

Innovation in education: from diploma to career perspective

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Career guidance and teachers' professionalisation of for better career development

Introduction

While changes in the labour market are clearly identified globally, the implications of these changes for education are not as clear. Career paths are more unpredictable nowadays than thirty years ago (Arthur et al., 2005; Pryor and Bright, 2011). Globalisation and rapidly changing technology have resulted in changes in work and required qualifications. Graduating in vocational and other tertiary education is no longer sufficient for lifelong employment. Workers' employability requires them to continue learning during their entire life.

The changing demands of the labour market are reflected in job descriptions. Thirty years ago, 100 per cent of the job advertisements for positions at higher education level in the Netherlands clearly noted what the required education was, 50 per cent described the necessary work experience and 20 per cent outlined the preferred interest for the job (Kuijpers, 2007). Nowadays, all vacancy descriptions contain general competencies, half of which relate to employability and personal development in terms of flexibility, learning ability and reflective and pro-active behaviour. Even for jobs in non-profit organisations, qualities such as passion, ambition and self-development are listed under the requirements (Kuijpers, 2007). In order to deal with the effects of the changing demands on the labour market and emergence of an unpredictable career individuals are expected to develop their own careers.

Schools are increasingly acknowledging that they have a strong responsibility to guide students not only in their academic growth, but also in their career development (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005). Even on the national level the importance of career development of students is emphasised. Nowadays in the Netherlands, career guidance is an element of the curriculum in vocational education (Ministry of Education, 2010). To support career guidance in education, teachers need to develop new competencies.

However, until now, little research is available regarding teachers' training in career guidance to prepare students for work in a complex and dynamic labour market. Available literature focuses on teachers trained in so-called 'trait-and-factor approaches' (Watts & Sultana, 2004). Studies show that the effects of this type of training is generally limited (McCarthy, 2004; Oomen et al., 2012). Research by Winters et al (2009, 2012, 2013), however, has shown that when career teachers develop a dialogical style, talking *with* students, instead of a mono-logical style talking *to* students,, students respond with more reflexive answers. It is for this reason that a professionalisation programme for teachers was developed in cooperation with career guidance experts, aiming to help them to conduct a career dialogue with their students. The development of the programme was accompanied by research. This chapter analyses the necessary changes in career guidance and implications for teacher training from different perspectives. Changing perspectives on career development and implications for guidance will be explained.

The current method

In the Netherlands, as well as in other Western nations, career guidance in education is primarily based on the trait-and-factor approach (European Commission & OECD, 2004; Sultana, 2004; Irving & Malik, 2005). This approach in which the concepts such as 'informed choice' and 'decision making' are key aspects, has a huge influence on career guidance in education. A good career choice is assumed to be made when the capacities of a potential employee match with the required knowledge and skills of the vocation in question. Therefore, counsellors and teachers are expected to provide students with reliable information about their capacities and about demands of a particular profession or job, and students are expected to make rational career choices. However, to make sound rational career choices, four conditions need to be satisfied (Rees & Bartlett, 1999; Watts & Fretwell, 2004; OECD, 2004; RWI, 2008). One must:

- know the alternatives of choices
- study the consequences of different choices
- use a strategy to weigh pre and cons
- have a goal in mind

These conditions are difficult to meet in a complex and dynamic society. From 1975 to 2005 the number of professions were cut by more than half, but the number of job titles were twentyfold (CBS, 1993; CBS, 2012). This means that the alternatives of choices are too many to be aware of. Moreover, nowadays, work itself changes because technology quickly becomes out-dated and the demands from the market change rapidly. Work and therefore one's career path becomes more and more unpredictable (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005) and it is increasingly difficult to make rational and information-based career choices (Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999; Guindon & Hanna, 2002). It is impossible to provide full or accurate information about the individual and/or the labour market. Combined with the insight that young people are not yet capable of making conscious and informed choices (Krieshok, Black & McKay, 2009; Blakemore, Burnett & Dahl, 2010), this makes career guidance and counselling in the traditional sense more and more obsolete (Hughes & Karp, 2004; Richard, 2005). In vocational education, this is demonstrated by the number of 'wrong' choices that are made at every stage of the career choice process. Between pre- and secondary vocational education, many students choose a direction that has nothing to do with their pre-vocational education. Steenaert & Boessenkool (2003) conclude that students choose their studies (i.e. topic or direction) without having a clear idea of what the actual content of that choice is, nor a clear perspective of future employment.

Research on career development of students

The research of Van Esch and Neuvel (2007) shows that at least 25 per cent of the students make a rather unmotivated and random choice with regards to secondary vocational education. Schools should not give more information to students in order to make an informed decision (which is in most cases not informed at all; see Van Esch & Neuvel, 2007), but should help students to develop their career. Recent international research shows that good-quality guidance is missing in schools; students make career choices under pressure without having an understanding of the meaning of these choices for their career and without developing career competencies (Lewin & Colley, 2011). The outcomes of the different studies mentioned were an incentive for policy makers to focus on career guidance in vocational education.

In 2006 and 2009, two large-scale research projects were undertaken in the Netherlands in order to find out under which conditions students between the ages of 12 and 24 were best able to develop the career competencies (i.e. career management skills) needed for today's labour market. (Kuijpers, Meijers, & Gundy, 2011; Kuijpers & Meijers, 2012). Current forms of career guidance, such as personal development plans (PDP's) and portfolios and more traditional ones such as conversations with the guidance counsellor and tests, did not noticeably encourage students to develop career competencies. The main reason for this was the absence of a dialogue about the content of personal development plans and portfolios. Both teachers and students focused on the formal requirements of PDP's and portfolios resulting in a strictly instrumental use (see also Mittendorff, Den Brok, & Beijaard, 2010; Winters et al., 2013). Although a career dialogue stimulates the development of career competencies in student, the majority of career counsellors working in Dutch education have little or no training in career guidance (Luken, 2009; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2002). Teachers find it quite difficult to provide career guidance and more specifically, have difficulty conducting career conversations with students (Kuijpers, 2011; Kuijpers & Meijers, in press).

(Inter)national policy on career guidance

An international comparison of career guidance in 37 countries shows that career guidance is more often integrated in policy in European countries than ever before (OECD, 2004). In European policy, the emphasis is on acquiring career management skills (Euroguidance, 2012). Also, in the Netherlands, national policy focuses on career guidance (Onderwijsraad, 2007; RWI, 2008; SER, 2007; VO-raad, 2009). The policies on career guidance in the Netherlands are described by Hughes, Meijers and Kuijpers (2014). According to this policy, teachers in the Netherlands have had the important assignment to provide students' career guidance on an ongoing basis. The Dutch national council of secondary vocational education integrated career competencies in the qualification requirements of secondary vocational education (MBO Raad 2010). Following recommendations based on research (Kuijpers, Meijers, & Gundy, 2011; Meijers, Kuijpers, & Gundy, 2013), the ministry decided that career competencies will be part of the exam programme for pre-vocational training in 2016. This requires an alternative approach to career guidance in schools.

The alternative approach

Especially because careers are less predictable or even 'chaotic' (Pryor & Bright, 2011), career guidance nowadays should be less focused on 'making the right choice' but more on developing career competencies. Kuijpers and Scheerens (2006) and Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens (2006) identify five distinctive career competencies:

- *Reflection on qualities*: observation of capabilities that are important for one's career;
- *Reflection on motives*: observation of wishes and values that are important for one's own career;
- *Work exploration*: investigating work and job possibilities;
- *Career control*: making thoughtful decisions and taking actions that allow work and learning to correspond with one's capabilities and motive and challenges at work;
- *Networking*: building and maintaining contacts focused on career development.

Large-scale studies with over 10,000 students of Dutch pre-vocational, secondary and higher vocational education (Kuijpers, Meijers & Gundy, 2011; Kuijpers & Meijers, 2012) show that these career competencies are used and developed in a learning environment that stimulates real-life experiences with work and a dialogue about these experiences. Even when personality traits of

students and their different educational programs were taken into account, the characteristics of the learning environment showed to be most influential related to the degree and the kind of career competencies used by students. In particular, the dialogue about career choices in schools and the conversation students have in the workplace proved to be crucial for applying career competencies and developing a career identity. Pizzolato's statements (2007), that dialogue about career options is needed to (re)formulate dreams and goals regarding a career, correspond with these findings.

Professionalising teachers in career guidance: a training programme

In the process of developing career competencies, teachers play a supporting role: they do not offer explanations or solutions, but they help students to articulate their experiences so that the underlying perspectives related to those experiences become apparent (Savickas, 2011). That means that in the conversation with students, teachers must not only make room for discussing actual experiences but also make room for the emotions of the students. Career guidance conversations with students require new routines by teachers. Instead of talking *to* students about their grades, telling them what they are not so good at and what they need to learn (i.e. traditional feedback), teachers need to talk *with* students about what is meaningful to them, what they want to learn and how they connect their learning in school to their future plans; i.e. providing feedforward (Kuijpers et al, 2011). Teachers need to develop new competencies to change their routines.

In 2010, the Dutch platform of pre-vocational education was established and the Ministry of Education financed a training programme for pre-vocational education teachers to promote the quality of career guidance. Teams of teachers from 25 different pre-vocational education schools were trained in career guidance conversation (Kuijpers, 2011). Inspired by the results of this programme, the programme called *Career guidance in secondary vocational education* adopted the training programme that was developed for pre-vocational education in 2012, to stimulate career guidance in secondary vocational education, again funded by the Ministry of Education. In the programme, teams of teachers of 34 schools were trained to be able to conduct career conversations.

The professionalisation project

A training programme for teachers was developed in 2010 and implemented between 2010 and 2011 in pre-vocational education, and between 2012 and 2014 in secondary vocational education (table 1). The professionalisation project was set up as a two-phased and layered training. The two phases consisted of an off-the-job and an on-the-job section. In the off-the-job section (which took two to three days with periods of two to four weeks in between), the emphasis was on explaining the theory and applying the theory in practice in career conversations in a safe environment. In the on-the-job phase, the emphasis was on the translation of the training to the school environment. For the dissemination and anchoring of this knowledge within the organisation, a two-layered construction was used. National experts trained two teachers from each participating school ("school coaches") in a four-day training program, so that these school coaches could in turn coach teams in their own schools during the in-school training. The school coaches became the designated experts who would later coach other teacher teams in their own schools. After the four-day training of the school coaches, the complete teacher team was trained for two days, off-the-job, in which the school coaches of that team had a supporting role. Before the actual course, if desired, teachers were given training in basic conversation techniques. After being trained off-the-job, all teachers in the team did a four-session,

in-school training programme (two individual and two team sessions) with their school coaches using video-recorded guidance conversations as a starting point for learning. Recordings of the conversations were taken by the teachers themselves. National trainers worked with both the school coaches and the teacher teams off-the-job and they also supported the part of the training that took place at the schools. After the on-the-job portion, a fifth training day for school coaches took place in which the aim was to anchor and disseminate the knowledge and insights acquired during the training.

Table 1. Professionalisation project

	School coaches trained by trainer	Teacherstrained by trainer	Teachers coached by school coach School coaches supported by trainer
<i>Off the job</i>	2 days career guidance 2 days train-the-trainer		
		1 day conversation techniques	
		2 days career guidance	During 2 days training
<i>On the job</i>			2x intervision
			2x individual coaching
<i>Off the job</i>	1 day on anchoring and dissemination of career guidance in the organisation		

Teachers were trained partly through role-playing activities and partly by analysing recorded career conversations they had had with their own students. They were also provided with recent theoretical insights about career dialogues. They needed to start the conversation with a meaningful experience, ask students to tell a small story about this experience and assign personal meaning to it. Teachers were taught to use the stories to identify students' qualities and motivation by asking them specific questions, and to encourage students to take action on the matter of work exploration, career control or networking based on the insight the student gained from the conversation. A lot of attention was paid to effective components of the conversation: teachers were taught to give appreciative feedback (i.e. to engage with the emotions of students instead of ignoring these) and to explicitly express particular qualities they felt they had identified in students. The content of the training programme was based on career competencies (Kuijpers et al 2006; Kuijpers, 2011).

The results of the professionalisation project

The training program proved to be effective in improving guidance conversations from a student perspective (Kuijpers, 2011; Kuijpers & Meijers, in press). For the quantitative part of the study, a quasi-experimental research design was used to measure effects among 3052 students, by comparing results of an experimental and a control group before and after the project. Video-recordings of 73 conversations of participating teachers before as well as after the project, were used for qualitative research. An important conclusion of this study was that a two-day, off-the-job training program for teachers was insufficient to achieve significant changes in guidance conversations measured at a

student level. However, off-the-job training combined with individual coaching of the teachers and team coaching on-the-job, proved to be effective in improving guidance conversations from a student perspective. An actual improvement requires teachers' guidance in applying the off-the-job training in their context. Not only the quantitative study showed changes in guidance conversations after the training program as reported by student, but changes were also seen in the recordings of conversations. In other words, teachers asked more career-oriented questions and students gave more career-oriented answers.

Despite the positive effects of the training and the fact that many teachers require training in career conversations, it is not easy to motivate teachers to participate in such programmes. A need for professionalisation is not self-evident to teachers (Van Driel, 2008; Mc Kinsey&Company, 2012). They often prefer short off-the-job training courses to learn how to work with specific instruments. The training described by Kuijpers (2011) and Kuijpers and Meijers (in press) is not only more time consuming (a combination of off-the-job and on-the-job training), it also contributes to change one's professional identity. Developing personality traits and qualities (i.e. identity) only takes place when the learning content is meaningful to the learners. That is something quite different than content being considered 'necessary' (see Hensel, 2010). Teachers are inclined to find content more meaningful when the content is the result of a dialogue in which they participate actively. They have to co-create their own training programmes (Winters et al, 2012; Van Veen, Zwart, Meirink & Verloop, 2010). This happened in the on-the-job part of the project, in teams (collective learning) with support of their managers (Lodders, 2012).

Implementation in schools

Although, the results of the study on professionalising teachers in career guidance are positive, a career learning environment is more than a career related dialogue. It is a cultural change within schools, from a set curriculum that is the same for all students at a certain age, to a personalised curriculum where students can discover, develop and demonstrate their talents and motives during the learning process within or outside the school. Aspects of career development and a career learning environment that can be distinguished based on research results on career guidance and innovation in education are illustrated in Figure 1.

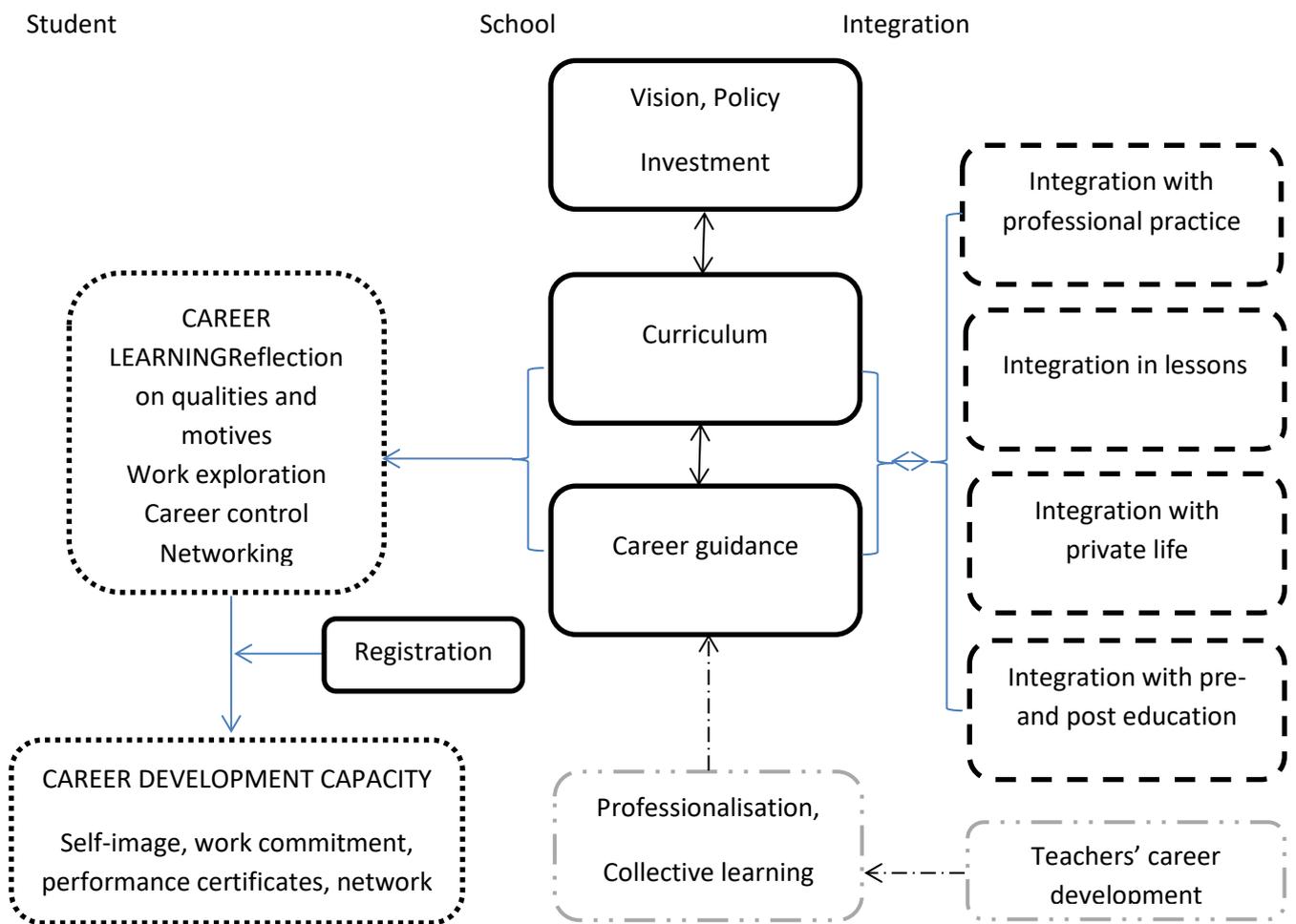


Figure 1. Aspects of career development and learning environment

To promote students' capacity to develop their career, career competencies need to be addressed, and the progress of the students in their career-development need to be recorded and discussed (Mittendorff at all, 2010). A career-related learning environment of career guidance and a career related curriculum – that is practice and inquiry based - is essential for career learning. Career learning is a continuous and cyclic process where students' experiences are used to reflect on and the outcome of this reflection forms the base for the choice of a new step (new experience) in career learning (Kuijpers, Meijers & Gundy, 2011; Kuijpers & Meijers, 2012). We saw that new routines of teachers in guidance cause a need for professionalisation. For innovation at the school or team-level, collective learning is more effective than individual learning (Lodders, 2012). Also, management support proved to be essential (Truijen, 2012). To redesign the curriculum, there needs to be a clear and collective vision, a policy on strategical level and an investment plan for implementation and teachers' professionalisation. Not only career teachers but all actors in career development should be included to really imbed the vision in the school. This means all teachers, also those who are not career counsellors, should play their role. Moreover, supervisors in professional organisations and parents should be involved (Lusse, 2013) and the curriculum and guidance must connect with the education of students (Kuijpers, 2009).

To promote a cultural shift in the school towards career learning, it is not only important to focus on the dialogue between teacher and student, but also to stimulate teachers to professionalise themselves in a career-related way. Therefore, the dialogue between teacher and manager should be career-oriented as well as organisation-oriented. The dialogue should be about space and direction at the individual and organisational level. Space for professionalisation at school level means facilitating learning in time, money and support (Nikolova, Ruysseveldt, de Witte & Syoit, 2014). Space at teachers' level includes the generation of learning effort and learning opportunities for teachers to organise their own professionalisation (Kessels, 2012).

Employees are continuously challenged to be employable, to adapt to the changing demands of their work, to be flexible and innovative in their organisation (Van Dam, Van der Heijden & Schijns, 2006). This is also valid for teachers: changes in the teaching profession do not only force teachers to (re)consider their career choices, they also need to manage their own careers (Kidd, 2006) to keep being employed and to have work in a job where they can use their talents and motives. As a result, the direction at school level is based on organisational goals; on teachers' level, it is based on career goals and career competencies. Space and direction in professionalisation is illustrated in Table 2. The dialogue between manager and teachers should be about all four quadrants of the table to stimulate innovations as creating a career learning environment. Research shows that when managers offer more learning opportunities (space) and set more challenging goals (direction), the relationship between the manager and teacher improves and learning activities by teachers increase (Bezuijen et al., 2010).

Table 2: Aspects of dialogue on professionalizing employees

	Organisational level	Individual employee level
<i>Space</i>	Time, money, support	Learning effort and opportunities to organise own professionalization
<i>Direction</i>	Organisational goals	Career goals and –competencies

A new perspective

Career-development requires a new perspective on education. The focus will be on making learning possible (instead of educating), effective and interesting, with emphasis on what students and teachers are capable of, and on what they want to learn instead of what they must learn. Instead of telling them what to do, students and teachers will be challenged to make their own decisions, find answers to questions and solve problems supported by their career coach or manager. Opportunities for challenging experiences will be created, and supported through reflection and career actions. Moreover, it is a system-approach in which parents, peers, practice supervisors and all teachers are involved, and in which teachers' education also pays attention to career guidance in their training. To make this or even a part of this possible, policy and evaluation of education should move from focus on the quantity of figures to the quality of personal growth so that as many people as possible can work according to their motivations and talents.

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