generated by clients. The fifth sub-theme pertained to the number of contacts/opportunities generated by clients as a result of the service provided. Sample responses include, "number of meetings with employers to develop new job opportunities and learn about desired skills in their industry."

Number of clients enrolled in training/education. The sixth sub-theme was labeled "number of clients enrolled in training/education." Sample responses that describe this type of evidence include, "enrollment in skills training," "registration statistics," "numbers attending personal development workshops," and "number of individuals in upgrading, training or other intervention services."

Number of clients leaving social assistance. The seventh sub-theme was "number of clients leaving social assistance." One respondent described this as, "[the] number of clients who either leave social assistance or require only partial help, as a result of connection to labour market."

Number of clients completing programs. The eighth sub-theme was labeled "number of clients completing programs." Respondents also utilize frequency counts of the number of clients who complete interventions or training programs. Responses categorized under this sub-theme were often simply stated as "program completion."

Number of jobs with benefits. The ninth sub-theme was labeled "number of jobs without benefits." Some respondents indicated that, in addition to counting employment totals, their agency also counts the number of jobs clients acquire that provide benefits.

Number of referrals. The tenth sub-theme was labeled "number of referrals." Respondents indicated that they conduct frequency counts of the number of referrals to other services/agencies/organizations they make on behalf of their clients.

Unspecified statistics. The eleventh sub-theme was labeled "unspecified statistics." Responses included in this sub-theme reflect a large number of responses that indicated "statistics" as evidence to confirm the attainment of outcomes. Responses included in this sub-theme did not indicate the nature of the statistics gathered.

Other Evidence/Measures

The second major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Other Evidence/Measures." One major type of measure that respondents described is client self-reports. Respondents indicated that they utilized client self-reports as evidence of the attainment of outcomes. Sample responses describing this type of evidence include, "individual's assessment of career action plan's usefulness in finding employment," and "client indicating an increase in hope/motivation."

Reports from other stakeholders are also used to measure the impacts of services. Sample responses describing this type of evidence include, "feedback from parents and educators," and "community perception of the effectiveness of the supportive environment."

Demonstration/observation of client change is another method used to measure impacts/outcomes of services. Respondents indicated that they utilized observation of

situational change and observation of personal change as a measure of the impact of their services. For example, respondents provided comments such as, "small community makes it easy to document what the students do after a program," and "client self-declares and can demonstrate steps completed or accomplishments."

Other types of methods under the theme "Other Measures" also include: telephone calls, surveys, client tracking, follow-up interviews, evaluation forms, external evaluations, feedback forms, unspecified follow-up, successful delivery of services, monthly/yearly reports and comparisons between groups.

In summary, according to the sample in this study, agency representatives utilize a wide range of methods to assess the impacts of their services. It is clear that priority is placed on the use of frequency counts. In particular, it appears that agencies often use frequency counts to determine the number of clients securing employment, enrolling in training programs, and accessing career development services.

Research Question 5: Part C

Survey Item # 5 also provided respondents with an opportunity to provide additional comments about the three most important outcomes they report and the types of evidence they used to determine attainment of outcomes. While 103/147 (70.1%) respondents did not provide any additional comments, and others used this opportunity to provide additional contextual information, interesting and useful comments were provided by some of the respondents. Four major themes emerged from an analysis of the data: "Frustrations With the Current System," "Barriers to Effective Evaluation," "Attempts Being made to Address Accountability Issues," and "Additional Contextual Information."

Frustrations With the Current System

The first major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Frustrations With the Current System." Respondents listed a number of problems that they experienced with the current system used for measuring/reporting outcomes. Some respondents expressed their frustration with the current system of valuing employment totals over client growth or the quality of the employment (meaningful engagement of the client in the work he/she obtained) secured by the client. Sample responses describing this frustration include: "Although I understand the reasons behind outcomes based funding, I feel that in certain cases it does a disservice to the individuals receiving service. The pressure becomes "placements," not quality placements or individual progress."

Other respondents also expressed frustration that the current system of valuing employment totals fosters an interest amongst career development service providers to cater to individuals who are easily employable. For example, one respondent indicated that the emphasis on employment totals, "[encourages] agencies to 'cream,' supporting only easily placed individuals."

In addition, respondents indicated frustration with their inability to document the full extent of the effects of their service provision. For example, one respondent indicated, "Funding agencies focus on measuring employment, but there are so many other changes which can occur that builds towards employment and these changes in individuals occur sometimes by participating in programs over a continuous period of time, not just after a 12 week course." Another respondent made this comment:

We find it very difficult to measure outcomes as the changes we are trying to
inspire are long term, often attitudinal, and even the skills changes are ones that
can be difficult to measure - if we see a client for 1 1/2 hours for a workshop or a
45 minute appointment, we can ask them questions at the end of the appointment -
but at this time we are checking to see if they then were able to go out and use the
knowledge - is it making a difference longer term?

Another respondent simply indicated, "It's very hard to document outcomes in a
drop-in service." Therefore, as this sub-theme suggests, many respondents are especially
frustrated with their inability to document the full impact of the services they provide.

Barriers to Effective Evaluation

The second major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Barriers
to Effective Evaluation." Three sub-themes emerged within the larger theme of "Barriers
to Effective Evaluation." These include: "lack of time," "lack of resources/ability to
conduct follow-ups," and "lack of standardized outcome measures."

Lack of time. The first sub-theme was labeled "lack of time." Some respondents
indicated lack of time as barrier to effective evaluation. Responses in this category were
simply described as "lack of time." The lack of specificity provided by respondents
makes it hard to understand what was meant by "lack of time" – perhaps it means that
little time is allocated for evaluation to occur or that practitioners are so busy providing
services that they do not have time for evaluation.

Lack of resources/ability to conduct follow-ups. The second sub-theme was
labeled "lack of ability to conduct follow-ups." This was infrequently cited as a barrier to
effective evaluation. One respondent commented, "We don't often get long-range contact

with student so we really struggle with defining what impact our services do have on students."

Lack of standardized outcome measures. The third sub-theme was labeled "lack of standardized outcome measures." Respondents indicated the lack of standardized outcome measures as an obstacle to conducting effective evaluation. One respondent described this frustration by stating that, "organizations and their funders would benefit from standardized outcome measurements."

Attempts to Address Problems of Accountability

The third major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Attempts to Address Problems of Accountability." Several respondents used this opportunity to describe the ways in which their agency is working towards addressing problems of accountability. For example, one respondent indicated, "We recently became engaged in a departmental project, which will result in the use of a computerized system to track client profiles, identify most common/significant barriers, track interventions etc."

Additional Contextual Information

The fourth major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Additional Contextual Information." A large number of respondents to this prompt used it as an opportunity to provide additional comments to describe the specific contexts in which they operate. Sample responses include: "Our services are individualized and focus on building a career action plan for labour market attachment," "We also use portfolio assessment and development process as a tool for determining client progress and impact of service as well as evidence of outcomes and client behavior changes and skill acquisition in the course of our service delivery," "We record all job development and

employment support hours attached to an individual person," and "Client Follow-up is to be done 12 weeks after intervention , 12 months and then @ 18 month interval . . and results recorded on electronic client system."

In summary, most respondent used the opportunity to provide additional comments to provide additional contextual information. Another less prominent theme was the frustration that many agency representatives experience when attempting to measure the outcomes of their services. Especially, respondents described their frustration with the predominant emphasis on employment totals as the legitimate outcome of career development services. Respondents also indicated frustration with their inability to document the full effects of the services.

Research Question 6: Part A

The sixth research question asked: "What outcomes do agencies identify resulting from the provision of their services but are currently not reporting (if any)?" Data were gathered through the use of Survey Item #6. Respondents were asked to list the three most common outcomes they notice (but do not currently report) resulting from the provision of their services. It is important to note that 51/147 (34.7%) respondents did not provide any outcomes in response to this question. Five major themes emerged in response to this question were: "Changes in Client Situation," "Changes in Client," "Broader Impacts," "Client Satisfaction," and "Other Outcomes."

Changes in Client Situation

The first major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Changes in Client Situation." Under this major theme three sub-themes emerged including: "financial independence," "creation of support networks," and "increased/better opportunities."

Financial independence. The first sub-theme was labeled "financial independence." Sample responses for this sub-theme include, "change in personal and financial support system," "increased independence from government support," and "increased financial independence of youth with disabilities."

Creation of support networks. The second sub-theme was labeled "creation of support networks." One respondent described this as, "Information and support networks created."

Increased/better opportunities. The third sub-theme was labeled "increased/better opportunities." For example, one respondent described this outcome as, "People who are underemployed finding employment in their trained field." Other sample responses include, "Changes in personal accommodation," "Increased options," and "High school graduation."

Changes in Client

The second major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Changes in the Client." Four sub-themes emerged in relation to this major theme including: "attitudinal changes," "skill development," "changes in client knowledge/awareness," and "improved health/well-being."

Attitudinal changes. The first sub-theme was labeled "Attitudinal Changes." A large number of respondents indicated that they witness increases in clients' optimism/motivation and increase in clients' self-confidence as a result of their service provision. Sample responses include:

Deconstructing limits on possibilities - opening clients to seeing far more possibilities for their lives (2 over-simplified examples would be - just because I'm a

history major I'm not limited to being a history teacher or a historian, or just because I keep hearing that there are no jobs in IT, maybe if I look more closely at that i might see the space I could create for myself if I really love that kind of work".

Skill development. The second sub-theme was labeled "skill development." A large number of respondents indicated that they frequently witnessed clients developing skills related to career development as a result of accessing their services. Sample responses include: "personal self-management skills," "improved post-high school planning," "improved networking skills," "improved resume writing skills," "improved interviewing skills," "improved life skills," "better coping skills," "improved post secondary planning," "increased preparedness for the work force," "improved academic achievement," "improved attendance," "clients punctuality/attendance," and "improved post high school planning."

Changes in client knowledge/awareness. The third sub-theme was labeled "changes in client knowledge/awareness." Respondents indicated that they noticed increases in knowledge and awareness as resulting from the provision of their services. Sample responses include: "career awareness," "clients learn about their core needs and interests," "clients gain knowledge," and "increase in awareness of career options available."

Improved health/well-being. The fourth sub-theme was labeled "improved health/well-being". Responses in this subcategory referred to improvements in clients mental and physical functioning. For example, one respondent described this outcome as "improved mental and physical well being". Another respondent described this outcome as, "Improvement in clients overall well being/family situation, etc..."

Broader Impacts

The third major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Broader Impacts." Two sub-themes emerged under this major theme: "impacts on communities" and "impacts on families."

Impacts on communities. The first sub-theme was labeled "impacts on communities." A number of respondents indicated that career development services positively impact communities. Sample responses include: "contribution to community sustainability through skills enhancement," "increased connection to community," "employment rate," and "changes in the community."

Impacts on families. The second sub-theme was labeled "impacts on families." This outcome was mentioned a number of times. Sample responses include: "positive family impact," and "reduced family violence."

Client Satisfaction

The fourth major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Client Satisfaction." Two sub-themes emerged under this category: "client satisfaction with career development service" and "client satisfaction with job match."

Client satisfaction with career development service. The first sub-theme was labeled "client satisfaction with the service provision." It was often described simply as, "client satisfaction with their relationship with us."

Client satisfaction with job match. The second sub-theme was labeled "client satisfaction with job match." A number of respondents indicated that client satisfaction with job match was a recognized, but unreported outcome. One respondent described this as "quality of job match."

Other Outcomes

The fifth major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Other Outcomes." Under this major theme, two sub-themes "provision of services" and "numbers served" emerged from an analysis of the data.

Provision of services. The first sub-theme was labeled "provision of services." This theme was chosen because many respondents reported that successfully implementing a program comprised an outcome. Sample responses include: "Professional development for consultants to assist with the integration of career development competencies into curriculum and in implementation workshops," "integration of career development competencies into curriculum is proceeding," "instructional resources supporting career education and development are evaluated and listed in bibliographies for curricula," "teacher understanding of career management and how to facilitate it; schools opting for Graduate Exit process to present portfolios," adopting 'Career Pathways' approach as a strategy for system renewal," and, "lobbying for provincial infrastructure; infusing, channeling enthusiasm for the concept."

Numbers served. The second sub-theme was "numbers served." This was an infrequent response that was repeatedly stated as "numbers served."

In summary, agency representatives indicated that they notice a number of outcomes resulting from the provision of their services (that they do not currently report). These outcomes pertain to client growth and development (skill development, attitude changes, and knowledge changes), changes in the client's status, impacts on communities and families, successful service delivery and client satisfaction. However, the majority of

responses were related to changes in client skill, attitude, and knowledge as well as successful service delivery (number of clients served).

<div align="center"><i>Research Question 6: Part B</i></div>

Survey Item #6 also asked respondents to provide the evidence that suggests that the unreported outcomes are being realized. It is important to note that 56/147 (38.1%) respondents did not provide a response to this prompt. Eleven major themes emerged from the data analysis. These include: "Anecdotal Reports," "Changes in Clients' Lives," "Observation/Demonstration," "Frequency Counts," "Surveys," "Evaluation Forms," "Unspecified Follow-up," "Unspecified Feedback," "Interviews," "Referrals," and "Not Measureable."

Anecdotal Reports

The first theme was labeled "Anecdotal Reports." Many respondents indicated that self-reports from clients confirmed that many unreported outcomes were being realized. Some sample responses are: "we hear anecdotally about the amazing things that people access through connections from our events, but at this point we are only capturing numbers of people at events, and immediate feedback at the end of the event - not the long term information," "client interviews," "client statement," "clients express the development," "they [clients] advise us that they are attending training or request financial assistance from us," "client reports that he has conducted job search activities," "participants report family relationships improve," and "consumers write staff letters of appreciation verbalizing how the centre has changed their lives (helped save their marriage, kept families intact, etc)".

Respondents also indicated that reports from other stakeholders (such as employers) confirmed the attainment of unreported outcomes. One respondent described this evidence as, "Anecdotal: Feedback from employers at mock interview sessions. Comment that students seem better prepared than most (due to their access to an our on-line Career Development course: Future Mapping)." Another respondent commented, "Employers sometimes report the added value of hiring a worker with a disability (higher motivation, attendance, etc.)." Also, one respondent described this evidence as "reports from employers of specific clients."

Changes in Clients' Lives

The second theme was labeled "Changes in Clients' Lives." This theme encompasses changes in skills, attitudes, situations, and in the quality of relationships.

A large number of respondents indicated that changes in client skill often resulted from the provision of career development services. For example, one respondent commented, "clients go from not knowing how to access services to knowing where to go for information."

In addition to changes in skill, respondents also indicated changes in clients' attitudes as a result of participating in career development services. One respondent commented, "from our personal experience working with clients we can see the increased hope and optimism - but we don't know how to capture that, nor do we know what happens later - is it sustained, does it make a difference?"

Respondents also recognized changes in client situation as an unreported outcome. Sample responses include, "People struggling with mental illness have used our services with no pressure put on them and over time have been able to return to gainful

employment," "less frequent visits to mental health agencies, hospitals, and other health providers," "clients working in the community," "clients return to school," and "clients become financially independent."

In addition, respondents indicated that they noticed changes in clients' relationships resulting from access to career development services. Responses included under this sub-theme include, "participants report family relationships improve"; and, "impact on families."

Observation/Demonstration

The third theme was labeled "Observation/Demonstration." This theme emerged from an analysis of the data as a result of the many responses that described observation as a type of evidence. Initially, the above-mentioned category ("changes in clients' lives") was included under the umbrella of "observation/demonstration" but since the responses did not communicate the way in which changes in the client were determined they were separated and left in the category "changes in clients' lives." Responses included in this theme "observation/demonstration" include: "Students post their draft resumes on an on-line discussion board after the resume workshop and we can see that they have applied what they have learned," "counsellor observation and client self-report." Some respondents simply described this evidence as, "observation." One respondent described this type of evidence by stating that, "It is our experience that those whom we continue to support appear to remain employed longer." Similarly, another respondent commented, "We see our clients out working in the community," "I meet regularly with my client base and see first hand." Other responses include, "clients seem to be happier - more alive," and "Students post their draft resumes on an on-line

discussion board after the resume workshop and we can see that they have applied what they have learned."

Frequency Counts

The fourth major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Frequency Counts." As in the case of reported outcomes, a number of respondents indicated that frequency counts suggest the attainment of non-reported outcomes. Examples mentioned include, "number of calls received" or "number of career plans completed," "number of jobs that are posted with us," and "more candidates interested in pursuing career in trades (increased enrolment)."

Surveys

The fifth theme was labeled "Surveys." Surveys were mentioned several times as evidence. They were simply described as "surveys."

Evaluation Forms

The sixth theme was labeled "Evaluation Forms." As with surveys, evaluation forms were mentioned a number of times. Each time it was mentioned it was simply described as "evaluation forms."

Unspecified Follow-up

The seventh theme was labeled "Unspecified Follow-up." This theme was intended to represent the many references to "follow-up" that did not specify the type of feedback being utilized. Such responses include, "follow up to confirm information when time permits."

Unspecified Feedback

The eighth theme was labeled "Unspecified Feedback." Many respondents cited "feedback" as the mechanism by which they determined that unreported outcomes were being successfully acquired. Unfortunately, many of these responses did not describe the type of feedback being obtained. This sub-theme was included to capture these responses. Sample responses include, "final evaluation reports," "client feedback," and "unsolicited client feedback."

Interviews

The ninth theme was labeled "Interviews." A number of respondents indicated that they use interview to determine service efficacy. One respondent described this as, "individual student interviews grade 9 / 12."

Referrals

The tenth theme was labeled "Referrals." This theme refers to referrals (of clients to other needed services or of clients referring others to career development services). For example, one respondent commented, "Participants refer family members for services."

Not Measurable

The eleventh major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Not Measurable." A small number of respondents indicated that some of the outcomes they noticed (but did not report on) were not measurable. For example, one respondent stated that "raised confidence and self esteem" was "unquantifiable."

In summary, according to the sample in this study, representatives of agencies providing career development services in Canada are utilizing a wide range of measures to recognize a wide range of impacts resulting from their services (which they are not

currently reporting). During the data analysis it appeared that the most frequent responses pertained to evidence such as self-reports, changes in client skill levels and observation.

Research Question 6: Part C

Respondents were also given an opportunity to provide additional comments regarding unreported outcomes. It is important to note that 116/147 (78.9%) respondents did not provide a response to this prompt. Five major themes emerged from an analysis of the responses: "Additional Outcomes Are Being Witness," "Evaluating Alternative Outcomes is Important," "Difficulty in Measuring/Reporting Alternative Outcomes," "Problems With the Current System of Evaluation" and "Additional Contextual Information."

Additional Outcomes Are Being Witnessed

The first major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was labeled "Additional Outcomes are Being Witnessed." Two sub-themes emerged under this major theme: "alternative outcomes are being witnessed but are not being measured or reported" and "alternative outcomes are not requested or valued by funders."

Alternative outcomes are being witnessed but are not being measured or reported. The first sub-theme was labeled "alternative outcomes are not being measured or reported." Respondents indicated that they routinely witness a great many more outcomes resulting from their services but that they are not measuring or reporting on them. One respondent commented on unreported outcomes by stating that, "These are ones we record internally and that we believe are the outcomes that really matter" but indicated that they are not reported on. Another respondent commented similarly, "Our services cover a number of areas that are not reported on. A one person program is not effective

for planning and building service, tracking indicators, administration of the program and reporting effectively on all areas served." Additionally, another respondent commented, "Our program currently has a 81% success rate of clients still in business after two years. This is tracked internally, but not necessarily reported to funder." Similarly, one respondent commented, "There are many positive outcomes with clients that are not measured such as increased knowledge, self-help services, resources, etc."

Alternative outcomes are not requested or valued by funders. The second sub-theme was labeled "alternative outcomes are not requested or valued by funders." Respondents also communicated frustration concerning the reporting of witnessed outcomes. They indicated that many witnessed/noticed outcomes do not go reported because they are not requested or valued by funders. One respondent described this frustration by stating, "We do group career counselling which I believe to be extremely valuable to clients, and which I have found in doing this long-term (about 12 years) they pass along to others [but the] agency doesn't value it or really measure it." Another respondent discussed this frustration by stating, "these [unreported] outcomes are more difficult to measure and therefore are not always taken seriously as measurements [by funders]." Additionally, another respondent commented that, "These outcomes [motivation, confidence, social inclusion] contribute greatly to job search, but are so often not acknowledged/seen as having much impact or are seen as soft skills. Soft skills are not addressed in funding."

Evaluating Alternative Outcomes is Important

The second major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Evaluating Alternative Outcomes is Important." The frustration that many respondents

communicated regarding unreported outcomes seems to underlie a belief in the importance of evaluating and reporting on alternative outcomes (other than quantitative measures of service efficacy). For example, one respondent commented, "I believe the increased self esteem I see in individuals is the biggest success in these programs. With increased self esteem, knowledge is then power, power to direct one's one future, make healthy decisions and move forward in their lives." Another respondent commented similarly, "we work very closely and ongoing with our clients/learners with relationships often spawning years. The growth and personal development becomes obvious. It would be great to have methods and tools to measure this growth. Measurement that would be acceptable to government."

Difficulty in Measuring/Reporting Alternative Outcomes

The third major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Difficulty in Measuring/Reporting Alternative Outcomes." Respondents indicated frustration with the difficulty they encounter when trying to measure and report on alternative outcomes. For example, one respondent commented that, "There are many "softer" outcomes, as well - increased confidence, less stress on family, improved life style, less likely to be unemployed again, but these are difficult to prove and track." In a similar way, another respondent indicated that, "It is difficult to measure what is one of the most important aspects or our services. The fact that clients gain the ability to make well-reasoned, thoughtful decisions based upon our services. As a result, our clients may feel more positive and hopeful about their options." Another respondent commented, "I believe that being active in some way in the community has a huge impact on increased self esteem/feeling of self worth. I would assume that these individuals would be less likely to

need intervention from mental health service providers. As well, keeping physically active should help decrease the support needed by health care professionals. However, tracking cost savings in these areas would be difficult if not impossible to report."

Problems With the Current System of Evaluation

The fourth major theme that emerged from data analysis was "Problems with the Current System of Evaluation." Respondents pointed out specific problems with the way that evaluation is currently being conducted. For example, one respondent commented, "It is very difficult to have performance contracts that only allow payments once the client is independent of social assistance .... especially if it is the head of a family or a single parent with multiple children to help them get a job that will make them 100% independent of social assistance. We believe that this design encourages systemic discrimination against these families since service deliverers cannot afford to intake clients who have a slim chance of 100% independence of social assistance."

Additional Contextual Information

The fifth major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Additional Contextual Information." The majority of respondents used this opportunity to provide additional contextual information. For example, one respondent commented, "Our focus is a bit different than others in the career service industry in that in most cases individuals will not likely be supporting themselves on their earnings." Another respondent commented, "We like to think of it in terms of short, medium and long term outcomes. Most of the work we do is in regard to finding employment, not specifically career development." In addition, another respondent commented, "We promote self sufficiency, therefore, we do a lot of work with clients to encourage them to be self

sufficient. The atmosphere in our office is safe and comfortable for clients to do their job search and think of what they want to put on their resumes. We provide guidance, encouragement and teach them how to use the computer to search for jobs, complete their own resume, search for Labour Market Information, training information, etc."

In summary, according to the sample in this study, agency representatives are frustrated by the fact that they are witnessing many more impacts resulting from the services that they provide but are not able to report on these outcomes. In particular, frustration was expressed concerning the lack of emphasis on the reporting of alternative outcomes (other than employment totals) and the lack of value placed on these outcomes by funders. Agency representatives also expressed frustration with their ability to accurately measure alternative outcomes. Many expressed the belief that measuring the impacts of services is complex.

Research Question 7

The seventh research question asked: "What difficulties do agencies face when trying to measure the outcomes/impacts of their services?" Survey Item #7 was utilized to gather data related to this question. Respondents were asked to describe the difficulties they face in measuring the outcomes/impacts of their services. It is important to note that 23/147 (15.6%) possible respondents did not provide a response to the question posed. This question provided one of the highest response rates out of all the open-ended questions. Twelve major themes emerged from an analysis of the data: "Complexity of Measuring and Reporting Outcomes," "Lack of Time," "Poor Data Collection," "Lack of Funds," "Inadequate Training," "Lack of Effective Measurement Tools," "Lack of Understanding," "Absence of Protocols for Conducting Evaluations and Reporting of

Results," "Disconnect Between Service Provision and Evaluation," "Lack of Value

Placed on Alternative Outcomes (Other Than Employment Totals)," "Losing Contact

with Clients," and "No Problems."

Complexity of Measuring and Reporting Outcomes

The first major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Complexity of

Measuring and Reporting Outcomes." Respondents commented on the complexities

involved in measuring and evaluating service efficacy. One respondent indicated that,

"We don't believe that it is simple to make cause and effect statements due to the

multitude of variables." Another respondent commented on the difficulties associated

with measuring changes in client development by stating that, "It is very easy to measure

achievement goals, but more complicated to measure social and self development."

Similarly, one respondent commented that it is, "Difficult to accurately measure changes

in client competence." Examples of other responses include: "Collecting concrete

measurements can be very difficult in some cases," "The changes we are trying to

measure are difficult to measure objectively. How does one measure hope or a switch

from discouragement to encouragement?" and "Client perception of self esteem growth is

difficult to measure and report. It is one of THE most productive things we do." A

number of respondents went further than stating that measurement is complex and

difficult. They communicated their belief that many outcomes are simply not measurable.

Sample responses include: "Some of the greatest outcomes in this line of business are

very intangible like "changing the way students think about career development – i.e.,

that it's not a linear path or a one step process" or "increased confidence to approach

employers and network etc," and "Many aspects not directly measurable, i.e., self esteem, etc."

Lack of Time

The second major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Lack of Time." Lack of time was cited repeatedly as one of the difficulties facing agencies as they attempted to evaluate the efficacy of their services. For example, when asked to specify the obstacles facing agencies in their attempts to evaluate their services one respondent commented, "Time. Often evaluation is never planned for and therefore the resources aren't available to do it well." Another respondent provided a similar response: "Time - finding time to create a broader more encompassing evaluation strategy." Other respondents commented, "Time pressures make it difficult for facilitators to spend a great deal of time collecting and reporting impact data," and "TIME - to develop measuring process/method and to collect and analyze results."

Poor Data Collection

The third major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Poor Data Collection." Sample responses included: "poor data collection," and "If all staff do not report their information into the database, it will be missed."

Lack of Funds

The fourth major theme identified in the data analysis was "Lack of Funds." Respondents identified lack of funds as hampering their ability to adequately measure the effectiveness of their services. Sample responses include: "Financial resources are limited to direct service delivery – very small amounts are available for service delivery," "Funding is only given for direct client services and program specifics. No extra

resources to collect or analyze the data. Resources are stretched beyond our capacity," "Services are time limited by funding," and "Funds are not readily available to support impact research across multiple agencies."

Inadequate Training

The fifth major theme identified through the data analysis was "Inadequate Training." Respondents indicated that they are not sufficiently trained in evaluation/measurement. Sample responses include: "Those involved do not always have the skills to set up appropriate evaluation tools," "Definitions and measurement tools - what specifically do we think we should be measuring and what tools would help us do that?" and "Lack of knowledge of what systems can be used to tracking/measuring outcomes."

Lack of Effective Measurement Tools

The sixth major theme identified in the data analysis was "Lack of Effective Measurement Tools." Respondents identified a lack of adequate measurement tools as an obstacle they experience in their endeavors to evaluate their services. One respondent indicated that, "[There is a need for] developing methods of data collection that will measure what you want to measure." Another respondent indicated that, "It would be great if a valid and reliable instrument could be designed for high schools instead of reinventing the wheel." In addition, another communicated a need for "appropriate tools and criteria that would really encompass the full range of changes witnessed."

Lack of Understanding

The seventh major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Lack of Understanding." A number of respondents indicated that effective measurement is

impaired by a lack of understanding about the importance of conducting evaluations.

Respondents noted that government representatives do not understand the importance of

measurement and evaluation. For example, one respondent described this frustration by

stating: "Lack of political will - politicians don't understand value of career services and

therefore don't ask for reports." More often, respondents indicated that often career

development practitioners do not understand, or value, measurement. For example, one

respondent cited, "lack of in-depth understanding of the importance of evidence-based

decision making across many agencies" as an obstacle to effective evaluation. Another

respondent described, "Lack of staff time or will. Lack of staff understanding of

importance [of evaluation]." Similarly, another respondent commented that, "Collection

of evidence not necessarily a priority for staff."

Absence of Protocols for Conducting Evaluations and Reporting of Results

The eighth major theme identified through an analysis of the data was "Absence

of Protocols for Conducting Evaluations and Reporting of Results." Respondents

indicated that a lack of a structured approach to evaluation and reporting contributed to

their frustrations in measuring the effectiveness of their service delivery. According to

respondents this lack of a structured approach to evaluation is evident in a number of

ways. For example, one respondent commented that there is no structure in place for

conducting long-term efficacy. He/she commented, that, "Because we operate in a 'use

what you need when you need it' model, we do not have long term relationships with

clients, and so it is difficult to see long term effects etc. - there is no current structure for

that." Another respondent responded similarly, commenting, "No actual measures or

systems in place for trying to follow-up clients long-term." Other respondents

commented on other areas wherein a lack of a structured approach to evaluation impacted their ability to effective evaluate their services. For example, one respondent commented:

> Employment Resource Centres have been set up as drop in services with no case management component. Basic client data is collected on the client's first visit, after that the only data that is captured is how many times they come in. Other than the satisfaction surveys we hand out (have to survey 10% of new clients every quarter) the only information we get on outcomes is anything that clients choose to share with us. We know that we are having an impact on people's lives by the verbal reports we get and by the fact that our highest source of referrals are from friends and relatives, but we have no way of documenting this and therefore proving to our funders that we are about a whole lot more than just the number of people who walk through the door every day.

Disconnect Between Service Provision and Evaluation

The ninth major theme to emerge from the data analysis was "Disconnect Between Service Provision and Evaluation." Respondents discussed the difficulties caused when those creating resources or services are disconnected from implementation and evaluation. For example, one respondent commented, "We produce resources but have no idea of the extent to which they are making an impact on student behaviour. Boards are responsible for implementation."

Lack of Value Placed on Alternative Outcomes (Other Than Employment Totals)

The ninth major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Lack of Value Placed on Alternative Outcomes." Responses related to this subcategory were provided quite frequently. Respondents communicated their frustration concerning the

lack of emphasis placed on alternative outcomes and the lack of value placed on outcomes other than employment totals. One respondent commented, "For some clients working less than 20 hours a week is a huge success, though not measured as employment by funder within their timeframe of case management (generally 3 months)." Another respondent commented that, "Success is always related to actually getting a job and not to the improvements an individual experiences on their journey to employment. For this reason, we have no idea about the marginal steps and successes because we cannot record them or spend time evaluating them." This frustration was also communicated effectively by another respondent:

> The Contact IV database used by the Province does not allow us many options as to the status of our clients after closure. The only options we have is: employed, unemployed or self-employed. As a good number of our clients receive funding for training, either as a wage subsidy or professional education, we wish there would be some way we could include training.

Another respondent commented, "Employment is easy to measure. Black and white. The 'softer' outcomes that actually provide more in the 'human element' are not widely recognized by funders."

Losing Contact with Clients

The tenth major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Losing Contact with Clients." Another obstacle hindering evaluation, according to this sample, concerned the difficulties associated with maintaining contact with clients long enough to follow-up on the efficacy of their services. For example, one respondent commented that, "In some ways it is obvious that our services benefit students, but because there is almost

no feedback mechanism, it is not clear how they have benefited from our services after

graduation as we usually have no further contact." Another described this difficulty:

> It is fairly easy to obtain outcomes after workshops, specific interventions, etc.,
>
> but it is more difficult to capture outcomes at the end of service. We request input
>
> by pen and paper, phone, and email. Clients are not as inclined to respond when
>
> the process is complete. Counsellors get individual feedback, but any formalized
>
> system has not been terribly successful. When asking clients to respond to an
>
> emailed feedback form, many are not able to access or do not have the basic skills
>
> to complete the emailed form.

Another respondent described this difficulty:

> Once clients become employed it is often difficult to monitor them since many of
>
> them want nothing more to do with the 'system.' This has really only been true
>
> since the 'system' has become aggressively punitive. Our agencies have to
>
> develop policies and procedures that will enhance the ability to monitor the
>
> client's status. This sometimes includes cash incentives for client to report. As
>
> well, we send out client satisfaction surveys regularly and receive about a 19%
>
> response even though we send the survey with a stamped self-addressed envelope
>
> and a pen.

Inconsistency in Program Delivery

The eleventh major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Inconsistency

in Program Delivery." A small number of respondents also described inconsistency in

program delivery as problematic. One respondent described, "inconsistency of delivery of

curriculum" as an obstacle. Another respondent indicated that, "having the materials

(curriculum and resources) does not mean that career education and development strategies are being delivered in classrooms to youth."

No Problems

The twelfth major theme to emerge from data analysis was "No Problems." A number of respondents indicated that they did not currently encounter any difficulties in measuring the efficacy of their services. For example, when directed to describe difficulties in measuring the impacts/outcomes of service provision one respondent commented, "None - the accomplishments of the people we serve are measured by their personal growth. Their employment success is measured by their amount of work and their pay. Our service makes it possible for individuals to obtain and maintain employment. We provide staff to support clients on the job."

In summary, according to the sample in this study, agencies encounter a wide range of barriers that impede their ability to conduct efficacy assessments. Respondents indicated that they find efficacy measurement complex. Many also expressed the belief that they have been inadequately trained to effectively measure the effectiveness of their services. They also described frustration concerning the lack of resources allocated to outcome measurement (for example, effective measurement tools). In addition, many respondents cited lack of time available for impact measurement, lack of understanding about the importance of measurement, lack of value placed on alternative outcomes, and difficulty in maintaining contact with clients as significant barriers impeding their ability to effectively measure the effectiveness of their services.

Research Question 8

The eighth research question asked: "What outcomes would agencies like to measure if they were able? Survey Item #8 was utilized to gather data related to this question. Respondents were asked to indicate what outcomes they would like to measure and report on if they were able. It is important to note that 54/147 (36.7%) of the respondents did not respond to this item. Eleven major themes emerged from an analysis of the data: "Impacts on Clients," "Impacts on Families," "Impacts on Communities," "Impacts on Employers/Businesses," "Client Satisfaction," "Process Factors that Contribute to Client Change," "Long Term Impacts," "Impacts on Populations/Priorities Not Funded by Government," "Quantitative Impacts," "Unsure," and "Other Impacts."

Impacts on Clients

The first major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Impacts on Clients." Eight sub-themes were categorized under this major theme. These sub-themes were: "skill development," "changes in client attitudes" (self-esteem, confidence, and optimism), "changes in client learning/knowledge," "changes in client situations," "changes in client self-awareness," "changes in client health" (quality of life) and "unspecified client growth" and "personal stories of success."

Skill development. The first sub-theme that emerged from the data analysis was "skill development." The skills mentioned by the respondents included improved job search skills, decision-making skills, assertiveness skills and communication skills. For example, one respondent communicated the desire to be able to measure, "The degree to which UBC students who attend or programs and services engage in the more creative job search techniques such as volunteering, information interviewing, networking,

researching the labour market etc." Another respondent indicated a desire to measure "Clients' ability to deal with change and make informed decisions in the labour market." Similarly, another respondent indicated an interest in measuring "improved communication skills, improved assertiveness skills, improved problem solving abilities" improved coping skills.

Changes in client attitude. Respondents also frequently mentioned changes in clients' attitudes (e.g. self-esteem, confidence, optimism) as an outcome they would like to measure. For example, one respondent described this outcome as "The awareness by clients of their future potential and their range of options and how this impacts positively on their career paths (and their lives)." He/she elaborated on this outcome by stating that, "This is difficult to measure (and perhaps not always valued by funders) but is perhaps the most significant services we offer our clients." Another respondent indicated a similar desire by stating that, "we also struggle with our preference for less emphasis on number of people served (which is still important) but more on changing mindsets and opening possibilities." Other responses include, "enhanced self esteem," "an increase in confidence and self esteem," "attitudinal changes," and "increased self worth which radiates out into all areas of a disabled persons life - employment, home, health, community."

Changes in client learning. Several respondents also commented that they would like to be able to measure the learning that occurs as a result of accessing career development services. Responses included "We would like to measure the learning," and "We need to be focusing on measurable learning outcomes, not just activities or placements."

Changes in client situation. Other respondents indicated that they would like to measure changes in clients' situations. For example, one respondent commented that they would like to measure the impact of their services on, "Personal problems of our clients that we deal with on a day to day basis." Another respondent stated similarly that measuring, "Overcoming barriers, e.g., alcohol or drug dependence, leaving abusive environments, lifestyle changes" would be valuable.

Changes in clients' level of independence. In addition to this, respondents indicated that they would like to measure changes in clients' level of independence (self-sufficiency). For example, respondents commented that they wanted to measure, "Students becoming more independent," and "Personal growth, growth in self-esteem and ability to function independently."

Changes in client awareness. Several respondents described their desire to measure changes in clients' awareness. Sample responses include: "Capturing changes in attitude and increased awareness of career development opportunities," "increased optimism about the future,"" I would prefer to report on the life-changing aspects of what we do - when clients leave us saying "wow- I see more options, I see that I can do it," and, "The awareness by clients of their future potential and their range of options and how this impacts positively on their career paths (and their lives). This is difficult to measure (and perhaps not always valued by funders) but is perhaps the most significant services we offer our clients."

Changes in client health/quality of life. Infrequently respondents also indicated that they would like to measure changes in clients' health/quality of life. One respondent

described this outcome as "Improvements and the general health and well being of the client mentally." Others simply described it as "Quality of life."

Unspecified client growth. A significant number of respondents also communicated a desire to measure client growth. However, they did not specify the type of growth. Sample responses include: "I would love to send an "end assessment" with the client group I work with. The funder will pay for psychological assessments at the "front end" but I know they would be amazed if they provided this same assessment at the "back end" of a client file. Only in working with these individuals can you see the true result of the supports provided. That's why I love this work :) Truly rewarding."

Personal stories of success. Finally, respondents indicated that "personal stories of success" are utilized in the measurement of effectiveness. Responses include, "All of the staff here could come up with lots of stories, but how do we report those to the funder?," "Personal Stories: what clients have to say about their situations, the help they did or did not receive, their personal outcomes (the good, bad, ugly)."

Impacts on Families

The second major theme was labeled "Impacts on Families." A number of respondents indicated that they would like to be able to measure impacts on families. Sample responses include: "Improvements to family life and impact on children (indirectly) as a result of services provided to parents," "Increased positive impact on whole family," "The impact and value of services on a person and their family (greater independence, more opportunities/choices, broader social network etc)."

Impacts on Communities

The third major theme was labeled "Impacts on Communities." Sample responses include, "Impact on community in general (e.g. healthy communities)," "A second issue is how do you meaningfully or authentically measure the good will generated, positive relationships, and contributions that positively impact the community you serve"; "I also think that the broad changes for the client and the community are the most difficult to measure and yet, we know that after five years and having 84,155 visits to our centre from youth clients we have made a huge impact on the community. If only we could track and report this!"

Impacts on Employers/Businesses

The fourth major theme was labeled "Impacts on Employers/Businesses." Respondents infrequently indicated that they would like to measure impacts on employers and businesses. Sample responses include, "The impact of ensuring that Work Seekers are job ready when it comes to marketing them to Employers"; and, "Highly urgent fill requests receive focused attention and employers are highly appreciative of quick turnarounds on fills especially for temporary and short term projects."

Client Satisfaction/Appreciation

The fifth major theme was labeled "Client satisfaction/Appreciation." Sample responses include, "The number of 'thank you's we get in a day"; "The "contentment factor"; "often funders seem to disregard this in favor of statistics"; "It builds our self-esteem when we hear comments like: you have been so helpful, thanks so much – this is the most information I have received from anyone, what a great place, what helpful staff,

couldn't have done it without you, etc.," and, "The 'contentment factor'; often funders seem to disregard this in favor of statistics."

Process Factors that Contributed to Client Change

The sixth major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Process Factors that Contribute to Client Change." Respondents indicated that they would like to measure the process factors that contributed to a successful intervention. Responses include: "As a front end service provider I come in contact with and provide services (listening ear, encouragement, answering questions). These are extremely valuable/helpful interventions that don't require any further follow up and therefore do not get counted/measured," "Are clients using the labour market information that we give them to make the best career and training choices for themselves? Does having access to labour market information products influence people's decision making process."

Long-term Impacts

The seventh major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Long-term Impacts." Respondents indicated that they would like to measure and report on long-term impacts of service delivery. Sample responses: "long term changes in a persons life and living situation what happened to them after they finished school?," "career attainment after post-secondary education," "longitudinal studies and/or long term tracking of clients - do good career development programs and services really make a difference in the long run," "Long term sustainable employment (one year follow-up)," "long-term behaviour changes," "longitudinal tracking of high school graduates," and "We think that it is more important as to how many people we work with who maintain employment rather than the number of new jobs we find/develop."

Impacts on Populations not Prioritized/Funded by Government

The eighth major theme identified through the data analysis was "Impacts on Populations not Prioritized/Funded by Government." For example, one respondent described that they would like to measure, "Non-traditional careers for children with disabilities." Another respondent described this desire:

> Government is often more interested on the people who are collecting EI or EIA in finding employment however 52% of the people using our services who were unemployed were not on any benefits. These people are not being measured in our government's unemployment stats which is frightening as they count for over half of the people unemployed. We are fortunate that we are allowed to work with these people but many employment programs can only work with EI or EIA recipients. This makes it extremely difficult for this 52% of unemployed people. This is particularly true with youth who are unemployed but are being supported by their families. Also, there are too many programs that provide employment skills to youth and adults who do not have any technical skills whatsoever. We feel these programs are perpetuating the "working poor" as they will only be able to attain minimum wage, dead-end jobs with this kind of training.

Quantitative Impacts

The ninth major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Quantitative Impacts." Responses categorized as "Quantitative Impacts" were mentioned very infrequently. Responses include: "1. Number of clients that have benefited from our intervention on their behalf. 2. Number of clients who feel our Dept is an agent of change for them," "Numbers of students going to post secondary vs working after high school

and in the following years. Numbers of students needing to upgrade," "Number of new graduates who obtain relevant employment 3, 6, 12 months after graduation," "The individuals that are actually successful in finding employment for which they are trained," and "Number of clients that we work with intensively and the successes these individuals face vs. number of clients accessing services (some only come 1-2 times and never really gain from it, I believe); Number of telephone contacts with clients"

Unsure

The tenth major theme identified in the data analysis was "Unsure." Respondents indicated that they were not sure what other outcomes they would like to measure. For example, one respondent answered, "Not sure. Personal stories of program participants have been used in the past. However, this can be an issue with confidentiality."

Other Impacts

The eleventh major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Other Impacts." This theme emerged in response to the emergence of a number of responses related to impacts not already categorized. Sample responses include, "The positive cost/benefit rationale for providing funding to an individual and/or their employer. The impact of ensuring that Work Seekers are job ready when it comes to marketing them to Employers," "Highly urgent fill requests receive focused attention and employers are highly appreciative of quick turnarounds on fills especially for temporary and short term projects"; and, "I wish we could report the projects we work on that either educate, create employment or provides valuable tools for our clients, such as: resume and conflict resolution, customer service, etc., workshops; projects that encourages businesses to establish in our rural communities (e.g. Call Centres) or employment partnerships that

creates employment; bilingual tools that we have created such as binders filled with examples of French resumes/letters; French key words list and action phrases; etc."

In summary, agency representatives indicated that they would like to measure a wide range of outcomes. Respondents especially communicated a desire to measure impacts on client skill levels, client attitudes, and on families, businesses, and communities.

Research Question 9

The ninth research question asked, "What are agencies perceptions as to better ways to measure the impact/outcomes of career development services?" Survey Item #9 was utilized to gather data related to this question. Respondents were asked to provide suggestions concerning how to better measure the impact/outcomes of career development services. It is important to note that 49/147 respondents did not respond to this prompt. Six major themes emerged from the data analysis: "More Consistency," "Broaden Evaluation Methods/Priorities," "Make Evaluation of Services More of a Priority," "Increase Cooperation Between Stakeholders," "Unsure of How to Improve" and "No Improvement Needed."

More Consistency

The first major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "More Consistency." Two sub-themes emerged under this category: "agreement of the definition of a 'successful' outcome" and "consistency in the utilization of evaluation methods."

Agreement on the definition of a "successful" outcome. The first sub-theme was "agreement on the definition of a 'successful outcome.'" Respondents indicated that it would help if there were agreement concerning the definition of a successful outcome.

For example, one respondent commented, "A specific measurable common definition of what is a successful employment outcome would be a good start."

Consistency in the utilization of evaluation methods. The second sub-theme was "consistency in the utilization of evaluation methods." Respondents commented that consistency in the utilization of evaluation methods would be helpful. One respondent stated, "If a consistent method/manner was implemented, we could set benchmarks and collect baseline data against which to measure results and progress ... could also compare to other jurisdictions."

Broaden Evaluation Methods/Priorities

The second major theme that emerged was "Broaden Evaluation Methods/Priorities." A significant number of responses concerned the need to broaden evaluation methods to improve the ability of agencies to measure the value of their services. Seven sub-themes were categorized under the major theme "Broaden Evaluation Methods/Priorities. These were "unspecified qualitative assessments," "anecdotal methods," "pre and post service assessments of qualitative change," "longitudinal studies," "interviews," "surveys," and "external evaluations."

Unspecified qualitative assessments. The first sub-theme was labeled "unspecified qualitative assessments." One respondent commented, "We are a fan of authentic assessment in that clients are able to show or leave us or walk away with a concrete accomplishment that demonstrates their self sufficiency related to employment." A couple of respondents also indicated that an increase in the use of qualitative methods would improve measurement. Responses include: "Qualitative research and reporting. Not just quantitative (numbers of client's per month) etc ... Numbers are needed for

accountability. Quality is measured by qualitative measures only!," "Use of tools which measure change in awareness and attitude before and after services," and "Important that it be able to be measured in terms of economic impact for the individuals, their employers, and for society. Customer satisfaction surveys could be used to supplement, but should not be used as a primary measurement."

Anecdotal methods. The second sub-theme was labeled "anecdotal methods." Respondents indicated that increased use of anecdotal methods would enhance measurement. One commented, "Our services invite clients that have indicated their appreciation for the assistance and support they have received, to put their comments in writing. To our staff, these are the successes and outcomes that statistics do not reflect."

Pre and post service assessments. The third sub-theme was labeled "pre and post service assessments." One respondent commented, "I would also love to do a "mini" video message upon first meeting the client and answering a few basic questions and an "exit" video message to see the difference in the persons physical appearance, ability to communicate and have a clear direction of where they are going :)."

Longitudinal studies/methods. The fourth sub-theme was labeled "longitudinal studies/methods." Respondents indicated that it would be beneficial to increase the use of longitudinal studies. Responses included: "Follow up surveys. 6months, 1 year out to see if students approach to career development and job search is really impacted by their participation in our programs"; and "longitudinal analysis - in Manitoba, children with disability may remain in school to age 21. May be helpful to track children post-graduation in terms of job satisfaction."

Interviews. The fifth sub-theme was labeled "interviews." Respondents indicated that increased use of interviews would improve the measurement of service efficacy. Sample responses include, "Asking questions about confidence in getting a job, motivation to find a job and value to them of the career education and so on"; and, "Qualitative interviews with clients before and several months after intervention to measure s/e impacts; measuring 1. health of family members; 2. children's performance in school; 3. purchasing capacity; etc."

Surveys. The sixth sub-theme was labeled "surveys." Respondents stated that increased use of surveys would be helpful. Sample responses include, "maybe a client questionnaire," and "telephone survey."

External evaluation. The seventh sub-theme was labeled "external evaluation." Respondents mentioned the need to use external evaluations to determine service efficacy. One commented, "Even though clients, families and others are consulted during major evaluations, a third party evaluation may benefit clients and programs more than the current system of introspection (as is common in some industries)."

Make Evaluation More of a Priority

The third major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Make Evaluation More of a Priority." Five sub-themes were identified within this major theme: "incorporate evaluation into service delivery," "provide training in evaluation," "provide support for evaluation," "provide better measurement/evaluation tools," and "provide information on best practices in evaluation."

Incorporate evaluation into service delivery. The first sub-theme was labeled "incorporate evaluation into service delivery." Infrequently, respondents mentioned that

it would be beneficial to incorporate evaluation into service delivery. Sample responses include, "Build in evaluation expectations into new and ongoing programming," "By designing a programme where impact measurements are intrinsically part of the process. Managers and staff would all be looking at the same variables," and, "Evaluation should be part of every activity funded."

Provide training in evaluation. The second sub-theme was labeled "provide training in evaluation." Respondents commented that additional training for practitioners in evaluation in measurement and evaluation would be beneficial. One respondent commented that, "Training of evaluation as well as samples would be useful." Another respondent commented, "We (the field collectively) need to become much better at measuring acquisition of learning assets (before and after snapshots of career self-management competencies."

Provide support for evaluation. The third sub-theme was labeled "provide support for evaluation." Most responses alluded to increased funding, time and support personnel. Sample responses include, "Funding made available for evaluation"; "appropriate resources. Our program is an early-intervention program (10-11 year olds) and as such, requires a significant tracking system"; "appropriate resources"; "With more money to hire someone to carry out the measurements. More money to develop better databases"; "More staff to research the impact we have"; and "As well time and personnel have been limited and make it difficult to try and evaluate the impact of career services."

Provide better measurement/evaluation tools. The fourth sub-theme was labeled "provide better measurement/evaluation tools." Most of these responses referred to access to better data gathering/collection and storage instruments. Sample responses

include: "If there were instruments that have been or are being created that we could use to measure above. Perhaps through Alberta Learning??," "computer based web system; meta data structure to preserve data information," "Different computer data system--one that offers more choices or free flow space," and, "With a user-friendly data base, which automatically uploads to Head Office."

Provide information on best practices in evaluation. The fifth sub-theme was labeled "provide information on best practices in evaluation." Respondents indicated that they would like to have access to information on best practices. Sample responses include, "sample report forms that other agencies use might assist us in developing new ways to measure the value/impact of our services"; and "we really need to know the best practices. When is the best way and how is the best way to present information."

Increase Cooperation/Coordination between Stakeholders

The fourth major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Increase Cooperation between Stakeholders." A small number of respondents indicated that it would be helpful if there were more cooperation between stakeholders. For example, one respondent commented that "more cooperation between secondary and post-secondary sectors on career and post-sec education planning issues [and] more research coordination at interprovincial and national levels" would be helpful.

Unsure of How to Improve

The fifth major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Unsure of How to Improve." A number of respondents indicated that they were unsure as to how they could improve. Sample responses include: "Looking forward to the outcomes of research like this to see if we can learn that!"; "hard to say as I have not worked in this field for long";

"Good question. I've certainly thought about it a lot here and we've had discussions at both the network meetings for all the HRDC funded ERCs across Toronto and also the next level up, the ERC/IRS Project Planning Committee (IRS are provincially funded ERCs) and we haven't come up with anything yet!"

No Need for Improvement

The sixth major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "No Need for Improvement." A small number of respondents also indicated that they did not feel they needed to improve the measurement of the outcomes of their services. One respondent commented, "Unsure – I think we do a good job." Another respondent indicated that it was "not an issue."

In summary, according to the respondents in this sample, there are many things that can be done to measure efficacy assessment of career development services in Canada. Some of the areas that were highlighted as areas for improvement include the need to broaden the priorities of efficacy assessment and the methods utilized for measurement as well as the need to provide more support for agencies and practitioners to measure the effectiveness of their services.

Additional Comments Regarding Impact/Outcome Measurement

Respondents were also given a final opportunity to comment on the issue of measuring the impact of career services. Survey Item #10 was utilized to provide respondents with this opportunity. Survey Item #10 asked, "What other comments would you like to make about the issue of measuring the impact of career services?" 69/147 (46.9%) of survey participants did not provide a response to this prompt. Five major themes emerged from an analysis of the data: "Appreciation for Conducting this

Research," "Call to Action," "Frustration," "Importance in Engaging/Educating

Stakeholders," and "Measuring the Impact of Services is Complex."

Appreciation for Conducting This Research

The first major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data is "Appreciation

for Conducting this Research." A small number of respondents simply used this

opportunity to express appreciation for the survey. For example, one respondent stated

that, "I think measuring our impact is crucial in the field of career development support is

to become more professional and seen as an area of expertise and a critical element for

the success of our society." Another respondent stated, "Thanks for doing this study - we

believe good things can come from asking these questions." Similarly, another

respondent commented that, "I think measuring our impact is crucial if the field of career

development support is to become more professional and seen as an area of expertise and

a critical element for the success of our society."

Call to Action

A second major theme that emerged from an analysis of the data was "Call to

Action." Respondents used this opportunity to further discuss the priorities that need to

be addressed in order to improve the measurement and reporting of outcomes. For

example, one respondent discussed the need to improve measurement tools by stating

that, "We need to [develop] a client friendly tool that will help clients see the movement

between entrance level skill jobs and more advanced skill jobs and how the progression

fits into their career planning goals." Another respondent discussed the need to enhance

the ability of practitioners to conduct efficacy assessments. He/she commented, "While

most of us recognize the importance of measurement (to support and retain good

programs, if nothing else!), we all say the same thing: not a priority with decision-makers (bosses); too few human and financial resources; some trepidation about launching surveys and research projects due to lack of expertise and time. We need to develop the expertise among practitioners to design research techniques that are relatively quick, technically accessible and still defendable as viable research tools."

Frustration With the Current System

The third major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Frustration with the Current System." The majority of respondents used this opportunity to express frustration concerning the way things are currently being done in efficacy measurement. Responses include the following: "At the current time, there seems to be a trend from the Government to demand more for less, making it very difficult to recruit qualified people to properly deliver quality services"; " I'm sick of various bodies asking about outcomes and yet not contributing any resources to help measure those outcomes. Then I have to listen to people talk about how we don't have good measurements. Put up or shut up!"; "In doing career counselling since 1976 I believe excellent career services are vital to help the population deal with the rate of change, but as it has really never been valued, no good system of measuring its impact(s) has ever been implemented. Several have been suggested"; "we have a holistic approach and try not to compartmentalize people's lives' into "career services" – measuring the impact of career services without including the impact on the whole person. For us it is difficult to separate the impacts of our services on "career" part of people's lives from the rest of their lives. To have that acknowledged to an even greater degree when measuring career services would be welcomed";

"Funding bodies would go a long way by better defining uniform service outcomes for

service agencies -- it would be up to those agencies to design programs that excel in those defined outcome areas." "I personally feel that it is meaningless just to report on the "employment outcomes" newcomers receive. The truth is anyone can get a job – cleaning floors, manual labor intensive – but that does NOT mean they have a meaningful employment outcome. I think that career services should take into consideration clients goals and career plans and assist them toward becoming successful in obtaining a kind of employment where they truly feel their skills are being exercised and stretched"; and, "I find it disheartening to watch services that work disappear because of a lack of understanding in government about the reality of helping people make significant long term changes in their lives."

Importance of Engaging Stakeholders

The fourth major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Importance of Engaging Stakeholders." Respondents highlighted the importance of engaging stakeholders in improving the measurement and reporting of outcomes related to career development services. This was communicated in a number of different ways. One respondent commented, "stakeholder involvement critical (students, parents, educators, employers, governments) - stakeholder collaboration important in planning these activities, disseminating and discussing results, and incorporating into follow up commitments." Another respondent described this need by stating that, "The questions asked by funders for a final report have a significant impact on the service format. For example, if a funder seeks only the number of clients with new jobs, agencies may not consider the quality of a job (e.g., are there benefits, so that the worker can afford their prescription drugs; does the work environment fit their personality...), the quality of the

job match (i.e., will the person be fulfilled; is it a job or a career? does it fit with their personal/family responsibilities; does it suit their interests and skills); how long do they last in the job (job tenures are almost never considered); how long does it take a worker to reach employment (i.e. job readiness of clients)." Another respondent described the need to involve stakeholders by stating that, "A lot of work still needs to be done to bring career development to the attention of politicians and general public - other than those just delivering the services! It has to become part of everything we do, the reason we have apprenticeship, labour market developments, education, etc."

Measuring the Impact of Services is Complex

The fifth major theme that emerged from the data analysis was "Measuring the Impact of Services is Complex." A significant number of respondents communicated their perception that measuring outcomes is extremely complex. Sample responses include, "When it comes to people, it is hard to measure because factors in their lives change which can impact on their employment prospects"; "important to realize this is a complex issue, with many 'lenses' and perspectives"; "measuring the impact of career services is a long term initiative. When developing a career action plan with folks facing multiple barriers to independence, the "outcomes" are stepping stones to independence. Important to recognize that outcomes vary from short to long term"; "Career services are not always about finding a job, but helping people find the type of job they want, sending them back to school and so on, so the effectiveness of these elements must also be investigated"; "There are so many factors which impact an individual's 'career success'; for example, their socio-economic situation, opportunities in the labour market, their level of motivation. My agency strives to teach clients effective career planning and work

search skills. I would never say that we are solely or even primarily responsible for the "success" or "failure" of a client."

In summary, respondents used the opportunity provided by Survey Item #10 to communicate their appreciation for this research. Some highlighted the importance of efficacy measurement for the ongoing professional growth of the career development field was expressed. Others expressed the need for more support to be provided to facilitate impact measurement. A number of respondents also communicated their frustration with the way that things are currently being done -- for example, emphasizing simple employment totals rather than ensuring that clients secure employment that is personally meaningful. The importance of involving all stakeholders was also expressed a number of times. Finally, the perceived complexity of measuring outcomes was expressed by a number of respondents.

Aggregation of Major Themes

Since there were a large number of respondents to this survey it seemed appropriate to aggregate the more prominent themes that resulted from the thematic analysis. During the content analysis the researcher identified sub-themes that appeared more frequently than others and flagged them to facilitate a frequency count of the more prevalent sub-themes. Such an aggregation was conducted to facilitate an understanding of the frequency with which certain sub-themes were provided. This aggregation was conducted at the sub-theme level since an aggregation at this level (as opposed to the macro level) would provide more detailed information.

Reported Outcomes: Frequencies

The most prevalent sub-themes that emerged through an analysis of the responses

to Survey Question #5 were "Changes in Employment Status" (78/104; 75%), "Changes

in Educational Status" (29/104; 27.9%), "Program Completion" (18/104; 17.3%),

"Successful Delivery of Services" (17/104; 16.3%) and "Client Satisfaction" (19/104;

18.3%) (see Table 14).

Table 14. Reported Outcomes: Frequencies

Outcome	n	%
Change in Employment Status	78	75
Change in Educational Status	29	27.9
Client Satisfaction	19	18.3
Program Completion	18	17.3
Successful Delivery of Services	17	16.5
Total	104	

Evidence of Reported Outcomes: Frequencies

The most prevalent sub-themes that emerged through an analysis of the responses

concerning the types of evidence utilized to identify and report on outcomes (Survey

Question #5) were: "Numbers Served" (16/105; 15.2%), "Number Finding Employment"

(31/105; 29.5%), "Number Enrolled in Training Programs" (18/105; 17.1%),

"Unspecified Statistics" (34/105; 32.4%), "Client Self-Reports" (14/105; 13.3%),

"Observation of Situational Change" (14/105; 13.3%), "Surveys" (14/105; 13.3%),

"Monthly/Yearly Reports" (15/105; 14.3%) and "Client Tracking" (18/105; 17.1%) – See

Table 15.

Table 15. Evidence of Reported Outcomes: Frequencies

Evidence	n	%
Unspecified Statistics	34	32.4
Number Finding Employment	31	29.5
Number Enrolled in Training Program	18	17.1
Client Tracking	18	17.1
Numbers Served	16	15.2
Monthly/Yearly Reports	15	14.3
Surveys	14	13.3
Observation of Situational Change	14	13.3
Client Self Reports	14	13.3
Total	105	

Additional Comments Related to Reported Outcomes: Frequencies

The major sub-theme that emerged in response the opportunity to provide additional comments was "Additional Contextual Information" (21/44; 47.7%).

Unreported Outcomes: Frequencies

The major sub-themes that emerged concerning unreported outcomes (Survey Question #6) were: "Changes in Educational/Employment Status" (35/96; 36.4%); "Attitudinal Changes" (37/96; 38.5%), "Impacts on Communities" (16/96; 16.7%) "Changes in Skill" (60/96; 63%), and "Successful Program Development or Implementation" (39/96; 40.6%) (see Table 16).

Table 16. Unreported Outcomes: Frequencies

Outcome	n	%
Changes in Client Skill Level	60	62.5
Successful Program Delivery	39	40.6
Attitudinal Changes	37	38.5
Change in Employment/Educational Status	35	36.5
Impacts on Communities	16	16.7
Total	96	

Evidence of Unreported Outcomes: Frequencies

The major sub-themes that emerged concerning the evidence being used to identify unreported outcomes (Survey Item #6) were: "Client Self Reports" (67/91; 73.6%), "Changes in Client Skill" (39/91; 42.9%), "Changes in Client Situation" (22/91; 24.2%), "Changes in Client Attitude" (14/91; 15.4%), "Frequency Counts" (15/91; 16.5%) and "Observation" (32/91; 35.2%) (see Table 17).

Table 17. Evidence of Unreported Outcomes: Frequencies

Evidence	n	%
Client Self Report	67	73.6
Changes in Client Skill Level	39	42.9
Observation/Demonstration	32	35.2
Changes in Client Situation	22	24.2
Quantitative Evidence	15	16.5
Changes in Client Attitude	14	15.4
Total	91	

Additional Comments Related to Unreported Outcomes: Frequencies

The two major themes that emerged when respondents took the opportunity to make additional comments (Survey Item #6) were, "Additional Contextual Information" (14/31; 45.2%) and "Additional Outcomes are Being Witnessed But Not Reported" (9/31; 29%) (see Table 18).

Table 18. Additional Comments Related to Unreported Outcomes: Frequencies

Additional comments	n	%
Additional Contextual Information	14	45.2
Additional Comments being Witnessed but Not Reported	9	29
Total	31	

Difficulties in Measuring Impacts/Outcomes: Frequencies

The major themes that emerged in response to Survey Item #7 were: "Lack of Time" (27/124; 21.8%), "Lack of Emphasis on Outcomes Other Than Employment

Totals" (21/124; 16.9%), "Lack of Understanding" (16/124; 12.9%) and "Losing Contact

with Clients" (39/124; 31.5%) (see Table 19).

Table 19. Difficulties in Measuring Impacts/Outcomes: Frequencies

Difficulties	n	%
Losing Contact with Clients	39	31.5
Lack of Time	27	21.8
Lack of Value Placed on Alternative Outcomes	21	16.9
Lack of Understanding	16	12.9
Total	124	

Underrepresented Outcomes: Frequencies

The major themes that emerged in response to Survey Item #8 were: "Changes in

Client Skill" (20/93; 21.5%), "Unspecified Client Growth" (17/93; 18.3%) and "Changes

in Client Attitude" (24/93; 25.8%) (see Table 20).

Table 20. Underrepresented Outcomes: Frequencies

Underrepresented Outcomes	n	%
Changes in Client Attitude	24	25.8
Changes in Client Skill Level	20	21.5
Unspecified Client Growth	17	18.3
Total	93	

Suggested Improvements to Current System of Impact Measurement: Frequencies

The major themes that emerged in response to Survey Item #9 were: "Increased Use of Longitudinal Studies" (12/96; 12.5%), "Provide More Support for Evaluation" (25/98; 25.5%), and "Unsure of How to Improve" (14/98; 14.3%) (see Table 21).

Table 21. Suggested Improvements: Frequencies

Improvements	n	%
More Support for Evaluation	25	25.5
Unsure of How to Improve	14	14.3
Increased Use of Longitudinal Studies	12	12.5
Total	96	

Other Comments Regarding Impact/Outcome Measurement: Frequencies

The major themes that emerged in response to Survey Item #9 were: "Call to Action" (10/78; 12.8%), "Frustration with Current System" (37/78; 47.4%), and "Measurement is Complex" (13/78; 16.7%) (see Table 22).

Table 22. Other Comments Regarding Impact/Outcome Measurement: Frequencies

Other comments	n	%
Frustration with Current System	37	47.4
Measurement is Complex	13	16.7
Call to Action	10	12.8
Total	78	

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results provided in this chapter can be summarized according to a number of key findings:

1. Agency representatives overwhelmingly reported that they value measuring the effectiveness of their services and that they do engage in reporting the outcomes of their services.

2. K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions place less value on measuring efficacy than other agency types. K-12 schools also report on outcomes less frequently than other agency types. As well, smaller agencies/organizations/service providers place less value on efficacy measurement. They also report on the outcomes of their services less frequently.

3. The main focus in efficacy assessment appears to be on employment totals. In addition, a strong emphasis is being placed on education totals (enrolling in, and completing education/training programs) as well as on other tallies such as successful delivery of services. As well, the primary measurement tools appear to be frequency counts (e.g., numbers served, number finding employment, number enrolled in training program, etc.).

4. Agency representatives are witnessing a number of other outcomes resulting from their services (but are not currently reporting them). These especially include outcomes such as changes in clients' skill levels, changes in client attitudes, and impacts on the community. According to respondents, these

outcomes are not being reported because they are not required, or are not valued, by those who fund services.

5. Agency representatives are utilizing methods other than frequency counts to measure unreported outcomes. The primary methods utilized are client self-reports and observation of changes in client skill levels, client situation, and client attitudes.

6. Agency representatives expressed frustration with their inability to report on the wide range of outcomes that they witness resulting from the provision of their services.

7. Agency representatives indicated a significant number of barriers that impede impact measurement. The primary obstacles described were lack of time, lack of understanding about the importance of measurement, lack of value placed on the measurement of alternative outcomes, and difficulty in maintaining contact with clients so as to conduct an assessment of service efficacy.

Chapter 4 provided an analysis of the data that were gathered through the use of the survey "Measuring the Impact of Career Services: State of Practice." Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of these results and will provide recommendations for future action and research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the implications of the results presented in the previous

chapter. As well, this chapter will discuss the strengths and limitations of this study.

Implications and Recommendations

This study highlights the fact that there are strengths regarding the current state of

efficacy research in the career development field in Canada. Most importantly, it appears

that there is a strong awareness of the need to link research and practice. The vast

majority of respondents indicated that they measure the impacts of their services (83.2%)

and that they value this activity (97.8%). It is also clear from this study that a wide range

of services are being provided to the public. Despite these strengths, a significant number

of weaknesses regarding the current state of efficacy measurement of career development

services in Canada were also identified in this study. These include the need to better

understand levels of specificity, the need to assess outcomes more broadly, the need to

provide more support to ensure that outcomes are being measured broadly and effectively

on the front lines of service delivery, and the need to build a consensus regarding the

need to measure the impacts of career development services.

Need to Understand Levels of Specificity

The Principles of Empirically Supported Interventions (PESI) highlighted the

need to understand the various levels of efficacy assessment (Whiston, 2002). According

to Principle 1 and Principle 2 level of specificity should be considered when evaluating

outcomes and level of specificity should not be restricted to diagnosis. Stated another

way, the Principles recognized that different interventions work with different clients

under different circumstances. Practitioners need to be aware of this when conducting research and when selecting interventions.

From the sample in this study, it appears that agencies are not sufficiently addressing levels of specificity. For example, it appears that are not tailoring their services to meet the different needs of various populations. A large number of respondents indicated that they do not target specific cultural groups (79.6%) or specific gender groups (97.9). Similarly, career development services are being made available across the lifespan without a sound evidence base attesting to the effectiveness of interventions across the lifespan. According to respondents, services are being provided to students in grade 9 or less (19.7%), students in grades 10 to 12 (36.7%), students in post-secondary settings (40.8%), young people – 19 years or less – who are not in school settings (48.3%), adults in early to middle age – 25 to 45 years old (68.7%), older adults – more than 45 years old (57.8%).

This is an area of concern since the current research base does not provide sufficient support to suggest that career development services are equally effective for divergent population groups. According to Whiston (2002) past research on career interventions has not been conducted across different developmental levels. The vast majority of research on career interventions has been conducted on college students. Also, as Whiston points out, "Although there is an assumption that these groups [women, members of racial and ethnic minorities, etc.] have unique needs and that traditional career interventions will not be as helpful to these groups, very little research has investigated group differences and whether specialized treatment approaches are significantly more effective" (p. 221).

In summary, it appears that career development services are being offered uniformly to populations without an understanding of the effectiveness of career development services across client demographics. In the future more research needs to be conducted with to understand the comparative effects of interventions with divergent populations. In addition, this research needs to be communicated to practitioners so that practitioners have sound evidence to help them make informed decisions for specific client groups under specific circumstances.

Need to Assess Outcomes Broadly

According to Wampold et al. (2002), assessment of outcomes should take into account multiple perspectives including client, program provider (e.g., therapist, program instructor), and third-party payers or Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). Assessing outcomes of interventions is complex and therefore must involve an examination of impacts from multiple perspectives across multiple factors such as symptom reduction, quality of life issues, cost-benefits, etc.. However, according to the sample in this study, it appears that outcomes are not being assessed broadly and multiple perspectives are not being utilized in assessing outcomes.

First, it appears that there is a need to assess outcomes more broadly. Specifically, according to this sample, there is a heavy emphasis on "changes in client status" – specifically change in employment and educational status – and "service provision" (tallying the amount of times a service is provided). According to agency representatives, these outcomes are given priority by those who provide funding.

This finding mirrors what others have concluded about the state of practice of efficacy assessment. For example, Myrick (2003) described the state of practice of

efficacy measurement in schools as predominantly involving frequency counts. According to Myrick (2003), in educational settings tallying various interventions is often considered enough to be accountable (How many students met with the counsellor? How many individual counselling sessions were provided? How many groups did the counsellor organize and meet? How many classroom guidance lessons took place? How many teachers consulted with the counsellor about their students or situations in their classes?) Although Myrick's (2003) comments describe educational settings these remarks appear to reflect the general focus of assessment in career development.

Agencies providing career development services need to assess outcomes more broadly. Hughes et al. (2002) suggest that the outcomes of career guidance can be summarized as: Immediate outcomes (enhanced knowledge and skills, attitudinal change and motivation), intermediate outcomes (enhanced job-search, or other search strategies, and individuals' contingency planning), longer term outcomes for individuals (enhanced take-up of appropriate opportunities, improved entry into, and retention within, labour and learning markets), and longer term outcomes for the economy (Gross Domestic Product, productivity gains, reductions in skills gaps and shortages, and enhanced income levels, and reductions in benefit payments). According to survey respondents, some of these outcomes are being measured but an insufficient amount of emphasis is currently being placed on outcomes such as enhanced knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation. As well, insufficient attention is being given to longer-term outcomes – especially cost-benefit analyses.

Second, it appears that multiple perspectives are not being utilized in identifying the impacts of service provision. Specifically, agency representatives expressed

frustration that their perspectives are not being taken into account. Many respondents expressed the need to assess outcomes more broadly but communicated frustration concerning the fact that they are often only asked to provide employment totals, educational totals, tallies of services provided and tallies of the number of clients served. When asked what outcomes are being witnessed but not reported respondents indicated many other outcomes such as increases in motivation, changes in attitudes, and skill development. According to the frustrations expressed by respondents, it would seem that agency representatives do not believe that they have a voice when it comes to selecting outcome measures. In the future, it will be important for multiple perspectives to be considered when measuring the outcomes of service delivery.

One way to accomplish the objectives of ensuring that a broader array of outcomes are being measured and ensuring that practitioners have a voice in the measurement of interventions would be to facilitate dialogue between all stakeholders as to the legitimate outcomes of career development services. From many of the responses provided in the survey it appears that there is a limited dialogue occurring between stakeholders regarding impact assessment. Practitioners are being asked to report on certain outcomes to the exclusion of other outcomes that they are noticing and are interested in reporting. Interestingly, when a parallel study was conducted with policy makers and employers by the CRWG themes common to the ones expressed by agency representatives were mentioned. Although definite conclusions were not possible due to low response rate policy makers and employers that did participate in this study also recognized the need to assess outcomes more broadly (Baudoin et al., 2005). Given this, it appears that there is a lack of communication between agencies, policy makers, and

employers. It is also possible that there is there is a lack of shared language regarding outcomes. Further dialogue between stakeholders needs to occur which focuses on defining and facilitating agreement on the legitimate outcomes of career development services. Once this has been accomplished stakeholders need to work together to development measurement strategies to effectively measure these outcomes.

Failure to measure outcomes broadly and to incorporate multiple perspectives results in a number of problems. One consequence of the current emphasis on tracking employment totals is that the evidence that results from this type of outcome measurement provides little insight into understanding the "why, how and for whom" of career development services. Many in the field of career development services (and in the field of counselling in general) have argued that one major gap in the research literature is the lack of evidence concerning the comparative effects of various interventions. Lampropolous (2000), Whiston (2002, 2003), Magnusson and Roest (2004), and Kendall (1998) have all pointed to the need for more research that demonstrates what treatments, provided by whom are best applied to what types of client problems. Unfortunately, frequency counts do not provide very much information to advance an understanding of these variables. Also, as a result of this emphasis, agencies are only being held accountable for one facet of career development and the full effects of career development services will remain unknown.

In summary, in the future greater emphasis needs to be placed on measuring a broader array of outcomes – rather than simply employment/educational totals. As well, multiple perspectives need to be considered in the selection of outcome measures. Without these changes the full potential of the client might not be realized (if the only

outcome desired by funding agencies is change in employment status), certain populations might be neglected, and the full effects of career development services will remain unknown. At a time when compelling evidence is needed to maintain funding, agencies are only able to provide a very small glimpse into the full impacts of career development services. A broader range of evidence that incorporates multiple outcome measures will only serve to better argue for the need for career development services. A broader range of evidence will also help efforts to understand the why, how and for whom of career development services.

Obstacles to Measurement

It is vital that research and practice be intertwined (Feltham, 2005; Whiston, 2002). As Lichtenberg and Wampold (2002) point out, "Evidence-based practice is the heart and soul of the scientist-practitioner model and what it means to be 'professional'" (p. 310). However, despite the need to integrate research and practice it appears that agencies find it very difficult to conduct efficacy assessments. Although it is encouraging to note that, according to the sample in this study, career development practitioners value and engage in the measurement of the effectiveness of their services, it is discouraging to note that they experience many obstacles in this endeavor. A significant number of respondents indicated that they experienced difficulties in measuring the impacts/outcomes of their services. In fact, of all the open-ended questions in the survey respondents provided the highest volume of responses (84.4%) to the question "What difficulties do you face when trying to measure the outcomes/impacts of your services?"

Respondents mentioned a number of barriers to effectively conducting efficacy assessments – frustrations such as complexity of measuring and reporting outcomes, lack

of time, poor data collection, lack of funds, inadequate training, lack of effective measurement tools, lack of understanding, absence of protocols for conducting evaluations and reporting results, disconnect between service provision and evaluation, lack of value placed on alternative outcomes, and losing contact with clients. The most frequently provided responses were concerned with complexity, lack of time, lack of emphasis on outcomes other than employment totals, and losing contact with clients. Given the significant barriers experienced by agencies in the measurement of service efficacy it appears that their ability to conduct research is compromised.

In general, more support needs to be provided to practitioners to help them effectively measure the impacts/outcomes of their services. Specifically, additional support needs to be provided in terms of funding, training, and allocation of time for measurement/evaluation. For example, it is important that the career development profession increase the level of training in measurement tools and methods to facilitate a growing awareness of alternative methods and to enhance proficiency with these methods (Harris-Bowlsbey, 2003). Many respondents indicated that outcome measurement in too complex and they are not sufficiently trained in measurement. Savickas (2003) attributes this lack of proficiency to the prevailing "deprofessionalizing" of career counselling and argues that career development professionals are often minimally trained in counsellor education programs. Certainly this has an impact on the ability of practitioners to measure the effectiveness of their services. Therefore, it is important to raise the standard of training required for those entering the career development field.

It is also important to provide additional support and training to those currently working in the field. For example, it would be beneficial to centrally develop, collect and

disseminate alternative measurement methods (Savickas, 2003). This could be partly accomplished through the creation of website forums such as the one developed by in the United Kingdom by the National Guidance Research Forum (NGRF). This website provides online resources for career counsellors in the form of "how to" and "best practices" articles, informational tips and Web links.

Another way to provide additional training and support for practitioners would be to generate documents that would provide peer-reviewed counseling guidelines and would recommend techniques that best address particular career concerns. These could be drafted in the form of brief documents, co-written and continuously updated by master counsellors and experienced researchers, and would summarize the best available information about a circumscribed topic from leading texts, premier journals, and peer-reviewed guidelines. Savickas (2003) argues:

> Resources such as these would be beneficial to encourage increased collaboration between practitioners and researchers to aid in the utilization of alternative measurements and to increase the amount of in-service training in assessment methods and tools being accessed by career development professionals. (p. 89)

These types of resources would be helpful in aiding practitioners to utilize available research. Whiston (2003) claims that practitioners are often unable to benefit from the work of researchers. This is often due to the fact that research is published in academic journals and is primarily written for an academic audience. While researchers bear some responsibility in making their research accessible to practitioners, resources such as peer-reviewed guidelines would be beneficial in providing additional support.

A further level of support could be provided to practitioners by increasing the level of cooperation between researchers and practitioners, as Savickas (2003) explains:

Career development researchers have already produced an impressive amount of content. Rather than focus on adding more content, the profession might switch focus to user functionality to make it easier for practitioners to navigate through the content to find information that they can use to help a particular client. (p. 88)

Savickas suggests that it would be helpful if researchers and practitioners worked collaboratively. Although he recognizes that collaboration can be difficult he suggests that "bridge researchers" could be developed by "cultivating scholars who concentrate on the interface between the profession of career counselling and the sciences of vocational psychology and occupational sociology rather than focusing on one or the other of these independent systems" (p. 89-90).

In summary, although it is imperative that research and practice be intertwined practitioners providing career development services in Canada indicated that they encounter significant obstacles when they attempt to conduct research on the impacts of their services. One significant barrier experienced by practitioners is the perceived complexity of measuring outcomes and the concern they have that they are insufficiently trained to conduct efficacy assessments. This is not an insurmountable problem but it is one that needs to be addressed. Practitioners need to receive more training in research and measurement. This needs to be providing through counsellor training programs as well as through in-service professional development sessions. In addition, available research needs to be communicated in a way that is usable for practitioners. Practitioners also need to be provided with more time to conduct efficacy assessments to make it an integral part

of their work. Finally, cooperation needs to be encouraged between practitioners and

researchers to ensure that outcomes are measured broadly and effectively. In this way,

practitioners will be better equipped to conduct efficacy assessments and integrate

research into their practice.

Building Consensus Regarding the Need to Measure Impacts

While the majority of sectors providing career development services recognize the

need to measure impacts and simply require additional support to facilitate this endeavor,

other sectors need to re-evaluate the amount of importance they place on the need to

conduct research. Two sectors of career development service provision that especially

needs to re-evaluate the importance of measuring impacts are schools within the K-12

system and post-secondary institutions. Representatives from these types of agencies

were less likely than expected to indicate that measuring the outcomes/impacts of their

services was "Very Important." Representatives of K-12 schools were also more likely

than expected to indicate that they do not report on the impacts/outcomes of their services

than other agency types.

The relative lack of importance placed on measurement by representatives of K-

12 schools and post-secondary institutions is an area of concern since the populations

being targeted by these career development service providers have the potential to

provide valuable evidence to highlight the long-term benefits of career development

services. These populations provide the opportunity to witness the impacts of career

development services upon an individual's lifetime. Valuable information regarding long-

term impacts can be obtained through measurement and evaluation with clients in K-12

schools and post-secondary institutions.

It is unclear from the research why respondents from these settings selected "Not At All Important" and "Somewhat Important" more frequently than "Very Important" to describe the level of value they place on the measurement of services. One possible explanation is that they simply do not have the resources or adequate staffing to conduct efficacy assessments. Tests of relationships conducted in this study suggested that smaller organizations (with one service provider and with two to five service providers) were much less likely to measure the impacts/outcomes of their services than larger agencies/organizations/service providers. Since K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions are more likely to have fewer career development service providers than other organizations, it is possible that it is simply a matter of numbers of staff devoted to career development. Perhaps representatives from school settings are overloaded due to small staff numbers and therefore unable to prioritize and value measurement and evaluation.

An additional hypothesis to explain the lack of emphasis placed on efficacy assessments in school settings is that there is a certain amount of trepidation concerning measurement (Myrick, 2003). Many respondents expressed their perception that measuring outcomes is complex and difficult. Respondents especially communicated their perception that assessing outcomes such as changes in skills, knowledge and attitude is too difficult. Given these perceptions, and the fact that these outcomes (learning, attitude change, and skill development) are commonly associated with school settings, it is certainly possible that many practitioners are reluctant to engage in impact assessment. However, if this is in fact the reason why respondents to this study indicated a lack of value concerning efficacy, these attitudes need to change (Myrick, 2003). One way to help practitioners overcome their trepidation is to provide them with the tools they need

to assess the outcomes of their services. Measurement tools and strategies need to be developed and made available to practitioners working in educational settings to help them effectively and efficiently measure the impacts of their services. Although measuring impacts such as learning changes, attitude changes and skill development appear complex strategies and tools can be developed to make the measurement of these outcomes less daunting. For example, Hiebert (1997) has suggested that many procedures have been developed in recent years that effectively document client change. These include checklists, portfolios, observational forms, cognitive mapping, self-monitoring data, authentic assessments and performance assessments. Authentic assessments, performance assessments, portfolios and checklists are commonly used to measure learning outcomes in schools; they would simply need to be adapted for use in measuring career development outcomes.

Perhaps the strongest hypothesis regarding the lack of value placed on efficacy assessment in educational settings concerns the lack of accountability in these sectors of career development service provision. According to tests of association that were conducted during the data analysis, representatives of agencies that do not receive specific funding for career development services were less likely than expected to indicate that they measure and report on the outcomes of their services. Conversely, representatives of agencies that do receive funding specifically for career development services were more likely than expected to measure and report on the outcomes of their services. Therefore, it would appear that agencies that receive funding to help them provide career development services feel more pressure to demonstrate the effectiveness of their services whereas agencies that do not receive funding for career development

services are less to see the value in measuring service impact. Service providers in K-12 and post-secondary institutions do not receive specific funding for career development services. Therefore, they do not feel pressure to justify their services. In the future, practitioners providing career development services in educational settings need to be held accountable for the services they provide and the importance of conducting efficacy assessments needs to be emphasized in order that the valuable work of impact measurement receives the proper attention in these jurisdictions.

In summary, conducting impact assessments is fundamentally important. Whiston (2002) argues that it is incumbent upon practitioners to measure the effectiveness of their services. The responsibility to conduct efficacy research does not fall solely on researchers but is shared equally between researchers and practitioners. Kellett (1994) similarly argues that, "It [is] not enough to have academic researchers investigate new approaches and develop new instruments for the evaluation of counselling" (p. 351). It must be done by practitioners in local settings as well. However, without proper support and without the recognition of all sectors of career development services embracing the need for integration of research and practice this important endeavor will not be possible.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted a number of areas that require attention to ensure that a sound body of evidence is established supporting the effectiveness of career development services. More research needs to be conducted to understand the varying levels of impact assessment. A broader array of outcome measures needs to be utilized and all stakeholders need to be included in discussions about the legitimate outcomes of career development. Finally, practitioners need to receive more support to help them measure

the outcomes/impacts of their service provision. This support needs to be provided in a variety of ways including: increased allocation of time for measurement, additional funding, increased awareness and support for measurement on the part of funding bodies and other stakeholders, and additional training and support to aid in the development of skill and proficiency in measuring outcomes.

Need for Further Research

This study uncovered a number of areas that would benefit from further research. Most importantly, this study highlighted the need to broaden the outcome measures that are currently being utilized in impact assessment. In particular, more research needs to be conducted on the effectiveness of career development interventions in helping clients achieve specific learning outcomes. Hughes et al. (2002) classify learning outcomes as attitudes, decision-making skills, self-awareness, opportunity awareness, certainty of preference and transition and define them as: "…The skills, knowledge and attitudes which facilitate informed and rational occupational and educational decision-making and the implementation of such decisions" (p.11).

Measuring the effectiveness of career development interventions in helping clients to achieve learning outcomes will serve two important functions. In the first place, it will provide a foundation upon which to build an understanding of the long-term economic impacts of career development services. Killeen et al. (1994) cite learning outcomes and attitudinal change as important 'precursors' to the economic benefits of career development services. In the second place, measuring the attainment of specific learning outcomes will allow for a much better understanding of the differential impacts of career development interventions with divergent populations (what works, with whom,

under what circumstances). For example, although 18% of the respondents in this study indicated that they specifically target First Nations peoples with their services not much is known about the effectiveness of the services being provided to this population. To effectively deal with this problem, an approach is needed whereby the specific barriers and learning needs of First Nations peoples are identified and paired with appropriate interventions. With this in place, impact assessments can be conducted that provide an indication of the true effects of specific interventions in meeting the needs and challenges faced by First Nations peoples. Such an approach, when broadened to consider the impacts of interventions upon a wide variety of populations (women, other minority cultural and ethnic groups, disabled persons, differing socio-economic groups, etc.), will provide a rich body of evidence attesting to the impacts of career development interventions. It will also allow the career development field to advance the current knowledge base from a simple understanding of the impacts of interventions on employment totals and numbers served to a complex understanding of the differential impacts of interventions on diverse populations.

In addition, impact assessments need to be broadened to include measurement of the long-term impacts and the cost-benefits of career development services. Currently, some barriers exist impeding this type of research (losing contact with clients, lack of funding, perceived complexity, etc); nevertheless, this research needs to be conducted. According to Whiston (2003), "In these days of increasing accountability and the movement toward empirically supported treatment or interventions, researchers must not only show that career counseling is effective, but also that it is cost-effective" (p. 39). This need has also been highlighted by Herr (2003) who argues that, "Concentrating on

the development of cost-benefit analyses can be considered a strategic opportunity in an era of growing expectations of accountability" (p. 16). Whiston (2002) comments:

> The benefits of career counselling have not been clearly identified nor has the field definitively established personal or economic gains that are a result of career counselling. There may be increased interest and support for career counselling interventions if researchers can demonstrate that there are economic benefits to career interventions. (pp. 230-231)

It would also be interesting to understand the degree to which practitioners utilize available evidence to inform their practice. Specifically, it would be beneficial to know whether practitioners base their decisions on "professional judgment" or do whether they base their decisions on more rigorous, objective standards? Although this study did not expressly attempt to determine the criteria agency representatives utilize in their treatment selection, it does not appear that treatment/intervention decisions are being based on scientific criteria. Whiston (2003) points out that practitioners have little involvement in research and are unable to keep up with current trends and research studies. It would be helpful to understand the degree to which career development practitioners access research to inform treatment decisions. It would also be helpful to understand the barriers they encounter when attempting to base their treatment decisions on research findings.

Finally, this present research endeavored to understand the current practice of efficacy measurement concerning career development services in Canada. As such, this research presents a "snap shot" of what is currently happening in Canada. Further research is required to understand the underlying causes that explain the findings in this

research. For example, representatives of K-12 schools and post-secondary institutes indicated that they place less value on conducting efficacy assessments as compared to representatives of other service providers. Since these individuals provide services to a critical population it is vitally important that further research explore the reasons why efficacy assessment is given less value in educational settings. Further research is needed to understand the cause of this phenomenon so that solutions may be implemented to remedy this situation.

Strengths and Limitations of this Study

There were a number of strengths in the way that this study was conducted. A large number of respondents contributed to this study (n=147). The responses were detailed and provided vivid information. In addition, this study benefited from the CRWG who participated in the conceptualization of the research goals and who contributed to the refining of the survey instrument. Because of their involvement the survey was piloted and areas of concern and weakness were addressed before the survey was made available to the survey participants.

Another strength of this study is that many of the respondents were very enthusiastic about their participation in this research. A number of respondents indicated that they were excited that this research was being conducted and conveyed their interest in being given access to the results when they were available. A number of respondents also asked permission to make the survey available to others and the fan-out method that resulted from this enabled a large amount of respondents to participate.

One limitation of this study is that the researcher lacked an extensive background in career development services. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) it is important

the researcher has a lot of knowledge and experience in the field in which she/he is researching. Experience provides a high level of sensitivity to the data analysis. Since the researcher lacked an extensive background in career development services is it is likely that his lack of sensitivity to the data may have contributed to inadequate interpretations.

Another weakness in this study was the ambiguity of the questions concerning evidence. Survey Items 5 and 6 asked respondents to indicate the type of evidence that they utilized to determine outcomes. Some respondents provided descriptions of the tools they utilize whereas other respondents described the type of evidence they obtained. This made it difficult to organize the responses provided by the participants. It would have been helpful to have divided the question into two parts by asking respondents to indicate the type of evidence they gathered as well as the tool they used to gather that evidence. This would have provided a clearer picture as to how agencies are measuring the impacts of their services.

Finally, another weakness of this study concerns the generalizability of the results. In the first place, certain agencies were represented more than other types of agencies. For example, 44.5% of respondents represented not-for-profit agencies, whereas only 1.5% of respondents represented for-profit (private practice) agencies. As well, only 10.2% of respondents represented post-secondary institutions and only 9.5% of respondents represented schools within the K-12 system. For this reason, it is difficult to make definitive conclusions regarding these agency types. Also, it is possible that provincial differences may account for different results. Since this study did not track regional representation it is not known whether the results of this study apply for all of English-speaking Canada or whether a certain province (or provinces) were more

represented than others. If so, the results may be skewed in favor of a certain province or region and may not accurately reflect the state of practice in Canada in general.

Summary

This study was conducted as part of a larger initiative to raise the profile of career development services. As a first step in this endeavor, this study was conducted to determine the state of practice of efficacy assessment concerning career development services in Canada from the perspective of representatives of agencies providing career development services. This study recognized a number of positive and negative issues related to efficacy assessment of career development service in Canada.

On one hand, it is clear that a lot of positive things are happening in the measurement of career development services efficacy. The vast majority of respondents suggested that they perceived measurement and evaluation as being vitally important. In addition, they were able to recognize some of the limiting factors impeding their ability to conduct comprehensive efficacy assessments. Also, it appears that the many agencies are ready to make changes to their current system of measuring and reporting on outcomes. There appears to be a consensus on a number of issues that are germane to addressing some of the gaps and problems that exist currently in the measurement and reporting of outcomes. For example, agency representatives recognized the need to build consensus concerning the legitimate outcomes of career development services. As well, agency representatives recognized the need to conduct broader assessments of efficacy. They recognized the need for better training in efficacy assessment to help them deal with the complexity of measuring a wide range of outcomes. They also recognized the need

for more and better measurement instruments and the need to increase the level of sophistication of the outcomes being measured.

On the other hand, this study also highlighted a number of areas that need to be addressed in order to build a strong case for career development services. It is clear that practitioners require more support to provide them with the knowledge and ability to conduct comprehensive research attesting to the wide range of impacts resulting from the provision of career development services. It is also clear that more emphasis needs to be placed on measuring a broader array of outcomes and on incorporating multiple perspectives when selecting outcomes. Finally, it is apparent that certain sectors providing career development services do not engage in measuring the impacts of their services as much as other sectors. It is important that all those providing career development services recognize the importance of measuring the impacts of their services. These areas need to be addressed to ensure that the field of career development successfully addresses pressing accountability concerns.

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Appendix A

Measuring Career Services Impact: Agency and Service Providers Form

Welcome.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey!

Background

In November of 2003, the Working Connections Symposium on Career Development, Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development was held in Toronto. The Symposium included representatives from practitioners, service providers, employers, academics and policy developers from every province and territory in Canada. One of the clear messages from the Symposium was that people and agencies that provide career development services are under constant pressure to prove that their services have an impact. Unfortunately, we do not have much information about how the results of services are currently being assessed.

As a follow-up to the Symposium, The Canadian Research Working Group for Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development was formed and is launching a study to learn more about how Canadian providers of career services evaluate the impact of their services. Our goal is to better understand the current state of practice in Canada with respect to documenting the results of career interventions and services.

There are two steps to completing the survey:
- First, you will need to fill out the Participant Consent Form (please see next page).
- Once that has been completed, you can proceed directly to the Survey. The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete.

Please return completed forms to:
    Ms. Celine Renald
    The Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)
    119 Ross Ave
    Suite 202
    Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 0N6
    Canada

Participant Consent Form

Measuring the Impact of Career Services: State of Practice

Instructions: Please read the Informed Consent Information below. By signing this form, you indicate that you have read and understand the nature of your participation in this research, and that you voluntarily agree to participate.

- I agree to participate in the research conducted by The Canadian Research Working Group for Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development. The research is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Kris Magnusson of the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge.
- I understand that I have been asked to participate in this research because of the valuable knowledge and experience I have acquired through my involvement in providing career development services.
- I understand that the purpose of the research is to provide researchers with an opportunity to learn more about how Canadian providers of career services evaluate the impact of their services and to help researchers to better understand the current state of practice in Canada with respect to documenting the results of career interventions and services.
- I acknowledge that my participation in this research will consist of completing a survey. I understand that the information I provide will be kept confidential and that my name or agency will not be linked in any way to the responses I provide in the survey. I also understand that the analysis of the data will be included in a report of the research findings, and may be presented for publication in academic journals or at professional conferences. In addition, I understand that the information I provide will also contribute to the research requirements for a Masters degree in Education in Counselling Psychology for Mr. Mark Slomp.
- I am aware that this research is partly funded by a grant from Human Resources and Skill Development Canada, administered through the Canadian Career Development Foundation.
- I understand that there are no known or foreseen risks associated with my participation in this survey.
- I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, and may refuse to participate and/or to answer any of the questions on the survey. In the event that I respond only to select question, I acknowledge that those responses will be used in the study.
- I am confident in the assurances provided by the researchers that the information I share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that anonymity will be assured in the following manner:
    - o Answers I provide will be stored in a data base;
    - o There will be no link between answers to specific questions and demographic information which may identify me or my agency;
    - o Only members of the Canadian Research Working Group will have access to the results. Only the research coordinators at the University of

Lethbridge (Dr. K. Magnusson and Mr. Mark Slomp) will have access to the specific contents of the data base.

- I understand that after data collection has been completed the data will be transferred to files held electronically by the research coordinators (Dr. Magnusson and Mr. Slomp). Upon completion of the data analysis, the files may be retained for a period up to two years, after which they will be destroyed.
- As well, I understand that I may address any concerns about my rights as a research participant by contacting Dr. R. Mrazek, Chair, Human Subjects Research Committee, Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge (edu.masters@uleth.ca; 403 329-2425).
- I am aware that I may make a photocopy of this Informed Consent for my records.
- I understand that if I have any questions about the conduct of the research project, I may contact Mr. Mark Slomp at mark.slomp@uleth.ca or Dr. Kris Magnusson at kris.magnusson@uleth.ca.

I have read the above material and understand the nature of my participation in this research, and I voluntarily agree to participate.

_____   _____
(signature)   (date)

Measuring Career Services Impact: Agency and Service Providers Form

Terms

What evidence do we have that career interventions work? To answer that question, we must first determine what we mean by "what works." In this study, we are particularly interested in learning:
- how your agency determines the impact of your services;
- what results you achieve; and
- how you go about measuring those results.

OUTCOMES

Throughout this survey, we will be using the term "Outcome" to mean a specific result or product of an intervention.

An outcome might be any combination of the following:

Changes in Client Competence: Reflected by changes in client knowledge, skills and/or attributes. Examples of changes in client competence include:
- Knowledge Change, such as
  - Increased information about occupational opportunities; ability to describe local and/or larger labour market conditions; increased understanding of personal interests/abilities; etc.
- Skills change, such as
  - Exploration skills, such as finding labour market information; decision-making skills; job search skills, such as writing effective resumes, effective interview techniques and accessing public and "hidden" job markets; skills for assessing market demands and creating personal niches; etc.
- Attributes change, such as
  - Changes in level of client sense of hope; increased sense of self confidence and/or self-efficacy; increased willingness to engage in career planning behaviours; etc.

Changes in Client Behaviours:
- For example, increased job-seeking behaviours, application to or enrollment in educational/training programs, etc.
- This may also be reflected by client progress through the processes or activities associated with the program or service provided.

Changes in Client Situation:
- For example, employment status, educational status, etc.

Broad Changes for the Client and/or Community:
- Examples may include client financial situation, social inclusion, impact on families, community economic development, etc.

INTERVENTIONS

We will also be using the term "Intervention" in a broad sense. An **intervention** may be thought of as any intentional activity that is implemented in the hopes of fostering client change. Another way to think of an intervention is anything that is done to produce an outcome for the client or target group.

Measuring Career Services Impact:

Agency and Service Providers Form

Instructions:

1. Please answer as many questions as possible. Place a checkmark on the line provided indicating the answer that **best represents** the perspective of the agency or service provider that you represent.
2. Some questions invite you to provide a written response. Please print or write clearly in the answer space provided.
3. When you have completed the survey, please return to:

Ms. Celine Renald
The Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)
119 Ross Ave
Suite 202
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 0N6
Canada

Part I: Context of Services and Agency Profile

1. Kind of Career Services Provided
   1.1. Please indicate how frequently your agency/organization engages in the following kinds of career services:

   1.1.1. Individual career counselling

   _____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

   1.1.2. Group career counselling

   _____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

   1.1.3. Career education programs

   _____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

   1.1.4. Assessment services

   _____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

   1.1.5. Career and labour market information services

   _____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

   1.1.6. Employment Counselling

   _____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

   1.1.7. Job search information and/or resources

   _____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

   1.1.8. Work Development

   _____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

   1.1.9. Other (please specify)

   _____

   _____ Never   _____ Sometimes   _____ Often

2. Target Population
    2.1. Which of the following describes the age group your services are intended to serve? Select as many as are appropriate:

        ____ Students in grade 9 or less

        ____ Students in grades 10 to 12

        ____ Students in post-secondary settings

        ____ Young people (i.e., 19 years old or less) who are not in school settings

        ____ Adults in early to middle age (25 to 45 years old)

        ____ Older adults (i.e., more than 45 years old)

        ____ Other (please specify)

    2.2. Which of the following best describes the target group for your services?
        2.2.1. Gender

        ____ Programs/services specifically designed for women

        ____ Programs/services specifically designed for men

        ____ Programs/services open to women and men

        2.2.2 Citizenship/culture

        ____ Programs/services designed with no specific cultural or ethnic group in mind

        ____ Programs/services designed for recent immigrants

        ____ Programs/services designed for First Nations people

        ____ Programs/services designed for other specific cultural groups (please specify)

        2.2.3. Employment Status

        ____ Programs/services designed for unemployed individuals

        ____ Programs/services designed for social allowance recipients

        ____ Programs/services designed for people in educational settings

        ____ Programs/services designed for people employed in specific work settings

        ____ Programs/services designed for any member of the community regardless of employment status

        ____ Other (please specify) _____

        2.2.4. Special Needs

        ____ Programs/services designed for individuals with special needs (please specify). _____

3. Kind and size of agency/organization/service provider
   3.1 Please indicate which of the following best describes your agency, organization or service:

   ____ Federal government agency

   ____ Provincial government agency (non-school)

   ____ School within the K-12 system

   ____ Post-secondary institute (college, technical institute or university)

   ____ Career services or human resource unit within a larger company/organization providing services for the benefit of employees

   ____ Not-for-profit agency

   ____ Private (for-profit) career services provider

   ____ Private practice/consultancy (self-employed)

   3.2. How many people in your agency/organization/service provision unit are responsible for providing career services?

   ____ 10 or more career development service providers

   ____ More than 5 but less than 10 career development service providers

   ____ 2 to 5 career development service providers

   ____ One-person

Part II: Outcomes of Your Services

4. Importance and practice of outcome measurement:
   4.1. How important is it to measure the outcomes/impact of career services?

   ____Not at all Important   ____ Somewhat Important   ____ Very Important

   4.2. Does your agency/organization report on the outcomes/impact of its services?

   ____Yes   ____No

(If you answered "No," please proceed to item #6)
(If you answered "Yes," please proceed to item #5)

5. Please list up to 3 of the most important outcomes that you report. For each outcome, please describe how the outcome is being measured (e.g., what evidence do you have/collect that each outcome is being achieved).

Outcome #1:

_____

_____

How Outcome #1 is measured (specific evidence):

_____

_____

_____

Outcome #2:

_____

_____

How Outcome #2 is measured (specific evidence):

_____

_____

_____

Outcome #3:

_____

_____

How Outcome #3 is measured (specific evidence):

_____

_____

_____

Additional comments?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What outcomes do you believe that you are achieving that you are either not required to report or that you are not directly measuring? Please list up to 3 of the most important "unreported" outcomes. For each outcome, please describe how you know that each outcome is being achieved (e.g., what evidence you have).

Unreported Outcome #1:

_____

_____

    Evidence that unreported Outcome #1 is being achieved:

_____

_____

_____

Unreported Outcome #2:

_____

_____

    Evidence that unreported Outcome #2 is being achieved:

_____

_____

_____

Unreported Outcome #3:

_____

_____

    Evidence that unreported Outcome #3 is being achieved:

_____

_____

_____

Additional comments?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What difficulties do you face when trying to collect evidence and/or measure the impact of your services?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Services and interventions often produce outcomes that are hard to measure, and funding agencies may seem to value (and therefore require reporting on) some kinds of outcomes over others. What things would you like to report on if you could?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. How could the value/impact of your services be better measured?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. What other comments would you like to make about the issue of measuring the impact of career services?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Part III: Follow-up

Thank you for participating in this survey. The results will help to strengthen the arguments for providing career development services in Canada.

There are others ways that you can help as well. We would like to conduct follow-up interviews after we have done a preliminary analysis of the data. Please indicate below if you would like to participate in a follow-up interview.

We would also like to begin to assemble a collection of tools, instruments, questionnaires, strategies or procedures that people have found to be useful in documenting and/or measuring the impact of their services. If you have something you would like to contribute to this, please indicate below.

Please note that information you provide on this page is kept completely separate from the answers you provided to the survey. We will have no way of linking individual offers for further interview participation or exemplars of outcome measurement to the specific results of the survey.

_____ Yes, I would be interested in participating in a follow-up interview.

Name:
_____

E-mail:
_____

Phone:
_____

_____ Yes, I would like to submit a tool, instrument, questionnaire or strategy that we have found effective for documenting and/or measuring the impact of our services. You may contact me at:

Name:
_____

E-mail:
_____

Phone:
_____

If you prefer, you may contact the researchers directly to express your interest in either submitting an exemplar or being involved in further interviews. Please contact:

Mr. Mark Slomp   mark.slomp@uleth.ca   OR
Dr. Kris Magnusson   kris.magnusson@uleth.ca
Thank you!

Appendix B

Participant Consent Form

Measuring the Impact of Career Services: State of Practice

Instructions: Please read the Informed Consent Information below. By signing this form, you indicate that you have read and understand the nature of your participation in this research, and that you voluntarily agree to participate.

- I agree to participate in the research conducted by The Canadian Research Working Group for Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development. The research is being conducted under the direction of Dr. Kris Magnusson of the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge.
- I understand that I have been asked to participate in this research because of the valuable knowledge and experience I have acquired through my involvement in providing career development services.
- I understand that the purpose of the research is to provide researchers with an opportunity to learn more about how Canadian providers of career services evaluate the impact of their services and to help researchers to better understand the current state of practice in Canada with respect to documenting the results of career interventions and services.
- I acknowledge that my participation in this research will consist of completing a survey. I understand that the information I provide will be kept confidential and that my name or agency will not be linked in any way to the responses I provide in the survey. I also understand that the analysis of the data will be included in a report of the research findings, and may be presented for publication in academic journals or at professional conferences. In addition, I understand that the information I provide will also contribute to the research requirements for a Masters degree in Education in Counselling Psychology for Mr. Mark Slomp.
- I am aware that this research is partly funded by a grant from Human Resources and Skill Development Canada, administered through the Canadian Career Development Foundation.
- I understand that there are no known or foreseen risks associated with my participation in this survey.
- I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, and may refuse to participate and/or to answer any of the questions on the survey. In the event that I respond only to select question, I acknowledge that those responses will be used in the study.
- I am confident in the assurances provided by the researchers that the information I share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that anonymity will be assured in the following manner:
    o Answers I provide will be stored in a data base;
    o There will be no link between answers to specific questions and demographic information which may identify me or my agency;

- o Only members of the Canadian Research Working Group will have access to the results. Only the research coordinators at the University of Lethbridge (Dr. K. Magnusson and Mr. Mark Slomp) will have access to the specific contents of the data base.
- I understand that after data collection has been completed the data will be transferred to files held electronically by the research coordinators (Dr. Magnusson and Mr. Slomp). Upon completion of the data analysis, the files may be retained for a period up to two years, after which they will be destroyed.
- As well, I understand that I may address any concerns about my rights as a research participant by contacting Dr. R. Mrazek, Chair, Human Subjects Research Committee, Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge (edu.masters@uleth.ca; 403 329-2425).
- I am aware that I may make a photocopy of this Informed Consent for my records.
- I understand that if I have any questions about the conduct of the research project, I may contact Mr. Mark Slomp at mark.slomp@uleth.ca or Dr. Kris Magnusson at kris.magnusson@uleth.ca.

I have read the above material and understand the nature of my participation in this research, and I voluntarily agree to participate.

_____   _____
             (signature)   (date)