Information Counselling

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Information Needs

During any school day, guidance personnel may be called upon to deal with problems requiring cross-cultural counselling, career counselling, referral services, or strategies to help adolescents cope with severe anxiety. Indeed, much educational literature has been produced in all the areas mentioned above. But it is often difficult for the guidance professional to keep up-to-date with the volume of it available and maintain an ongoing awareness of recent findings, Ministry curriculum initiatives, new learning materials, and relevant developments in educational software. Some of the following requests for information may represent your current information needs:

- How should AIDS education be taught in the classroom? Has the Ministry of Education developed resource materials on AIDS?
- What software is available to teach problem-solving or decision-making?
- Who goes to college?
- Are there any kits or texts for students on careers in art, biology, or physics?
- Is peer counselling effective with learning-disabled adolescents?
- Are there any Canadian studies on parent-remarriage appropriate for students who are trying to cope with this situation?
- Are there any films or videotapes that show boys caring for babies?
- What materials are available to help English-as-a-second language students acquire basic consumer skills?
- Are there any recent studies on Guidance Certificate Programs in Ontario faculties of education?
- Have any boards of education developed effective techniques for assessing guidance services?

These sample requests are typical of the special needs that arise on a day-to-day basis in the guidance counsellor's office. ONTERIS can respond to such information requirements.

Information Services — ONTERIS

ONTERIS is the acronym for the Ontario Education Resources Information System — an online bilingual bibliographic database of educational information produced in the province. To illustrate how a service like ONTERIS can help counsellors, let us consider how to form a

simple search for research material which focuses on one area featured in the questions listed above. Our initial question might be:

What *current research* or report materials are available related to counselling or teaching about *problem-solving* or *decision-making?*

FIGURE 1

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MATERIAL TYPE: Report
LANGUAGE OF DOCUMENT: English

Cassie, J.R. Bruce; Robinson, Floyd G.
    Career Decision Making : Growth in Frameworking Skill — St. Catharines : Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Curriculum Processes Centre, 1983. — i,19 p. (/OISE report/)

SUBJECT

/DECISION MAKING/. /Career education/. Programs. /Schools/
    related to /career development/. /Teaching methods/
    /Models/ for /vocational counselling/

ANNOTATION

        This paper, which serves as an extension to the monograph Introducing a Decision Making Strategy, describes different levels of mental frameworking that students use when processing career-related decisions. Theoretical elements that establish the practicality of choice-point analysis are traced.
        After a discussion of the sequence of mental operations that may comprise a cognitive skill, a 4-stage process for dealing with individual choice points is envisaged. The reasons for identifying significant career decision points around which intervention in the career decision-making process of students should take place are then discussed, especially in terms of the fact that over a period of time many career-related decisions are made and a learned framework may have utility in subsequent decisions.
        In a discussion of levels of frameworking skill (including advanced levels), 7 examples of frameworks are described which demand increasingly more sophisticated levels of decision-making skills. A short description of the pedagogy of decision training is followed by examples of methods which teachers may employ to improve skill development, and a discussion of horizontal transfer. Concluding pages contain a bibliography and 2 brief appendices comprising rule structures sufficient to generate decision frameworks at different levels of complexity and a procedure for intensive interaction skill teaching.

(JC)

AVAILABILITY:
MF not available

(By displaying some of the records found by the computer one can see which ones are most relevant to one's needs.)

Our search strategy will use each of the italicized terms. The first step will be to select the research and reports section of the database. Then we can search for the descriptors PROBLEM SOLVING or DECISION MAKING and specify that the publication date be "greater than" 1980 (i.e., nothing before 1980 but everything since then). In a matter of seconds the computer will check thousands of records and respond by indicating the number of records which meet all three designated search requirements. Should one retrieve a large number of postings, one might want to add COUNSELLING as a descriptor in order to be even more specific. Figure 1 is a sample record which would be retrieved in this search.

On the same subject, problem-solving or decision-making, one might wish to find learning materials such as simulations, games or other types of software which would help students in the intermediate or senior divisions develop problem-solving skills. One would then search the newest part of the database, LEMA, which contains all types of learning materials from texts to software. Again, the descriptors PROBLEM SOLVING or DECISION MAKING will retrieve all records which have either descriptor present. But we will, in addition, specify grade level as INTERMEDIATE or SENIOR and material type as SOFT-WARE. Figure 2 is a sample record retrieved in this search.

This sample search has illustrated two of the thousands of items in the ONTERIS database. A request for information may be very broad (e.g., all Ministry and board guidance guidelines) or very specific (e.g., research on peer counselling). Whatever the limits, the computer will discover what the database contains in relation to the designated request. Thus, the database may be used to keep up to date generally with educational literature or to answer specific needs.

Access to ONTERIS

The ONTERIS database is available to the public through BRS Information Technologies under the label ONED. BRS is an international vendor offering a wide variety of databases in such fields as medicine, physical and applied sciences, business, and education. Clients wishing to search ONED subscribe to BRS and pay for access time and printouts. Typically, BRS charges for searching ONED are approximately $25.00 per contact hour between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. After 5:00 p.m. (BRS After Dark) costs are substantially lower.

Many Ontario boards of education are BRS subscribers, and search the database on BRS to answer information requests from teachers and other board personnel. Faculty of education libraries also access the database through BRS, and some of these libraries offer search-for-fee services. Thus, the library at your local board of education or closest faculty of education is a good starting point in locating information. In addition, many individuals use their microcomputer and a modem to

FIGURE 2

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FILE SEGMENT:  COMP                                          LM05104
LANGUAGE OF DOCUMENT:  English
MATERIAL TYPE:  Lessonware; Computer disk
MICROCOMPUTER INFORMATION:  G.E.M.S. ICON System; QNX 2.25; C; 512k.
CORPORATE AUTHOR:  Interactive Image Technologies
TITLE:  A Week in the Life of....
SERIES:  Ontario Ministry of Education call for computer-based
         learning materials, 1984-85 ; 1.
PUBLICATION INFORMATION:  Toronto : TVOntario  DATE:  1988


CURRICULUM SUBJECT:  HEALTH EDUCATION; FAMILY STUDIES; VALUES
                     EDUCATION

DESCRIPTORS:  LIFE SKILLS
              Personal values and decision making


EDUCATION LEVEL:  Intermediate Division - Grades 7-8



                     ANNOTATION CONTENTS

This simulation raises the issues, situations, and dilemmas typically
met in adolescence and encourages the development of decision making
skills.  Issues include drug and alcohol use, theft, personal
intimacy and loyalty, family relationships, and sexuality.  There are
4 characters (2 male, 2 female) and the student becomes the companion
of their chosen character.  The interaction is through the selected
character's monologue-describing events and asking the student to
make the decision.  Events are typical of school, social and family
life.
A summary of the events and choices may be printed and the school
year book's entry for each character may be viewed and reflects the
consequences of the choices made.  A note-pad and glossary are
provided.

NOTES:
Commercial ICON version is available

SPECIAL FEATURES/COMPONENTS:
1.  Teachers' manual includes prerequisite skills,  a list of
additional issues such as careers, racial prejudice and sexual abuse,
objectives, directions for using the program and the record keeping
function, sample run, and suggested followup activities.
2.   Students' manual includes directions for using the program and a
sample run

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:  Ambience software, colour monitor, Epson or
compatible printer
COPYRIGHT STATUS:  Copyright
GEOGRAPHIC SOURCE:  Canada
AVAILABILITY:  Licensed G.E.M.S. version is available to school
boards and approved educational institutions in Ontario at a cost-
recovery price from: TVOntario Customer Service, Box 200, Station Q,
Toronto, Ont., M4T 2T1.  Commercial version is available from
Interplay Learning Materials Group, Software Ontario Corporation, 49
Bathurst St., Suite 400, Toronto, Ont., (416 361-0333).
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access the ONED database over the telephone lines. These alternative forms of access make ONTERIS easily available to potential users.

Further information regarding the ONTERIS collection, (policy, document backup, microfiche, etc.) or advice on searching ONED may be gained by calling ONTERIS at (416) 965-4110. For information on databases available through BRS, on becoming a client of BRS, or on search training, guides and other services offered by BRS, you may phone 800-468-0908.