

finding the best next thing to do

Most development in careers-work is made a step at a time. This means looking at what is already in place, and thinking about what might be done to improve things. An effective careers coordinator then needs a way to sift through new ideas for action.

- a. what is already established and working well?
- b. what, among what is established, needs more attention?
- c. what, although it would be a new departure, seems like a good prospect now?
- d. what, however good an idea, is not a realistic prospect for us, now?

And so, for reasons you can explain, work in 'a' and 'd' will get no more attention - not now anyway: because it is as good as you are in a position to get it; or because it would require too much new investment. Better to work on what can be done and can have a sustainable impact.

On the other hand, action described in 'b' and 'c' may be where you will find real opportunities for further development: that might mean improving something that is already there; or it might mean putting some new provision in place. The best next thing to do is what will offer a good return on the investment of resources and energy.

making sense of your programme

The chart on the following page provides a framework to help you with this thinking.

It shows:

- seven settings for programme development - numbered from, the bottom, 1-7;
- three levels of development - numbered from the left, .1 to .3.

Twenty-one areas for describing your programme - and of improving it. You can use the chart by colour-coding each box to indicate...

- green** well established - this is in position and good;
- amber** need more work - this is in position but not good;
- red** good prospect - we are ready and willing to act on this now;
- blue** not a prospect - this is out of reach in any foreseeable future.

It will help you also to write, in the spaces in the boxes, key words which indicate why you code this area in this way. Remember you are doing this not for how the school- or college-as-a-whole works, but for how - specifically - the careers-work programme works.

It will give your programme its distinctive pattern. It will be unlike other schools' or colleges' - providing its own basis for further development

careers work in schools and colleges

<p>COMMUNITY-LINKED 7 WORK</p>	<p>customer – we help families, employers, etc. - with what they seek</p> <p>7.1</p>	<p>resource – they help us - with an experience base</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>partner – they influence us, e.g. through consultancy</p> <p>7.3</p>
<p>INTEGRATED 6 CURRICULUM WORK</p>	<p>'friends' in mainstream curriculum - informally supporting us</p> <p>6.1</p>	<p>partners in the mainstream - taking formal responsibilities</p> <p>6.2</p>	<p>inter-departmental agreements – with HoDs & senior management</p> <p>6.3</p>
<p>PSHE & 5 CITIZENSHIP</p>	<p>modular 'carousel' - in a collection of topics</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p>tutor-group work - on a week-on-week sustained basis</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p>comprehensive life-role-related programme - linking across-the-board</p> <p>5.3</p>
<p>SPECIALIST 4 CAREERS EDUCATION</p>	<p>basic programme - e.g. 'how to find suitable opportunities and apply'</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p>participative learning - students try out & adapt their learning</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>experiential learning - students respond to & influence the learning</p> <p>4.3</p>
<p>REPORTING, 3 RECORDING & PROGRESS-FILE WORK</p>	<p>standardised tools - with tests, assessments, psychometrics & with worksheets</p> <p>3.1</p>	<p>'strengths-and-weaknesses' diagnoses - for selection, e.g. formal action plans</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p>enabling 'what should I do now?' e.g. Progress-Files - for disclosing needs & personal targets</p> <p>3.3</p>
<p>FACE-TO-FACE 2 WORK</p>	<p>information, advice and guidance – focussed on decision making</p> <p>2.1</p>	<p>mentoring and counselling – exploring feelings & issues</p> <p>2.2</p>	<p>negotiating 'if-you-will-we-will' agreements - to support progress</p> <p>2.3</p>
<p>RESOURCE- 1 CENTRE WORK</p>	<p>displays & loans - effectively indexed</p> <p>1.1</p>	<p>multi-media & locally produced resources – including ICT</p> <p>1.2</p>	<p>expanding coverage - linking to, e.g., finance, leisure & citizenship</p> <p>1.3</p>

twenty-one areas for programme improvement!

using your programme pattern

The seven levels of programme provision represent seven ways of bringing in more, and more varied, resources. The variety is important: each of the seven settings offers a different kind of help. That is why the person responsible for this work is often called a 'coordinator', rather than a 'head of department': this network of links requires a different, and challenging, range of abilities.

The three levels of programme development in each setting represent the depth and dynamism with which the resources are used. The farther to the right you extend the programme:

- the more links your students will make;
- the more they will acknowledge and disclose their own thoughts and feeling;,
- the more dynamic and sustained the learning process will be.

So the 'effectiveness' pressure pushes your programme upward (for variety) and to the right (for impact).

This doesn't mean that you stop doing '1.1' in order to do '1.2' and '1.3'. Nor do you stop doing '1' in order to do '2'. The chart describes how new resources and dynamism can be progressively **added** to the programme.

So why don't all careers work programmes have all of these areas? It is because there are also pressures downward and to the left.

- the higher the setting number (1-7) the greater the hassle in sustaining the link;
- the higher the development number (.1-.3) the greater the cost.

Bureaucratic pressure is, therefore, limiting in its effects. There is resistance to involving more people - needing more agreements, negotiation and planning. There is also resistance to incurring the need for more delivery time, resources and training.

Programmes tend - therefore - to start from the bottom-left, and move 'up' and 'right', slowly. In your colour coding, the best-established 'green' areas are likely to be closer to the bottom-left. 'Amber', 'red' and 'blue' areas may well form a rainbow - bending upward and to the right. The 'way blue yonder' will be among the more demanding and costly areas.

But, education pressure is upward and to the right. And the 'green' areas are your foundations for that movement. Success here lays the ground for future development. Indeed, you should not try to move on until you are sure of the basis - and can demonstrate its value. Your areas for useful and arguable new development are likely coded 'red' and 'amber'. That is where you will find the best next thing to do.

Much depends on what is already in place. That will be different for your programme than for others. Knowing what to do about it is your coordinating skill.