

Careers overview

Source: adapted from: *Careers Education and Guidance in a Nutshell* (DfES 2004) <http://www.cegnet.co.uk>

In the early days, careers work focused on matching individuals to specific opportunities in education and work. As choice was limited, many young people simply followed in their family's footsteps. Making decisions about the next steps was a straightforward process, taking little time and requiring little preparation. For most students, an 'end of school' careers guidance interview with the Youth Employment Service was generally sufficient.

As the world changed and opportunities grew, the matching process became more complex. More young people had to decide whether to continue their education or get a job. They had to think about the longer-term consequences of their decisions as well as their next steps. So, careers work changed and young people began to receive some careers education in preparation for their 'end of school' guidance interview. This was normally a handful of lessons giving information about the opportunities on offer and advice on how to complete application forms and construct CVs.

Technology, globalisation and other developments have continued to transform the world, and change has become a feature of daily life. In schools, curriculum change meant that young people had some choice about which subjects to study in Years 10 and 11. To help them make these 'career choices', most schools extended their careers education lessons into Year 9 and gave young people earlier access to careers guidance. The expansion of post-16 choices also led to an increase in the careers guidance offered to young people in sixth forms and colleges.

Today, a career is a personal journey through an assortment of opportunities that include learning, work and career breaks, both planned and unplanned.

Continuous change presents people with career choices throughout their lives. Some stem from personal circumstances, such as the need to support a family. Others come from personal aspirations, such as a desire for promotion, to become self-employed or to live somewhere different. Yet others result from external forces, such as company reorganisation, redundancy, new technology and retraining to remain employable.

The links between living, learning and earning have never been clearer. It is no longer possible to keep them in three separate boxes. A decision made about one always affects the others, whatever the age of the individual concerned. Nor is it possible to say that learning ends when someone leaves school, college or university.

Dealing with ongoing career choice and change means that most adults are engaging in lifelong career planning and development, although they rarely use these labels. The careers education and guidance that individuals receive in schools and colleges provide the foundation for this. Careers education programmes now emphasise helping young people to build their knowledge and self-help skills. The

aim is to give them the survival skills they need to grasp opportunities, manage change and deal with success, disappointment and the unexpected.

In the immediate future, careers education and guidance will change in response to the development of a single 14–19 phase of education, including:

- more emphasis on financial education – so that young people are ready to think about and deal with the financial implications of their choices;
- more emphasis on enterprise and employability skills – so that young people are equipped to manage their own careers;
- increased information – so that young people can research their choices and make informed decisions about living, learning and earning.

Make a note of what you think your students' general needs for CEG are.

Now look at pages 6–11 of *Informing Choices*, which is available to download at http://www.qca.org.uk/14-19/6th-form-schools/68_2120.htm. Apart from coping with the rapid changes in the world of work, young people now have a vast array of opportunities in learning before they go into full-time employment. Make a note of what you think your students' particular needs are for help with making these choices.

Now read page 12. Compare what you read with what you know your school provides. This is your starting point for thinking about what help you can provide (with more training!).