

# Career Counseling and Services: A Cognitive Information Processing Approach

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# Chapter 14

## Accountability and Evaluation in Career Services

# Overview

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- Need for accountability
- Defining career development
- Effects of career interventions
- Assumptions and propositions
- Five components of effectiveness
- Determination of costs
- Requirements to implement a CIP approach
- Implications

# Need for Accountability

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- Accountability
  - establishing responsibility for certain outcomes, given a set of human and non-human resources
  - long standing trend demanding accountability in public education and human services programs
  - essential element of professional practice in career services

# Accountability

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- Progress has been slow in linking inputs to outputs
- Demonstrating accountability critical aspect of successfully competing for funds
- Few useful accountability and evaluation models

# Accountability

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- Accountability models hampered by the absence of conceptual and operational constructs that define outputs of career service interventions, i.e.,
  - How do career services change the lives of clients?

# Defining Career Development

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- Variety of definitions exist
  - on-going process that occurs over the life span; includes home, school, and community experiences (Pietrofesa & Splete)
  - self-development over the life span through the integration of the roles, settings, and events of a person's life (Gysbers & Moore)

# Defining Career Development

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- Total constellation of economic, sociological, psychological, educational, physical, and chance factors that combine to shape one's career (Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, & Peterson; Sears)
- Implementing a series of integrated career decisions over the life span (Peterson, Sampson, Reardon, & Lenz)



# Defining Career Development

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- Analyzing career services counselors' roles
  - developing and clarifying self-concepts
  - relating occupational information to self-information
  - teaching decision-making skills
  - providing opportunities for occupational reality testing
  - assisting individuals in educational and occupational placement

# Defining Career Development

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- Outcomes of career development services, key question:
  - Does a career development program meet the needs of students (or some other target population) at a manageable cost?

# Defining Career Development

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- Sample outcome criteria
  - increased use of community resources
  - decreased dropout and absenteeism from school
  - increased involvement of parents and teachers
  - increased work-related experiences
  - increased use of counseling services

# Defining Career Development Outputs

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- National Career Development Guidelines (Kobylarz, 1996)
- 3 key skills areas
  - 1) self-knowledge
  - 2) educational and occupational exploration
  - 3) career planning

# Defining Career Development Outputs

- Initiative of the National Career Development Association (NCDA); Policy Statement of the NCDA Board of Directors
  - definitions of career development terms
  - philosophical statement on work in the United States
  - policy directives on career interventions for various age groups
- Helps standardize and clarify the nature & purposes of career programs

# CIP Approach to Accountability

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- Assessing client changes
  - primary effects
    - development of new cognitive capabilities
  - secondary effects
    - manner in which new capacities are applied to career and life-style decisions

# Effects of Career Interventions

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- Group or class interventions more effective than individual counseling
- Oliver & Spokane--career classes have greatest impact on client gains, but are most expensive
- Individual & structured group interventions are most cost-effective

# Effects of Career Interventions

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- Career courses for credit increased
  - career decidedness
  - career maturity
- Long term effects of career courses not established
- Study by Whiston, Sexton & Lasoff
  - career classes followed individual & group counseling in effectiveness



# Effects of Career Interventions

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- Brown & Krane--**effective** career interventions have 5 common elements:
  - 1 allow clients to clarify career & life goals in writing
  - 2 provide clients with individualized interpretations & feedback, e.g., test results
  - 3 provide current information on risks & rewards of selected occupations
  - 4 include study of models & mentors
  - 5 assist in developing support networks for pursuing career aspirations

# Assumptions and Propositions

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- 1 fundamental set of cognitive abilities and knowledges that undergird effective career problem solving & decision making
- 2 career development intervention is a learning event
- 3 causal linkage between acquisition of career problem solving & decision-making skills and career/life adjustment

# Assumptions and Propositions

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- 4 Cost for delivery of a career intervention determined by
  - accounting for all resources required to administer an intervention
  - to a cohort group of clients with a common career problem
  - to achieve a desired level of proficiency in terms of the CIP pyramid

# Assumptions and Propositions

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- **Career services program** is composed of an integrated set of career service interventions, (e.g., organization unit with mission, goals, and budget)

# Accountability System

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- Means documenting the results of career service interventions in measurable terms and accounting for the resources invested in them

# Five Components of Effectiveness

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1. **diagnosis** of client needs
2. **prescription** of activities to address needs
3. documenting plans & activities that describe the **intervention process**
4. **outputs** or primary effects of the intervention
5. **outcomes** or effects of the primary changes

# Diagnosis

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- Gaps between existing levels & desired levels of knowledge & skill
- Analysis of client needs to identify skills and knowledge needed
- Assessment techniques to determine entry-level knowledge & skill performances
- Statement of desired level of attainment by the group

# Prescription

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- Development of a plan to meet client's diagnosed needs, e.g., knowledge and skill gaps
- Objective of career service interventions-- development of specified skills and knowledge areas
- Can use task analysis to develop set of learning activities



# Process

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- Series of activities (planned & unplanned) performed by client and the counselor to bring about change in skill and knowledge gaps
- Involves collecting data to indicate that progress has been made

# Outputs

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- New skills and knowledge acquired by the client
- Primary client changes resulting from career service interventions
- Also known as performance indicators
- Variety of tools available to assess changes in outputs

# Outcomes

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- Effects resulting from new cognitive or perceptual capacities, e.g.,
  - more focused plan for career exploration
  - reduced fear of failure
  - successful job placement
  - greater job satisfaction
  - increased performance in school or work

# Outcomes

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- Measuring outcomes may involve a published instrument or a homemade form that relates directly to the intervention objectives; may include open-ended questions that provide qualitative information

# Determination of Costs

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- Can be a complex task
- Determining cost effectiveness may be critical for program survival
- Costs can be approximated by summing cost components for personnel, materials and supplies, and overhead
- Takes into account diagnostic procedures, prescription activities, and process, output, and outcome costs

# Cost-Effectiveness

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- Relating costs for career service interventions to outputs (gain in knowledge & skills)
- Comparing output/cost ratios of various career interventions to determine which are more effective or more efficient

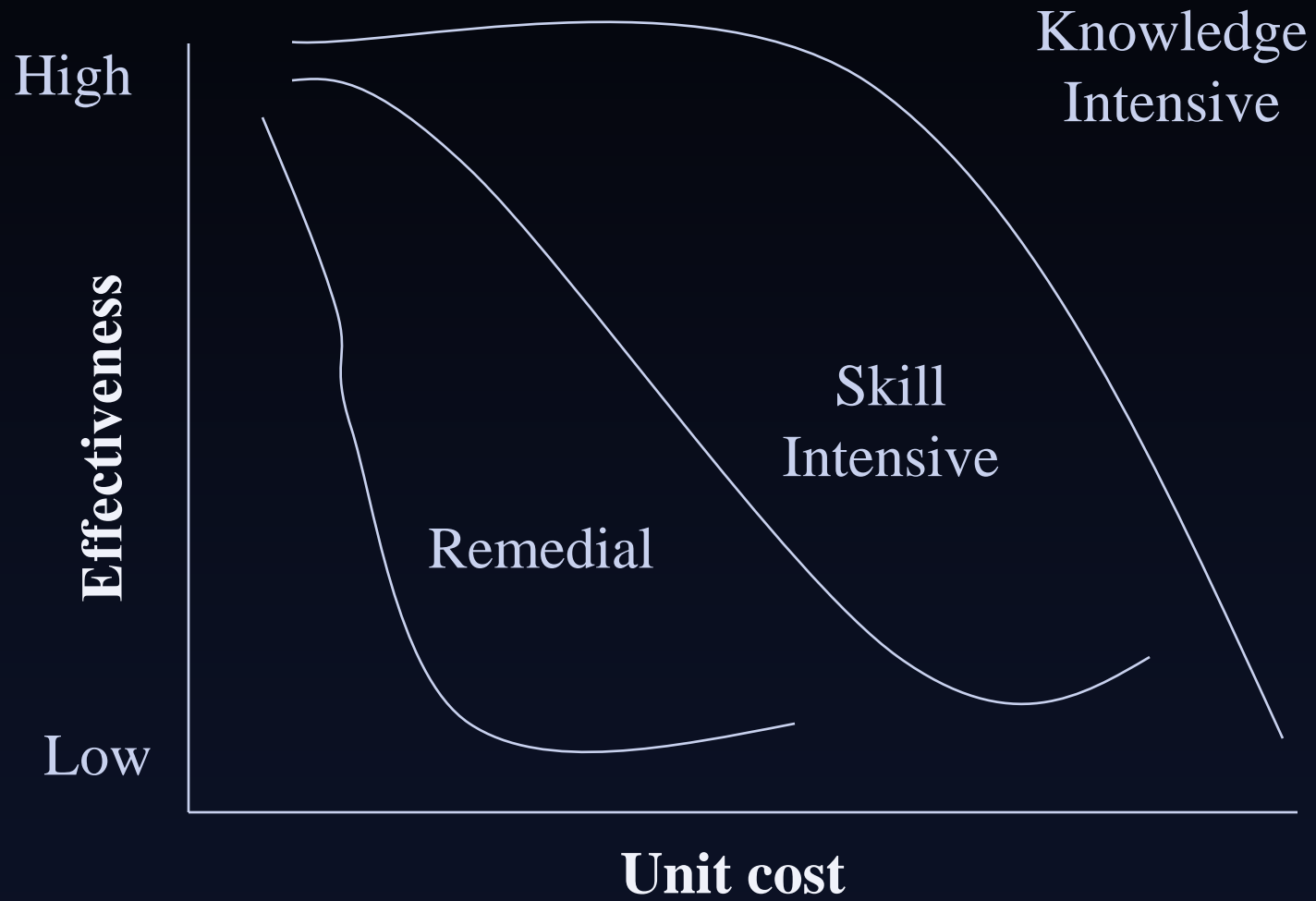


Figure 14.2

Relationship between effectiveness and unit cost in human services programs

# Requirements to Implement a CIP Approach

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- Knowledge of skills and content domains that underlie rational career decision making processes
- Knowledge of conditions that bring about the development of knowledge and skills in clients
- Valid & sensitive measures to detect subtle changes resulting from career service interventions
- Knowledge of program planning and budgeting to document resources invested



# Requirements to Implement a CIP Approach

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- Counselors must become familiar with:
  - research findings in cognitive & developmental psychology
  - methods of measuring changes in cognition & perception
  - human services program management

# Implications

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- Accountability model draws distinction between **outputs** and **outcomes**
- Counselors may be held accountable for knowledge and skills that client acquires (outputs or direct changes) versus how changes are implemented in daily living (outcomes)

# Implications

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- Requires a rethinking of career services
- Focus is not just on immediate client gains (e.g., acquisition of career information, job search & interview skills) but also on the acquisition of long-term career problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Counselors can meet accountability requirements by demonstrating that clients have acquired new problem-solving capabilities (outputs) and can apply them to their daily lives (outcomes)

# Summary

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- Focus on defining accountability and career development in operational form--tying resources to results
- Distinguishing between **outputs** of career services interventions and their **outcomes**
- 5 component effectiveness model and a basic cost model
- Method for determining costs for a career service intervention based on CIP
- Requirements to implement an accountability approach; Implications of this approach

# Getting the Most Benefit from Reading

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- Examine the budget of a career development service.
- Describe the outputs and outcomes for a group of individuals with common career problems.
- Develop an evaluation strategy to document effectiveness and costs.
- Examine an internal evaluation report for an established career services program.

# For Additional Information

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[www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/](http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/)

Thank You

