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Me and You in the World of Work: A Career Group Manual on Relationship Management Skills for Students

Maria Cristina M. Firmante
De La Salle University Manila
maria.cristina.firmante@dlsu.edu.ph

Abstract: While it is a task of every colleges and universities to assist students acquired necessary skills needed and expected of them in the workplace. Preparing students on their future career is essential for employment success. The current career development manual is intended as a reference guide in facilitating a group intervention that will address anticipated soft skills needed in the world of work. It utilized the role of the relationship management skills using the Social Emotional Theory (SEL) as its framework. It aims to achieve the following goals: a) learn exhibit pro-social behavior and demonstrate positive social skills; b) learn and understand the value of team work (seek and help others) and c) learn negotiate conflict constructively. The advantage of developing a career group manual is to ensure the expected graduate employability skills of students. Furthermore, career development program has been one of the tools that helped enhance students' career readiness, promote positive attitude and engagement as well as formulating their plans before and after graduation.

Key Words: college students, relationship management skills, career readiness

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Caplan, Vinokur, Price, and Van (1989) the career skills intervention was to stimulate the career competency development and work related wellbeing of individual. Career development is a continuous lifelong method of developmental experiences that focuses on seeking, getting and processing information regarding self, occupational and academic alternatives, life styles and role choices (Hansen, 1976). It contains of the following activities that also promotes self-exploration in terms of personal skills, abilities and interests; career exploration which includes having the skill to identify potential pathways and the

requirements for pursuing them (Rice, Gillies, Leahy and Polesel, 2015). Career development is one of the tasks for colleges and universities in assisting their students to best prepare themselves in the workplace (Firmante, 2019). In career development, students will gain awareness of vocational preferences, narrowing of occupational choices, formulation career goals and engagement in long-term career planning (Firmante, 2019; Savickas, 1999).

This context has led to create this career group manual. It is intended for the students specifically those who going to the internship program and those who are graduating. The aim of this program is to provide a venue where students will be able to learn one of the core competencies



needed in the workplace. In 2012, the National High School Center, Washington D C reiterated that many researches shows the significant role of relationship management skills in building students competencies. As such, it is one of the competencies of social and emotional learning that is found to be a good measure for college and career success. It is also in reference to social communication skills and therefore the ability to get the best out of others (Zimmeran, 2016). The researcher who is also a practicing school counselor believes that it is noteworthy to explore. How the students see themselves, how do they relate with their classmates and others also provides opportunities of good relationship management skills in the future (Firmante, 2019). Furthermore, the ultimate goal is to assist the students in achieving the readiness needed in the global market.

career choice (Wellington, 2005). Furthermore, social skills has been found as a good foundations of a executing a client service, promote positive attitude, effective communication, respectful interaction and the ability to remain composed in the difficult situation (Evenson, 1999; Zehr, 1998).

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) framework demonstrates how it enhances students' capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively with daily tasks and challenges (CASEL, 2008). According to Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger (2011) studies have hypothesized consistently that the social and emotional competence is critical to long term academic achievement and career readiness and an element of academic and workplace success. CASEL (2017) further described the five core social and emotional competencies that are important foundations for young people's well-being: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. "Having the fourth competency which is relationship skills permits one to regulate his or her actions as well as expectations so that interactions with different people will turn out well" (Firmante, 2019). While technical skills are part of numerous outstanding educational curricula for students' preparations of future career, soft skills such as social qualities on the other hand are known as people skills and personal attributes that needs further exploration in the curriculum so that students may learn its importance before they start exploring the global market on their respective

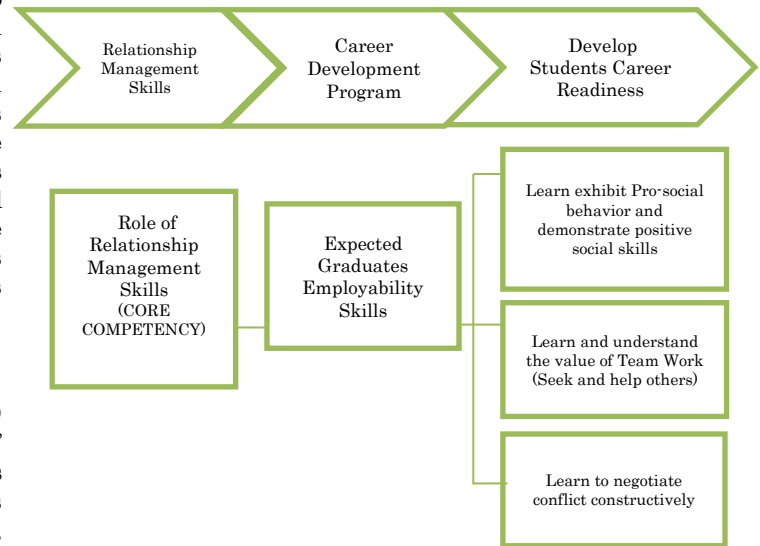


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework Using Relationship Skills Management as the Core Competency for Students Career Development Program

The conceptual framework of this current manual is the outcome of the "Conceptual paper on relationship skills: Towards the development of students' career program of Firmante (2019). The researcher who is the same author of the current manual believes that assisting students develop social and emotional competence early on their stay in the university will also help them possess basic competence such as good and effective work habits in the future. The skills can be taught and at the same time can be learn.

The main building blocks of the career skills intervention is the career skills and competencies. According to Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer, Huibers, and Blonk (2013) career competencies are composed of knowledge, skills, and abilities central to the career development that can be developed by an



individual. Literature has consistently hypothesized that social and emotional competence is a basic element of academic and workplace success. There is increasing evidence that social and emotional competence is critical to long-term academic achievement and career readiness (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Relationship management skills were described as the ability to ascertain and maintain healthy and regardful relationship with various people and groups. It composed of communication, social engagement, relationship building and teamwork and highlights the capacity of communicating clearly, listening well, cooperation with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, seek and provide help when needed. Relationship skills also offer individuals with the tools they have to ascertain and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, and to act in accordance with social norms (CASEL, 2017).

3. METHODOLOGY

The following are the guide in facilitating the career development program for the students:

GROUP GOALS

The objective of the career group manual is to lead the participants towards a better understanding of what is expected from them in the workplace. It will give emphasis to the role of relationship management skills as one of the competencies needed in the workplace.

The activities are purported to make them aware of the importance of soft skills and develop such. Specifically, the following goals are expected to be met at the end of the process:

- a) Learn exhibit Pro-social behavior and demonstrate positive social skills
- b) Learn and understand the value of Team Work (Seek and help others)
- c) Learn to negotiate conflict constructively
- d) Realized the value of relationship management skills
- e) Achieved personal and career readiness

PRE-GROUP SCREENING AND ORIENTATION

It will be a seminar workshop type that composed of four sessions. The group will be composed of 10 to 15 participants who will be on their internship year prior to their graduation. In order to establish and set group cohesiveness effectively, the facilitator will discuss further the general purpose, goals of the group, and ground rules.

The seminar-workshop utilized the following strategies to achieve its goals: 1) structured learning experience 2) group discussion and sharing 3) plenary sessions 4) self-assessment 4) video presentation 5) lecture and processing and 6) evaluation.

GROUP SESSION OUTLINE

This seminar-workshop will be conducted through an inductive method combined with experiential learning. Lectures, individual activities, structured discussions, processing of the experience and formulating generalizations comprise the content of each activity delivered. Participants were given the chance to learn about themselves in each activity and to actively involve themselves in action planning.

Group facilitating is a fundamental skill needed by professionals in various fields. A requisite competence for those who are active in human resource development and educators who believe in participative learning, the art and science of group facilitating aims to improve performance by encouraging free expression and personal involvement in planning and deciding matters related to work and study (Ortigas, 2003).

The following are the activities intended for this career development manual:

Session 1: Introduction of the Role of Relationship Management Skills

Purpose, Activities, and Process

An introduction about the seminar-workshop will be given to the participants. They will also be encouraged to share their thoughts that have led them to join the group, expectations, and things that they wanted to gain about the seminar-workshop. After which, the lecture about the role of relationship management skill will follow.



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For session 1, participants will learn establish and maintain this competency which is not only essential for success but a lifelong fulfillment. At the end, processing will follow.

Session 2: Building a Healthy Relationship in the Workplace

Purpose, Activities, and Process

The objectives for this session is to be able to learn to create a healthy relationship dynamics, take a strategic approach in fostering positive relationship, and learn constructive approach in communicating. There will be lecture, individual activity and dyad sharing. At the end session 2, processing will follow.

Building positive workplace relationship is vital for career success Relationships can positively or negatively affect satisfaction with job. A person who can build a positive relationship may be able to feel more comfortable by others thus be able to feel closer bond to the people they are working with.

Session 3: We Are One: The Value of Team Work

Purpose, Activities, and Process

For this session, participants will be able to learn the value of team work. Learning the importance of teamwork and learning how to share their varied skills will signify good cooperation and complementary role in achieving common goals.

There will be lecture, individual activity and dyad sharing. At the end session 3, processing will follow.

Session 4: Conflict? It's Okay: Negotiate Constructively

Purpose, Activities, and Process

Successful work relationships are based on collaborative behavior. However, conflict in the workplace is also a reality. The objective of this session is for the participants to learn how to handle conflict in the workplace. The goal of a workplace conflict resolution approach is to find a win-win, or a compromise, so each interests or needs are met at some level.

There will be lecture, individual activity and dyad sharing. At the end session 4, processing will follow. Participants will receive their certificate and will be ask to accomplish the evaluation of the seminar-workshop.

EVALUATION STRATEGIES

Facilitator's Group Notes

Facilitators' group note is one of the elements for the evaluation of the career program. These are the personal notes with regards to the group process observed in the seminar-workshop. It is an essential element that could serves as a basis in checking whether the group objectives are met.

Participants Evaluation of the Program

In order to measure the effectiveness of this career development program, a research-made evaluation will be developed in accordance with objectives of the said program. A likert scale will be used to evaluate the content of the group manual, the resource person, and overall assessment of the participants. This is will be given at the end of the program.

REFERRAL AND FOLLOW-UP

The facilitator's group manual will served as the basis to counter check the need of the participants for further intervention and follow-up.

At the end of the seminar-workshop, the facilitator will encourage participants to see their school counselor for career consultation or counseling who will need further intervention.

4. IMPLICATIONS TO COUNSELING

The career development program provided can serve as guide to school counselors in facilitating students' employability readiness. Literatures posited that the role of relationship management skills is one of the competencies that should be acquired and be seen in the workplace. Literatures even pointed out the relationship management skills are important in every person's lives. In addition, it has been found that SEL competency has a positive effects in improving students' academic performance, benefits physical health, improves citizenship, and essential to the future career and lifelong process.



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It is also the pursuit of every Counseling and Service Offices to demonstrate its commitment to students' holistic well-being. Furthermore, student will benefit in creating and providing a good career development program.

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