

1992

A Study of the Effectiveness of Peer Counselors and Computer-assisted Career Guidance Systems at Eastern Illinois University

Kathleen C. Ritten

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Educational Psychology and Guidance](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Ritten, Kathleen C., "A Study of the Effectiveness of Peer Counselors and Computer-assisted Career Guidance Systems at Eastern Illinois University" (1992). *Masters Theses*. 2164.
<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/2164>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

A Study of the Effectiveness of Peer Counselors and Computer-
assisted Career Guidance Systems at Eastern Illinois University
(TITLE)

BY

Kathleen C. Ritten

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Specialist in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1992
YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

27 Apr 92
DATE

ADVISOR

27 Apr 92
DATE

DEPARTMENT HEAD

A Study of the Effectiveness of Peer
Counselors and Computer-assisted
Career Guidance Systems at
Eastern Illinois University

by

Kathleen C. Ritten

Eastern Illinois University

B.A. Purdue University 1984

M.S. Ed. Eastern Illinois University 1991

ABSTRACT

Eastern Illinois University, located in east central Illinois, is dedicated to providing high quality undergraduate and graduate education at an affordable cost for the citizens of the state of Illinois (Eastern Illinois University college catalog). The university's primary mission is to provide its approximately 10,000 students with a comprehensive undergraduate program of liberal studies as they seek degrees in applied sciences, business, education, fine arts, health, physical education and recreation, and liberal arts and sciences (Mission and Goals of Eastern Illinois University). To complement its undergraduate curriculum, Eastern's Graduate School also offers master's and specialist degree programs in various concentrations.

In addition, the university provides a variety of educational support programs to students free of charge, many of which are offered through the Counseling Center. A large percentage of students who take advantage of the services the Counseling Center offers come for career counseling. In order to serve the growing number of students who need individual assistance in developing and investigating possible career goals and interest areas, the Counseling Center relies on a graduate assistant and a team of peer counselors to augment its professional staff and to guide students through the career exploration process by means of specialized occupational resources, specifically

computerized career guidance and information systems.

Over the years, as interest in this service has increased, so has the need for these paraprofessionals. However, the recent retirement of the founder and supervisor of the Counseling Center's peer counseling program left the program without a coordinator and without a sense of direction.

In order to garner support for continuing the Counseling Center's peer counseling program, the writer was interested in assessing the relationship between the peer counselors and the computer-assisted career guidance resources. This study attempted to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of one of the Counseling Center's most popular computer-assisted career guidance systems, SIGI PLUS, and the perceived helpfulness of the peer counselors who assisted students in using this program.

Students who used the Counseling Center's career resources in the fall of 1991 were given a short self-report questionnaire to complete which asked them to indicate the perceived levels of helpfulness of both the program they used and the peer counselor who assisted them. Two hundred twenty eight Eastern Illinois University students replied to a survey asking them to indicate which of the four computerized guidance programs they used and whether or not they thought it was helpful; how helpful was their peer counselor; and whether or not they would recommend this

service to a friend.

Cross tabulations and Pearson correlations were run using the survey variables of perceived level of helpfulness of SIGI PLUS, perceived level of helpfulness of the peer counselor, and the week during the period of the peer counseling program that students were surveyed. A significant relationship was found between the level of perceived helpfulness of SIGI PLUS ($p < .05$) and the helpfulness of the peer counselor ($p < .05$). Both variables were also found to have a low, but significant positive correlation to the period surveyed in the semester ($p < .05$). A moderately high degree of significance was observed between the perceived degree of helpfulness of SIGI PLUS and students' perceived helpfulness of the peer counselors.

The observations and recommendations presented in this study were intended to serve as a reference to guide the staff and future coordinators of the Counseling Center's peer counseling program, in the hopes that this particular program will not only be continued, but will also be enhanced.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to express my sincere appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Paul Overton, as well as to Dr. Shirley Moore and Dr. Bud Sanders for their insight and their valuable feedback throughout the completion of this project. I'd also like to thank the staff of the Counseling Center for their support, as well as their interest and input concerning the peer counseling program. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with such a great group of people.

I'd also like to acknowledge Doug Bower for his expert advice and assistance with the statistical analysis for this field study. His patience and his words of wisdom were greatly appreciated.

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to thank my husband Mark for supporting my decision to pursue my graduate studies. His patience, encouragement, and understanding have meant a great deal to me. Thank you for seeing me through the completion of this project and for being there for me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ABSTRACT..... | i |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | iv |
| APPENDICES..... | v |
| X CHAPTER I..... | 1 |
| X Introduction..... | 1 |
| Background..... | 3 |
| History of the Peer Counseling Program..... | 3 |
| Peer Counselors..... | 4 |
| Recruitment and Training..... | 6 |
| The Peer Counselor Handbook..... | 7 |
| Making the Transition..... | 9 |
| Orientation..... | 10 |
| X Statement of the Problem..... | 12 |
| X Procedure..... | 13 |
| X Limitations of the Study..... | 13 |
| X CHAPTER II-RELATED RESEARCH..... | 14 |
| Peer Counseling..... | 14 |
| Components of a Peer Counseling Program..... | 16 |
| Computer-Assisted Career Counseling..... | 20 |
| Computer-Assisted Career Guidance Systems..... | 20 |
| Integrating Computers and Career Counseling..... | 21 |
| The Need for Counselor Intervention..... | 22 |
| Computers and Counselors..... | 27 |
| X CHAPTER III-METHOD..... | 29 |
| X Participants..... | 29 |
| X Data Analysis..... | 30 |
| X CHAPTER IV-RESULTS AND DISCUSSION..... | 31 |
| X Limitations of the Study..... | 33 |
| X CHAPTER V-CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 35 |
| X Conclusions..... | 35 |
| X Recommendations for Implementation..... | 36 |
| Before the Start of the Academic Year..... | 36 |
| Prior to the Beginning of Each Semester..... | 36 |
| At the Start of Each Semester..... | 37 |
| X Further Recommendations..... | 39 |
| X REFERENCES..... | 41 |

APPENDICES

- A. Course Description of EDG 5890**
- B. Survey Instrument**
- C. Sign Up Sheet for Peer Counselor Orientation**
- D. Follow Up Letter to EDG 5890 Instructor**
- E. Thank You Letter to EDG 5890 Instructor**
- F. Thank You Letter to Peer Counselors**
- G. Peer Counselor Handbook**

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Eastern Illinois University, located in east central Illinois, is dedicated to providing high quality undergraduate and graduate education at an affordable cost for the citizens of the state of Illinois (Eastern Illinois University college catalog). Of the approximately 10,000 students enrolled at Eastern, 90% are undergraduate and 10% are graduate students. According to the mission statement of Eastern Illinois University, the university's primary mission is to provide all students with a comprehensive undergraduate program of liberal studies as they seek degrees in applied sciences, business, education, fine arts, health, physical education and recreation, and liberal arts and sciences (Mission and Goals of Eastern Illinois University). To complement its undergraduate curriculum, Eastern's Graduate School also offers master's and specialist degree programs in various concentrations.

In addition, the university provides a variety of educational support programs, which are available to students free of charge. Many of these are offered through the Counseling Center.

Staffed by a team of professional counselors and counseling psychologists, the Counseling Center offers assistance with personal, social, and vocational concerns; problems affecting academic performance; and other issues

associated with the adjustment to college life (Eastern Illinois University college catalog). A large percentage of students who take advantage of the services the Counseling Center offers come for career counseling. In order to serve the growing number of students who need individual assistance in developing and investigating possible career goals and interest areas, the Counseling Center has established a library of occupational and vocational resources, including computerized guidance information systems. To help direct students in the use of these specialized resources, the Counseling Center has long relied on a graduate assistant and a team of peer counselors from the department of Educational Psychology and Guidance and the Psychology department to augment its professional staff and to guide students through the career exploration process.

Over the years, as interest in this service has increased, so has the need for these paraprofessionals. However, the recent retirement of the founder and supervisor of the Counseling Center's peer counseling program left the program without a coordinator and without a sense of direction. For years both the graduate assistant and the peer counselors had been under the direct supervision of one person; no one else on staff was quite familiar with how this program was run. There were no written guidelines explaining how this network of peer helpers was structured

or how it should be organized.

Background

As a graduate assistant and a peer counselor in the Counseling Center during the academic year 1990-91, the writer had the opportunity to observe first hand how the peer counseling program operated. She became familiar with the computerized guidance programs and worked with students in various stages of the career exploration process to introduce them to these resources and to facilitate the development of career interests. During this time, she also became involved in instructing the peer counselors in the use of these resources. This experience provided the writer with insight not only as to how the peer counseling program functioned, but also how it could be improved.

The following year, the writer returned to serve as interim coordinator for the peer counselor program when her assistantship with the Counseling Center was renewed. Based on her experience working with both the career resources and with the peer counselors, the writer felt she could serve as a resource person during this period of transition and could make some modifications to help strengthen the existing framework of the peer counseling program.

History of the Peer Counseling Program

The peer counseling program was first established in 1982, in cooperation with the university's Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance. Just four years

earlier, the Counseling Center had purchased its first computerized career guidance and information system to supplement its library of career resources. Although it proved to be a valuable tool in providing students with direction for further career exploration, there simply was not enough staff at the time to provide personalized assistance on a large scale.

When the idea of using peer counselors was proposed, it presented the Counseling Center with an opportunity to secure additional support for its professional staff, in exchange for giving counselors in training a chance to gain first hand experience helping students. The concept was accepted and has proven to be a success. By the end of the peer counseling program's first year, the number of clients using the Counseling Center's career resources had increased significantly from previous years (1982 annual report).

Peer Counselors

Peer counselors were first introduced to help free up full-time counselors for other duties and to supplement the hours of the graduate assistant. For the last ten years, participants in the peer counseling program have been helping students make the connection to career resources which help them help themselves.

Since the start of the program, peer counselors have worked with the graduate assistant in the Counseling Center's career resource area to assist individuals in

utilizing the computerized career guidance and information systems and to facilitate the career development and decision-making processes. The peer counselors' duties today include working one-on-one with students who are trying to decide on a college major, helping them to locate and retrieve information on possible occupations related to their major or interest areas, and connecting those who are considering the possibility of continuing their education to the appropriate resources. With the aid of these interactive guidance programs and other resource materials, peer counselors help students gain insight about themselves and about a variety of career possibilities, empowering them to make more informed decisions about their future.

Services continue to be provided on an as needed basis with appointments to use the career resources usually scheduled during regular office hours, when either the graduate assistant or a peer counselor is present to provide assistance. Each peer counselor works approximately two hours a week, Monday through Friday, for a period of one semester. Although these hours tend to vary each semester and depend on the peer counselors' schedules, they help supplement the hours of the graduate assistant and allow the Counseling Center to make these resources available to the student body at convenient times.

Over the years, efforts have continued to expand this service. Since the program's initiation, the number of

available computerized career guidance and information systems have multiplied; currently, students may choose from three career guidance systems and one program designed to assist with enhancing study skills. In 1982, during the peer counseling program's first semester, 14 graduate students participated in the program. By the fall of 1991, the number of participants had grown to 26. Both of these factors have helped the Counseling Center keep up with the growing demand for career counseling.

Recruitment and Training

Beginning in the fall of 1982, graduate students enrolled in the introductory Educational Psychology and Guidance counseling class, Current Practices and Problems in Counseling, were encouraged by their instructors to participate in the peer counseling program in return for classroom credit and pre-practicum training. This four credit course was specifically chosen because it provided counselors in training with a basic repertoire of interpersonal skills, such as empathy, active listening, attending, feedback, and the use of open-ended verbalizations. Enrollment in the course was required in order to participate in the peer counseling program.

Prior to starting the peer counseling program, students completed a series of exercises and participated in videotaped simulated counseling sessions to help them practice basic counseling skills. These skills became the

foundation for their training as peer counselors.

Those who expressed an interest in becoming peer counselors were referred to a designated member of the Counseling Center's professional staff, who helped coordinate the peer counseling schedule each semester and arranged a group meeting to introduce prospective peer counselors to the Counseling Center. Prior to working with students, the peer counselors were given an orientation to the career resource library, which included a brief overview of the computerized programs.

The Peer Counselor Handbook

During the writer's first year of working with the peer counselors, many of the peer counselors expressed to the writer that they felt a little unprepared and weren't sure what to do once they got started. Most felt a little uncomfortable trying to explain to students something they had not yet had a chance to master or did not yet fully understand themselves. While each participant had been introduced to the occupational/vocational library and had seen a brief demonstration of the computerized guidance programs during their orientation session, they lacked hands-on experience in working with these resources.

At that point in time the peer counselors training was unstructured at best. Due to the short duration of the peer counseling program (less than one semester), the time allotted for training had to be limited. Because each of

the computerized guidance systems were designed to be self-guided, it was presumed that the peer counselors could instruct themselves in the operation of these specialized resources. While the programs were easy to use, there weren't any references to tell the peer counselors how to get started or to assist them in assessing which program would be the most helpful to the individual student. To help the peer counselors to become better acquainted with these resources and to ease some of their anxiety, a handbook was developed by the writer to introduce them to each of the computerized career guidance and information systems.

The peer counselor handbook grew out of a short handout of information originally assembled during the spring of 1991. This initial version was more of a "survival kit," drawn from the writer's personal experience in working with students and with the career resources. It featured a brief overview of the career guidance systems and included instructions for powering the computers on and off, along with a description of each of the four programs, and a guide for entering and exiting each program. Each of the peer counselors was given their own copy of the handbook so they could follow along in their training. In addition, the writer met with each of the peer counselors and carefully reviewed the information in the handbook with them to reinforce key points and to help illustrate how to use each

of the programs. This represented a departure from the way peer counselor orientation sessions had previously been conducted.

Even in its early stage, the handbook proved to be a helpful companion in teaching peer counselors the ropes. Eventually, as more information was added, it evolved into a set of step-by-step guidelines for introducing peer counselors to the computerized guidance and information systems, to the Counseling Center, and to other career resources. In the fall of 1991, it was incorporated into the peer counseling orientation session and has become an integral part of the peer counselors' training.

Making the Transition

In order to facilitate a smooth transition from one coordinator to another, the writer felt it was important to let those who had worked with the founder of the peer counseling program know that the Counseling Center planned to continue with this program. Prior to the beginning of the fall semester of 1991, the primary instructor of the Current Practices and Problems in Counseling class was contacted and informed that the graduate assistant would be temporarily serving as the coordinator for the peer counseling program. To solicit his cooperation, the writer gave him an idea of how many peer counselors would be needed and asked that interested participants be referred to her. Following this conversation the instructor was sent a brief

description of what the peer counseling program was all about, along with a sign up sheet, to be distributed to the students in his class. He was asked to instruct interested participants to sign up for one of three scheduled orientation sessions and then return the list of names and dates to the interim coordinator.

Orientation

Instead of one group meeting, three 60 to 90 minute orientation sessions were scheduled to accommodate the prospective peer counselors' schedules and to keep attendance at a manageable number. The sessions were held during the fourth full week of classes in order to give interested participants time to work out their class schedules and to allow them an opportunity to complete class exercises designed to help them hone their counseling skills. Although the peer counseling program had traditionally not started until October or later, it was observed that most students began using the career resources much earlier. The writer believed that the beginning of the semester would be a more appropriate time to start the peer counselors so that they would get the experience they needed and so the Counseling Center would have the support personnel they required to meet the needs of the students.

Before orientation was held, the peer counseling handbook was revised to cover a more in-depth look at each of the career guidance and information systems, and now

included a set of detailed instructions to guide the user through each of the programs. Also featured was a description of other reference materials in the occupational/vocational library, including books and other printed career resources, as well as a list of referral sources to assist students.

Upon meeting with the peer counselors, each was once again given their own personal copy of the handbook. In addition, a copy was kept in a notebook in the career library for reference. The notebook provided an outline of information to be covered during the orientation and touched on some important topics, including the services offered through the Counseling Center, a description of what specifically peer counselors do, the number of hours a week peer counselors work, the length of the peer counseling program, information about how and when to make an appropriate referral, and instructions for operating the computerized guidance programs.

After reviewing the material in the handbook, questions were addressed and each of the computerized guidance programs were demonstrated from beginning to end, to fully illustrate their ease of operation. By the close of the meeting, each of the peer counselors had signed up for designated "office hours" based on their availability, and were scheduled to begin peer counseling two weeks later. The peer counselors were encouraged to sign up for the same

period of time as that of at least one other peer counselor, in order to maximize the support available for each other and for the students. A system was also established so peer counselors could direct their questions to the interim coordinator during this introductory period, as well as throughout the course of the semester.

Following their orientation, the peer counselors were invited to stay and "play" with the computers. They were given the following week to get further acquainted with these and other resources in the occupational/vocational library before they began meeting with students. During this time they were urged to come in during their scheduled hours and any other time during regular office hours, to familiarize themselves with the ins and outs of the career guidance and information systems, and to continue asking questions.

Statement of the Problem

In order to garner support for continuing the Counseling Center's peer counseling program, the writer was interested in assessing the relationship between the peer counselors and the computer-assisted career guidance resources. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of one of the Counseling Center's most popular computer-assisted career guidance systems, SIGI PLUS, and the perceived helpfulness of the peer counselors who assisted students in using this program.

The observations and recommendations presented here are intended to serve as a reference to guide the staff and future coordinators of the Counseling Center's peer counseling program, in the hopes that this particular program will not only be continued, but will also be enhanced.

Procedure

During the fall of 1991, students who used the Counseling Center's computerized career resources were given a short survey to complete which asked them to indicate the helpfulness of both the program they used and the peer counselor who assisted them, and whether or not they would recommend this service to a friend. The survey was conducted throughout the peer counseling program's eleven week term.

Limitations of the Study

The focus of this study was limited to Eastern Illinois University students who used the computerized career guidance resources during the eleven week period of the peer counseling program in the fall of 1991. The results of this study reflect the responses of those students surveyed at that point in time and therefore cannot be generalized to the student body at large. Because this was the first study of this kind at the Counseling Center, it should be repeated to determine whether the results are consistent over time.

CHAPTER II

RELATED RESEARCH

Counselors today are faced with the challenge of trying to provide quality counseling services to an increasing ratio of students, while having to work with fewer resources of support. In order to cope with budget cuts and staff shortages, counselors have begun to explore other avenues, such as using peer counselors and computer technology, to help them meet the needs of their clients.

Peer Counseling

With the advent of computer-assisted guidance systems, the domain of career counseling has expanded from the ranks of professionals to include peer counselors. While a few studies have suggested that peer counselors can be effective as career resources (Ash and Mandelbaum, 1974), much of the literature to date has focused on using peer counselors to assist students with personal problems.

Peer counseling has been defined as "a variety of interpersonal helping behaviors assumed by nonprofessionals who undertake a helping role with others" (Tindall & Gray, p. 5).

Research has shown that with proper training and supervision, both undergraduate and graduate students can supplement or assume certain tasks usually performed by professional staff (Delworth & Johnson, 1984; Delworth, Sherwood, and Casaburri, 1974). Peer counselors, or

paraprofessionals, are typically students who have been selected and trained to assist in the delivery of services to fellow students (Ender, 1983). While they were intended to complement existing staff members, peer counselors have been found to be as effective as professionally trained counselors in offering a variety of student services (Brown, 1974; Carkhuff and Truax, 1965; Sherwood, 1985).

For the past few decades there has been an increasing interest among college counseling centers in using students in counseling roles to complement ongoing services (Zunker, 1975). This has been attributed to the inability of professional staff to keep up with the increase in the demand for counseling services (Brown, 1974).

The use of student paraprofessionals have impacted the way student services are delivered (Hansen & Johnston, 1986). According to Heath (1980), peer helpers can facilitate student development by enabling students to take responsibility for growth in others and by providing opportunities for students to assume alternative roles. In addition, peer counselors: (1) provide services to other students without increasing costs or reducing the quantity or quality of services offered; (2) offer a means to bridge the gap between professionals and "underserved populations" through peer identification; (3) help free professional staff members for other tasks, such as training, development, and interacting with clients; (4) enhance the

college's image and help establish and maintain regular, long-term contact with the student population (Hansen & Johnston, 1986; Sherwood 1985).

Components of a Peer Counseling Program

Regardless of the capacity in which peer counselors are used, the process of developing, organizing, and implementing a successful peer counseling program takes time, energy, and commitment (Tindall & Gray, 1985). As Tindall and Gray (1985) point out, building a peer counseling program is a step-by-step operation. It begins by: (1) assessing the needs of the group to be served in order to develop strategies to facilitate the desired change; (2) making a commitment to familiarize oneself with the concepts of peer counseling and how to plan a program; (3) gaining the support of administration and staff; and (4) developing methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the peer counseling program.

Sherwood (1985) compared these steps with the sequential stages of: (1) institutional preparation; (2) position and personnel selection; (3) staff training; and (4) program evaluation.

Although they parallel one another, both models illustrate the importance of assessing the attitudes and interests of the professional staff; identifying the needs of the student population; defining program objectives; taking inventory of human and physical resources; and

estimating the degree a supervisor is dedicated to taking the necessary steps to plan, develop, and implement such a program (Sherwood, 1985; Tindall & Gray, 1985).

Once peer counselors have been screened and selected, they must acquire the necessary skills to perform job-specific tasks. It is up to the professional supervisor to identify the needs of paraprofessionals and to design training programs and techniques that will address their skill level.

Brown (1974) pointed out that a successful peer counseling program must take care to control for three things: (1) the kinds of training; (2) effective interactions of peers and professionals; and (3) proper supervision and control.

According to Tindall and Gray (1985), the trainer is the key link in any training program. To be successful, supervisors must be competent, committed and mature individuals, with strong training and supervisory skills, and have the ability to evaluate performance (Sherwood, 1985). In addition, an effective trainer must possess the qualities of intellectual curiosity, physical fitness, pragmatic outlook, optimism, problem-solving skills and deductions, and a good role model (Tindall & Gray, 1985).

In order to teach the necessary skills required for the successful completion of the job, it's important that supervisors: explain the skills in behavioral terms;

effectively model the skills to be performed; provide the peer counselor with an opportunity to practice the skills, along with feedback regarding the development of their skills (Moore, 1974; Sherwood, 1985; Tindall & Gray, 1985). It also helps to teach peer counselors how to make use of supervision; how to deal with ambivalence and anxiety about being evaluated; and how to maintain a balance between performing personal and professional tasks (Moore, 1974).

Lastly, evaluative procedures should be designed not only to provide feedback to paraprofessionals about their performance and the progress they are making, but also to assess whether or not the objectives of delivering specific services to students were met (Sherwood, 1985; Tindall & Gray, 1985).

In reviewing the literature, Tindall and Gray (1985), have synthesized the essential conditions for instituting a peer counseling program:

1. Involve everyone who is a part of the program in the planning.

2. Develop a specific planned training program. The program format may be in the form of classes, a series of workshops, training seminars, or whatever is needed, but it must have built in an effective training component.

3. Short encounter groups or one time workshops of short duration are not adequate to train helpers effectively.

4. A lengthy training program isn't necessary, but it must be well structured and long enough to enable trainees to integrate the training.

5. Individuals who have the qualities of sensitivity, warmth, and awareness of others make effective trainees.

6. Supervision of trainees is important. This includes providing on-going feedback while the trainee is functioning in a peer counseling role.

7. Evaluation and research must be a part of the training and peer counseling program to measure progress and isolate problems.

8. Persons involved in the program need to be interested in the concept and the application of peer counseling.

9. Peer counselors should not be used as aides to do "flunky" work which professionals do not want to be bothered. That is not what they are trained for. The peer counselors must be an integrated part of the total program with responsibilities comparable to those of the professionals.

10. Supervisors must explain the ethical aspects of the training and supervision.

11. Peer counselors should work with peers who have similar value systems.

12. Peer counselors can work successfully with support groups if trained properly.

13. The professional trainer needs to be able to be a trainer, coordinator, facilitator, organizer, and evaluator.

Computer-assisted Career Counseling

One of the most valuable assets of the computer is its ability to store and process vast amounts of information (Pyle, 1984). Super (1970) viewed the computer as "just another library; a terminal as just another book with a good table of contents, a good index, and programmed interactions to insure good personal use of data" (p. 106).

Among the helping professions, computer technology has had the most impact in the area of career guidance and counseling (Sampson & Pyle, 1983). During the late 1960's, counselors first began experimenting with a variety of computerized guidance and information systems to assist high school and college students with career guidance (Harris-Bowlsbey, 1984). However, it wasn't until the 1970's before their use became widespread (Pyle, 1985). Counselors soon came to the realization that computers could facilitate the counseling process by reducing the amount of time they spent doing repetitive and routine tasks, such as disseminating information, thereby freeing them to spend more time interacting with students (Sampson & Pyle, 1983).

Computer-assisted Career Guidance Systems

Computer-assisted career guidance (CACG) systems were designed to assist individuals with the career development and decision making processes. Career guidance systems have

been grouped into three areas (Pyle, 1984): (1) Administrative (programs that help with administrative tasks, such as record keeping); (2) Information (programs developed specifically to provide students with information about careers); and (3) Skill-Building (programs designed to assist in the development and enhancement of career development skills).

In addition to providing assistance in the retrieval of career information, skill-building programs help guide the user through the career decision making process (Katz & Shatkin, 1980). This specific type of career guidance system can not only assist clients in assessing their values, interests, and skills (components that are critical in career decision making), it can also help them relate these aspects to occupations and help them plan and implement the necessary next step in this career exploration process (Pyle, 1984). Because they are more comprehensive than systems that only provide information about careers, skill-building systems generally take more time to complete. An example of one such system is SIGI--the System of Interactive Guidance and Information (Katz, 1980).

Integrating Computers and Career Counseling

Research has shown that computers can be used as a tool to enhance the career counseling process (Pyle & Stripling, 1976; Sampson & Stripling, 1979; and Katz, 1980). Studies by Pyle and Stripling (1976) and Myers, Lindeman, Thompson,

and Patrick (1975) found that using computer-assisted guidance systems in secondary and post-secondary schools facilitated growth in vocational maturity among high school and college students.

A review of the literature by Sampson (1984) on computer-assisted guidance, revealed that:

1. Clients respond positively to using a CACG system.
2. Clients are able to expand their knowledge of self and the world of work.
3. Clients are more specific about their career and educational objectives after using a CACG system.
4. Clients have increased confidence in their career decision making ability after using a CACG system.
5. Clients seem more motivated to use other career planning resources to assist them in the career decision making process after using a CACG system.

According to Crites (as cited in Pyle, 1984), using computers in career counseling can: (1) assist the client in the process of making a career choice; (2) teach the client decision making skills; and (3) help the client become better adjusted in all aspects of living.

The Need for Counselor Intervention

The need for counselor intervention has been well documented (Harris-Bowlsbey, 1984; Lindsay, 1988; Pyle & Stripling, 1976; Sampson & Pyle, 1983; Sampson & Stripling, 1979). According to Pyle (1984), "Counselor intervention is

an important aspect of an individual's use of both information and guidance systems" (p. 143).

While computers have the potential to perform such tasks as interviewing, conducting assessment, providing information and performing repetitive assignments, they lack the "human touch," i.e. they are incapable of empathy, genuineness, and the ability to be accepting and nonjudgemental (Lindsay, 1988). Furthermore, computers cannot make decisions or choices for a client.

As Johnson and Sampson (1985) have pointed out, those who use computerized career guidance systems always have another step to take after using the computer, whether its to follow up more information about a particular career, choose a major, or begin a job search. The counselor-computer connection provides a bridge to help link the student to the appropriate resources which may help him or her complete the next step in the career exploration process.

Although counselor intervention is an important aspect of a client's use of both information and guidance systems, computer-assisted guidance systems generally are perceived by their developers to be programs that the user can operate with minimal assistance from instruction manuals and workbooks (Pyle, 1984). Research by Cassie, Ragsdale, and Robinson (1979) contend that counselor intervention is needed because students generally have a low level of self-

awareness, and require assistance in interpreting self-assessment data. Studies by Melhus, Hershenson, and Vermillion (1973) and Dungy (1980) also support this finding and suggest that without counselor intervention, there is an increased potential that computer-assisted guidance systems will not be used effectively.

While the counselor can help the client to synthesize information to carry out his or her plans (Pyle and Stripling, 1976), the type of counselor intervention seems to vary with the computer-assisted guidance system and the setting in which they are used (Sampson & Pyle, 1983). Counselor interventions generally occur in individual and group formats. According to Sampson and Pyle (1983), interventions may be conducted by both professional and paraprofessional staff. In some cases, the counselor may work closely with an individual throughout the course of the program to introduce him or her to the career guidance system, and to provide guidance throughout and after the process. Other times the computer-assisted program may be used as a "stand alone service" with the counselor acting as a consultant to the client on an as needed basis (Sampson & Pyle, 1983).

Sampson & Stripling (1979) maintain that counselors are a necessary component of computer-assisted counseling. In a study using SIGI, they found that students preferred a structured intervention over a nonstructured approach

(Sampson & Stripling, 1976). The structured intervention featured a systematic orientation and introduction to each of the program's sections, and concluded with a follow-up to assess each individual's needs after completing the program.

Using the same career guidance program, Pyle and Stripling (1976) observed that when the counselor intervened and managed the computer-assisted guidance process using the SIGI handbook with community college students, a significant increase in career maturity was demonstrated (Pyle and Stripling, 1976).

Sampson and Stripling (1979) recommended making computer-assisted career guidance systems available to students who want to use these programs without counselor intervention. They suggested, however, that counselors should be available for consultation when students experience problems at the computer and when they request further counseling following the completion of a program.

Without adequate counselor intervention individuals who use CACG systems could encounter several problems (Sampson & Pyle, 1983). For instance, clients may experience anxiety if they are not introduced to computer applications. Some individuals feel anxious about using a computer because they are concerned that they lack the skill or mathematical ability to operate such equipment, or they fear that if they make a mistake it may damage the computer or the system being used (Sampson & Pyle, 1983). Such anxiety may further

exacerbate the presenting problem that led them to seek help in the first place. Related to this issue is the concern that clients may have unrealistic expectations of the computer's abilities and may see it as a solution to their problem. Without an introduction to a computer application, clients may experience excessive anxiety and misconceptions which can limit their ability to benefit from using such a resource. Without appropriate follow-up, potential misconceptions and misunderstandings are also likely to go uncorrected.

Talbutt (1988) points out that just as counselors have an ethical responsibility to explain the purposes and results of tests, they also have an obligation to their clients to help them understand the content and limitations of information contained in computerized guidance programs. This is indicated in the American Association for Counseling and Development Ethical Standards, which state that: "Members must provide specific orientation or information to the examinee(s) prior to and following the test administration" (AACD, 1981, Section C.1).

Problems may also result when information contained in computer assisted career counseling and guidance systems are inaccurate or become outdated. After a period of time, a computer program may cease to function properly, due to equipment or program failure. The resulting anxiety and frustration experienced by clients who encounter these

problems may prompt them to terminate counseling altogether.

Sampson and Pyle (1983) have proposed a series of ethical guidelines to help prevent such problems:

1. Before using a computer-assisted counseling, testing, or guidance system, counselors should be sure the client's needs have been assessed to determine the appropriateness of using such a resource.

2. Clients should be given an introduction to a computerized-guidance system to alleviate anxiety and to clear up any potential misconceptions regarding the role of the computer or the operation of the program being used.

3. Counselors need to provide some kind of follow-up to correct misconceptions and misunderstandings and to assess the subsequent needs of clients.

4. Counselors need to ensure that the information in computerized guidance systems is both accurate and up-to-date.

5. Counselors should also be sure that both the computer equipment and software are properly functioning.

6. Depending on the problem, either direct or indirect counselor intervention may be used to effectively assist the client.

Computers and Counselors

In spite of evidence of the potential benefits of using computers, some counselors have resisted them (Pyle, 1985). Computers have sometimes been perceived as a threat, in part

because of their mechanical nature, and also because of counselors' apprehension and fear of using and/or being replaced by them (Lindsay, 1988).

According to Lindsay (1988), a lot of negative feelings toward computers stem from the question of whether or not counselors can be replaced by computers. While the computer may sometimes be perceived as a substitute, it can never completely displace the counselor (Lindsay, 1988). As Harris-Bowlesby (1983) points out, "No computer-based system can replace counselors or stand entirely alone" (Harris-Bowlesby, p. 67).

Krumboltz (1985) holds that "without directions from a human being, the computer...is useless" (p. 165). When used together, however, both counselors and computers can be combined to harness the potential each has to offer and help those who use these resources to get the information they need to make decisions and to learn (Lindsay, 1988). While most studies to date have focused on the effectiveness of using the computer alone, research by Garis (in Harris-Bowlesby, 1983) has concentrated on using the computer alone, the counselor alone, and combining the two together. It has been suggested that the most effective form of career guidance for students could be a combination of the computer with the counselor. However, it seems more research is needed in this area.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

To explore the relationship between the peer counselors and the computer-assisted career guidance systems, students who used the Counseling Center's career resources in the fall of 1991 were given a short self-report questionnaire to complete which asked them to indicate the perceived levels of helpfulness of both the program they used and the peer counselor who assisted them.

Two hundred twenty eight Eastern Illinois University students replied to a survey asking them to indicate which of the four computerized guidance programs they used and whether or not they thought it was helpful; how helpful was their peer counselor; and whether or not they would recommend this service to a friend. Using a four point scale, students were to base their responses according to whether they perceived the program and the peer counselor to be: Very helpful (4), Helpful (3), Somewhat helpful (2), or Not very helpful (1). Students were also invited to add any additional comments or suggestions they felt added to or hindered their experience.

At the end of each session with the computerized programs and with the peer counselors, students were instructed to complete the questionnaire and then drop it in a box designated for the surveys. Surveys were collected

throughout the peer counseling program's eleven week term.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the results were entered into a data base and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-X). Frequency distributions were run on the entire survey. In analyzing the data, it was revealed that of the Counseling Center's four computer-assisted guidance systems--the System of Interactive Guidance and Information Plus (SIGI PLUS), the Horizons Career Information System (CIS) the Computer-Linked Exploration of Careers and Training (C-LECT), and the Computer Assisted Study Skills Instruction package (CASSI)--the majority of the 228 students surveyed (N=170) used SIGI PLUS during the eleven week survey period. Because of this, it was decided to limit the data analysis to this particular program.

Cross tabulations and Pearson correlations were run using the survey variables of perceived level of helpfulness of SIGI PLUS (how helpful SIGI), perceived level of helpfulness of the peer counselor (how helpful peer counselor), and week during the period of the peer counseling program that students were surveyed (lateness in the semester by week).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Using a four point scale, students' responses to the survey were calculated according to whether they perceived the program and the peer counselor to be: Very helpful (4), Helpful (3), Somewhat helpful (2), or Not very helpful (1). Of those surveyed, 91 students (39.9%) found SIGI PLUS to be very helpful; 51 students (22.4%) thought SIGI PLUS had been helpful; 23 (10.1%) found SIGI PLUS somewhat helpful; and five students (2.2%) didn't think SIGI PLUS had been very helpful at all.

With regard to the perceived helpfulness of the peer counselors, 149 students (65.4%) of those surveyed felt their peer counselor had been very helpful; 44 more (19.3%) responded that the peer counselor had been helpful; 11 students (4.8%) indicated they perceived the peer counselor as being somewhat helpful; and only one student (.4%) perceived the peer counselor as being not very helpful.

An analysis of the data revealed a relationship between these two variables. Of those surveyed, the majority of students felt both the SIGI PLUS program (91, 39.9%) and the peer counselor (149, 65.4%) had been very helpful. A somewhat smaller number of respondents echoed this finding and indicated the program (51, 22.4%) and the peer counselor (44, 19.3%) had been helpful. The remainder of students surveyed either ranked both the SIGI PLUS program and the

peer counselor as having been somewhat helpful (23, 10.1% and 11, 4.8%) or not very helpful (5, 2.2% and 1, .4%).

The data also showed that a large portion of the students came in to the Counseling Center to use the computerized career guidance systems during the first few weeks of the peer counseling program. During the first four weeks of the eleven week period, 153 students (67.1%) took advantage of this service; during weeks five through eight, 49 more (21.5%) were seen; and another 26 students (11.4%) came in during weeks nine through eleven.

In response to the question of whether or not students would recommend this service to a friend, of those students surveyed, 224 (98.2%) said they would recommend the service, while only three students (1.3%) said they would advise against it.

To better understand the relationship of the perceived helpfulness of the SIGI PLUS program, the peer counselors, and the week in the semester to one another, Pearson correlations were run using all three variables. As illustrated in Table 1, a significant relationship was found between the level of perceived helpfulness of SIGI PLUS ($p < .05$) and the helpfulness of the peer counselor ($p < .05$). Both variables were also found to have a low, but significant positive correlation to the period surveyed (lateness) in the semester ($p < .05$). In other words, as the semester progressed, an increase in ratings for both the

computer-assisted guidance program and the peer counselor, was observed.

TABLE 1
Results of Pearson Correlation

| <u>Variables</u> | <u>How Helpful SIGI</u> | <u>How Helpful P. C.</u> | <u>Week</u> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| How helpful SIGI PLUS | ---- | .59 | .19 |
| How helpful Peer Counselor | .59 | ----- | .14 |
| Lateness in semester (by week) | .19 | .14 | --- |

N=170

All correlations are significant, $p < .05$, two-tailed.

A moderately high degree of significance was observed between the perceived degree of helpfulness of SIGI PLUS and students' perceived helpfulness of the peer counselors, which lends support to the rationale of using peer counselors to facilitate students' use of computer-assisted career guidance systems. These findings have implications for counselors. In a time of limited human and financial resources, peer counselors, together with computer technology, offer professional counselors a means of providing quality support services for students who need individualized guidance through the career exploration process.

Limitations of the Study

The statistics in this study were limited to the data collected during the eleven weeks of the fall 1991 peer counseling program and were specific to those students who used the Counseling Center's career resources at that time.

Although elements of training were not addressed in this survey, the results of this study may also be used to further the notion of training peer counselors early on in the semester. Because this was the first study of this kind at the Counseling Center, it should be repeated to determine whether the results are consistent over time.

It should also be noted that the graduate assistant, who worked an average of 14 hours a week and had prior experience in working with both students and the career resources was also included in the data and may have influenced the significance of the data. Other variables to consider that may have had some impact on the results include: (1) the quality of peer counselor-student interactions; (2) the personality of the peer counselors; and (3) students' tendency to over- or under-rate their experience on a survey.

Future questionnaires might include: (1) a list of desirable peer counselor qualities; (2) an indication of whether the student prefers working with the computer, the counselor, or a combination of the two; and, lastly (3) a rating system which features an extended continuum of levels of perceived helpfulness from 1 to 10, as opposed to 1 to 4.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of using peer counselors and computer-assisted career guidance systems to help augment the Counseling Center's professional staff and to extend career counseling services to an increasing student clientele.

In surveying students who came to the Counseling Center for assistance with career counseling during the fall of 1991, it became apparent that there was a relationship between the perceived level of helpfulness of the peer counselor and the perceived helpfulness of the SIGI PLUS computerized career guidance program. The majority of students who responded to the survey expressed satisfaction in working with both the computer-assisted career guidance system and the peer counselor.

The results of this study lend support to the rationale of using peer counselors to facilitate students' use of computer-assisted career guidance systems. In light of these findings, it is recommended that efforts be made to continue the Counseling Center's peer counseling program.

The results also have implications for further research in this area. To ensure quality service will be available to help meet the needs of students who continue to use these resources, such a program should be evaluated on an on-going

basis.

Recommendations for Implementation

In order to facilitate the continuation of the Counseling Center's peer counseling program, the writer has outlined a list of proposals and steps to follow to help guide future coordinators of this program.

Before the Start of the Academic Year:

1. Appoint a professional staff member to serve as a coordinator of the peer counseling program. This person can serve as a link between the peer counselors and other professionals and can better address peer counselors' concerns and/or problems, as they adjust to their new roles.

Prior to the Beginning of Each Semester:

1. The coordinator should contact the instructor(s) of the Current Practices and Problems in Counseling class to introduce him- or herself and to elicit the instructor's cooperation in recruiting peer counselors. The coordinator should encourage the instructor to refer students who are interested in participating as peer counselors to him or her. The instructor should also be made aware of how many participants are being sought. NOTE: the majority of graduate students in the Educational Psychology and Guidance program tend to enroll in this course in the fall, therefore the number of graduate students participating in the peer counseling program will be much greater during this semester

than during the spring. On the average, this number should be kept between 20 to 25 participants per semester (it is usually about this for the fall, but considerably less in the spring).

2. Dates for peer counseling orientations need to be scheduled in advance. At least two different dates should be scheduled to accommodate interested participants' varied schedules. No less than 90 minutes should be scheduled for each orientation. Students need only attend one orientation. (NOTE: It's easier to meet in groups of 10 rather than meet individually with students; it saves time, and limits the number of times you have to repeat the information.) It's also a good idea to block out an alternate date in the event one of the scheduled dates doesn't work out.

3. In addition to ensuring the information on the computer-assisted career guidance programs are kept up-to-date, the Peer Counselor Handbook should also be revised as necessary.

At the Start of Each Semester:

1. Prior to the second class meeting, send a brief memo to the instructor, addressed to the students, explaining what peer counselors do. Included in this memo should be a list of dates and times of the scheduled orientations. Interested participants should sign up and have the instructor return the memo to the peer counseling

coordinator. Orientation should be held during the fourth or fifth full week of classes. By that time, prospective peer counselors should have completed several class exercises designed to help hone their counseling skills and should have a better idea of their own schedule.

2. The coordinator should meet with the prospective peer counselors on the designated dates. Each interested participant should be given their own copy of the Peer Counselor Handbook. (At least one copy should be kept in the occupational/vocational library.) Orientation should cover materials in the handbook and address any questions students may have. Also included should be a tour of the Counseling Center.

Afterwards, each of the computer-assisted career guidance systems should be demonstrated to illustrate what each of the programs look like and what each can do.

3. Before the end of the orientation session, each student should sign up for "office hours." These may be scheduled in either one two-hour time block or, if absolutely necessary, two one-hour blocks of time. Try not to schedule more than two peer counselors per hour. However, all efforts should be made to "buddy up" peer counselors either with one another or with the graduate assistant, for added support.

4. Students should be invited to stay following the orientation session to work with the computers and help them

get comfortable with the computerized resources. Encourage students to come in on their own prior to their scheduled office hours. If at all possible, have peer counselors come in during the following week so they can use the time to acquaint themselves with the resources, but hold off taking appointments during that first week. This can help reduce some of their anxiety, by giving them time to get used to their new schedule, and establishing a level of familiarity and comfort prior to meeting with clients. It may also help to encourage them to come in at various times to observe one another or the graduate assistant.

5. Invite peer counselors to ask questions and encourage feedback.

6. Because students are participating in the peer counseling program for credit, it's a good idea to send the instructor(s) a list of names of the participants shortly before the end of the semester (on or around mid-term week would be fine). In addition, a letter should be sent to both the instructor and the peer counselors during, or shortly prior to, the last week of the peer counseling program thanking them for their cooperation during the course of the semester (see Appendix).

Further Recommendations

1. A second "mini" orientation is recommended to help peer counselors anticipate what to expect before meeting with clients. Such a meeting would give the peer counselor

coordinator an opportunity to role play typical client-counselor interactions that peer counselors might encounter and to serve as a model for facilitative responses to a variety of potential situations. The graduate assistant could be utilized as a resource person to assist the peer counselor coordinator in this endeavor by working closely with the peer counselors on an on-going basis to ensure they receive the necessary training.

2. Traffic tends to slow down during the last few days of classes. Because this is usually a busy time for graduate students, it might be wise to terminate the peer counseling program at the end of the last full week of classes.

3. It's a good idea to encourage peer counselors to ask questions and to make referrals to other campus resources (i.e. department chairs, the library, and the placement center) if the Counseling Center doesn't have the information the students are looking for.

4. More research should be conducted regarding the effectiveness of combining peer counselors with computer-assisted career guidance to provide a means of further evaluation of the peer counseling program. One possible suggestion would be to design a survey instrument similar to the one in this study and administer it to every student who uses the computerized resources on a continuing basis to more accurately gauge students' responses over time.

REFERENCES

- Academic Development FY 82 Annual Report, Eastern Illinois University.
- American Association for Counseling and Development (AACD). (1981). Ethical standards. Alexandria, VA: American Association for Counseling and Development Press.
- Ash, K. S., & Mandelbaum, D. (1982). Using peer counselors in career development. Journal of College Placement, 47-51.
- Brown, W. F. (1974). Effectiveness of paraprofessional: The evidence. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 53, 257-263.
- Carkhuff, R. R., & Truax, C. B. (1965). Lay mental health counseling: The effects of lay group counseling. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 29, 426-431.
- Cassie, J. R. B., Ragsdale, R. G., & Robinson, M. (1979). A comparative analysis of choices and S.G.I.S. Toronto, Canada: Ontario Department of Education. (ERIC Document No. ED 180132)
- Delworth, U., & Johnston, M. M. (1984). Student paraprofessionals in counseling and career centers. In S. C. Ender & R. B. Winston, Jr. (Eds.) Students as paraprofessional staff: New directions for student services (pp. 81-90). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Delworth, U., Sherwood, G., & Casaburri, N. Student Paraprofessionals: A Working Model for Higher

- Education (Washington, D.C.: Student Personnel Series No. 17, American College Personnel Association. American Personnel and Guidance Association, 1974).
- Dungy, G. (1980). Abstract of career decision-making questionnaire research. In C. Johnson (Ed.), Adult SIGI manual: Supplemental training materials. Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Eastern Illinois University Undergraduate College Catalog, 1991-92.
- Ender, S. C. Students as Paraprofessionals. In T. A. Miller, R. B. Winston, Jr., & W. R. Mendenhall (Eds.) Administration and Leadership in Student Affairs. Muncie, Indiana: Accelerated Development, 1983.
- Hansen, R. N., & Johnston, M. C. (1986). College students as paraprofessional career specialists. Journal of Career Development, 13 (1), 18-29.
- Harris-Bowlsbey, J. (1983). The impact of computers on career guidance and assessment. New Directions for Testing and Measurement, 20, 63-76.
- Harris-Bowlsbey, J. (1984). The computer and career development. Journal of Counseling and Development, 63 (3), 145-148.
- Johnson, C., & Sampson, J. P. (1985). Training counselors to use computers. Journal of Career Development, 12 (2), 118-127.
- Johnston, J. A., & Hansen, R. N. "Using Paraprofessionals in

- Career Development Programming," New Directions for Student Services: Facilitating Students' Career Development, No. 14 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981, pp. 81-97).
- Katz, M. R. (1980). SIGI: An interactive aid to career decision making. Journal of College Student Personnel, 2 (1), 34-40.
- Katz, M. R., & Shatkin, L. Computer-assisted guidance: Concepts and practices (ETS RR-80-1). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1980.
- Krumboltz, J. D. (1985). Presuppositions underlying computer use in career counseling. Journal of Career Development, 12 (2), 165- 170.
- Lindsay, G. (1988). Strengthening the counseling profession via computer use: Responding to the issues. The School Counselor, 35, 325-330.
- Melhus, G. E., Hershenson, D. B., & Vermillion, M. E. (1973). Computer-assisted versus traditional vocational counseling with high school and low readiness clients. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 3, 137-144.
- Moore, M. (1974). Training professionals to work with paraprofessionals. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 53 (4), 308-312.
- Myers, R. A., Lindeman, R. H., Thompson, A. S., & Patrick, T. A. (1975). Effects of educational and career

- exploration system on vocational maturity. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 6, 245-254.
- Pyle, R. (1984). Career counseling and computers: Where is the Creativity? Journal of Counseling and Development, 63 (3), 141-144.
- Pyle, K. R. (1985). High tech/high touch: A synergy applicable to career development. Journal of Career Development, 12 (2), 145-156.
- Pyle, K. R., & Stripling, R. O. (1976). The counselor, the computer, and career development. Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 25, 71-75.
- Sampson, J. P., & Pyle, K. R. (1983). Ethical issues involved with the use of computer-assisted counseling, testing, and guidance systems. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 61 (5), 283-287.
- Sampson, J. P., Jr. (1984). Maximizing the effectiveness of computer applications in counseling and human development: The role of research and implementation strategies. Journal of Counseling and Development, 63, 187-191.
- Sampson, Jr., J. P., & Stripling, R. O. (1979). Strategies for counselor intervention with a computer-assisted career guidance system. Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 27, 230-238.
- Sherwood, G. P. (1985). Allied and Paraprofessional Assistance. In U. Delworth, G. R. Hanson, & Associates

(1st ed.), Student Services: A handbook for the profession (pp. 368-383). California: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Super, D. (1970). Computer-assisted counseling. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Talbutt, L. C. (1988). Ethics and computer usage: Hidden answers for school counselors. The School Counselor, 199-203.

Tindall, J. A., & Gray, H. D. (1985). Peer counseling: An in-depth look at training peer helpers. (3rd ed.). Indiana: Accelerated Development, Inc.

Zunker, V. G. (1975). Students as paraprofessionals in four-year colleges and universities. Journal of College Student Personnel, 16 (4), 282-286.

APPENDIX A

Course Description of EDG 5890:

Current Practices and Problems in Counseling

Course Description of EDG 5890:

Current Practices and Problems in Counseling

Current Practices and Problems in Counseling (four semester hours credits). "The study of principles and the acquiring and practicing of skills" (Principles and Practices of Counseling course syllabus, Fall, 1990).

APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument

Career Counseling Survey

Thank you for using the Counseling Center's career resources. We'd like to know what you thought of our services so we can better serve students like yourself in the future. Your input is greatly appreciated and comments or suggestions are always welcome.

Date:

Peer Counselor:

1. If you used any of the computerized guidance programs, how helpful would you say they were? (Please check all that apply.)

| | <u>Very Helpful</u> | <u>Helpful</u> | <u>Somewhat Helpful</u> | <u>Not Very Helpful</u> |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u> </u> SIGI PLUS | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| <u> </u> CIS | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| <u> </u> C-LECT | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| <u> </u> CASSI | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

2. What brought you to the Counseling Center?

 I'm in school but I'm not really sure what I want to do
 Needed assistance in choosing a major
 Wanted to find out more about occupations related to my major
 My advisor recommended that I come
 Came here to fulfill a class assignment
 a. Please specify which class _____
 I was just curious about the career resources
 Other

3. How did you find out about the career resources?

 From a counselor
 From my academic advisor
 From a friend
 From my RA
 I attended a career planning workshop
 Other (please specify)

4. How helpful was your peer counselor?

| | | | |
|--------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| Very Helpful | Helpful | Somewhat Helpful | Not Very Helpful |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

5. Would you recommend this service to a friend?

 Yes No

6. Comments or Suggestions:

APPENDIX C

Sign Up Sheet for Peer Counselor Orientation

Sign up for Peer Counselor Orientation

Thank you for your interest in volunteering as a peer counselor this semester at the Counseling Center.

Peer counselors help students who need career guidance and assistance with decision making (such as choosing a college major, deciding what they really want to do, and gathering information on how to achieve their goals). They help students learn how to help themselves and to realize new choices.

To introduce you to the peer counseling program, three dates have been scheduled for a brief orientation. You need only attend ONE (which ever fits your schedule best). During this time, we'll compare schedules and try to coordinate time(s) which will be compatible with your schedule and the Counseling Center's (hours for peer counseling will be from 8:00-12:00 and 1:00-4:00 Monday through Friday). A brief overview of what to expect will be also be presented.

In order to get the maximum benefit out of this experience we need people who can commit to two hours a week--either one 2 hour time block or two 1 hour time blocks each week, starting the week of September 23rd.

If you have any questions or cannot attend one of the listed orientations but would still like to participate, please feel free call me at the Counseling Center (581-3413) either Monday or Thursday mornings from 8:00-12:00, or Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons from 1:00-4:00.

Thank you again for your participation.

Kathi Ritten
Graduate Assistant

Please sign up for only one orientation session.*

Please be sure to include a phone number where you may be reached in the event a session may need to be rescheduled.

| <u>Tues., Sept. 17, 1:00</u> | <u>Wed., Sept. 18, 1:00</u> | <u>Thurs. Sept. 19, 9:00</u> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. | 5. |
| 6. | 6. | 6. |
| 7. | 7. | 7. |
| 8. | 8. | 8. |
| 9. | 9. | 9. |
| 10. | 10. | 10. |

*Participation is limited to 20 participants.

APPENDIX D

Follow Up Letter to EDG 5890 Instructor

Date: September 23, 1991

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Bob Saltmarsh
Professor

From: Kathi Ritten
Graduate Assistant

Re: Peer Counseling Program

I wanted to thank you for encouraging students in your EDG 5890 Current Practices and Problems in Counseling class to participate as peer counselors for the Counseling Center this semester.

I was impressed by the enthusiastic response to the peer counselor program. It was initially projected that only about 20 to 22 people would be able to participate in the program; however, once our schedule took shape (based on students' availability), we realized that it was possible for all 26 who attended the orientation sessions and signed up for hours to take part.

Since this is the first week of peer counseling, we may still have some students that need to adjust their hours or who may decide they are unable to participate. I will be sending you a list of participants for your records in a few weeks.

Thanks again for your cooperation. We appreciate your part in continuing a program of students helping other students learn how to help themselves.

APPENDIX E

Thank You Letter to EDG 5890 Instructor

Date: November 18, 1991

M E M O R A N D U M

To: Bob Saltmarsh
Professor

From: Kathi Ritten
Graduate Assistant

Re: Peer Counselor Participants

As the semester winds to a close, I wanted to say thank you once again for encouraging students in your EDG 5890 Current Practices and Problems in Counseling class to participate as peer counselors for the Counseling Center this semester.

I was truly impressed by the enthusiasm and caring attitude expressed by this semester's peer counselors. I've enclosed a list of participants names for your records.

Peer counselors for Fall 1991 included:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Suzanne Aljabori | Brad Musgrave |
| Leslie Allard | Nancy Penk |
| Ahmed Alquraishi | Shawn Peoples |
| Mythili Bala | Tracy Planeta |
| Debbie Barker | Kim Rhodes |
| Kelli Collins | Peg Schulte |
| Mark Davis | Nathan Swinford |
| Tom Dequimpal | Tammy Toellner |
| Michelle Frese | Lynn Travis |
| Donna Furgeson | Jackie Weber |
| Paul Genovese | Eldine Webster |
| Audra Harris | Kathy White |
| Mary Mulcahy | Todd Wright |

Thanks again for your cooperation. We appreciate your part in continuing a program of students helping other students learn how to help themselves.

APPENDIX F

Thank You Letter to Peer Counselors



EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS 61920

Counseling Center
(217) 581-3413

December 2, 1991

Dear Peer Counselor:

As the semester draws to a close, I wanted to let you know how much we appreciated having you as a peer counselor at the Counseling Center this semester. Your participation in the peer counselor program helped us to provide an important service to many students who needed assistance in career guidance and decision making.

The caring attitude you showed and your willingness to listen and help others to explore new choices helped many students learn how to help themselves.

I hope your semester as a peer counselor has been a beneficial learning experience for you. If you are interested in continuing on as a peer counselor for next semester, please let me know. We'd love to have you back.

Thanks again for all your help. Good luck with finals, and have a happy holiday.

Sincerely,

Kathi Ritten
Graduate Assistant
Counseling Center

KR:bjh

APPENDIX G

Peer Counselor Handbook

A Guide to Peer Counseling:
A Handbook Featuring (Almost) Everything You
Ever Wanted to Know About Peer Counseling
(and More!)

Prepared by Kathi Ritten
Graduate Assistant, Fall 1991

INDEX

| | |
|--|----|
| Index..... | i |
| Welcome..... | ii |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Application of Skills..... | 2 |
| Making a Referral..... | 2 |
| First Steps..... | 3 |
| Etc..... | 4 |
| Introduction to Career Exploration Programs..... | 5 |
| SIGI PLUS..... | 5 |
| CIS..... | 6 |
| C-LECT..... | 6 |
| CASSI..... | 6 |
| Getting Started..... | 7 |
| Powering up the computers..... | 7 |
| Making print outs..... | 7 |
| Entering/exiting programs..... | 7 |
| SIGI PLUS..... | 8 |
| CIS..... | 9 |
| C-LECT..... | 11 |
| CASSI..... | 12 |
| Printed Resource Materials..... | 13 |

Welcome

Welcome to the Counseling Center! We appreciate your participation in the Peer Counselor program this semester.

As a peer counselor you will be providing an important service to students who are seeking career guidance and assistance with decision making (such as choosing a college major, deciding what they really want to do, and gathering information on how to achieve their goals). In working one-on-one with students, you'll not only be helping them learn how to help themselves, you'll also be helping them to realize new choices.

This information packet was put together to introduce you to the resources the Counseling Center has available for student use and to provide some guidelines to help you get started.

Featured is information about the Counseling Center, some helpful hints to help get you oriented, an introduction to the computerized career exploration programs (and also to the computers), and information about various other resources used to assist students who may be trying to decide on a major, or who are investigating potential career possibilities.

We hope this handbook will serve as a useful reference as you get started. If you have any questions please feel free to consult the Peer Counseling program coordinator, the graduate assistant, or one of the counselors. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.

Thanks again for your participation.

Introduction

The Counseling Center offers personal and career counseling services to students at Eastern Illinois University free of charge. Five full time and two part-time counselors are available to assist students in exploring personal concerns. Students may stop by or call (telephone number 581-3413) to make an appointment Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Peer counselors work primarily with the graduate assistant to help those students who need career guidance and assistance in accessing information about occupations in a variety of fields. Both peer counselors and the graduate assistant work in the career resource area, located towards the back of the Counseling Center. This area features computers containing computerized career guidance programs and various other printed resource materials for assisting students.

Peer counselors work about 2 hours a week Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Peer Counselor program runs approximately 10 weeks throughout the fall and spring semesters, beginning the fourth or fifth week of each semester and ending the last week of classes. (The graduate assistant is available approximately 14 hours a week throughout the regular course of the semester).

Peer counselors do not work over holidays (Labor day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, or Lincoln's birthday), during fall or spring break, during finals week, or during the week of the IACD convention.

Application of Skills

As mentioned earlier, peer counselors help students learn how to help themselves. Although you will be doing primarily "vocational counseling" (i.e. helping students to explore potential career areas that match the skills they already possess or are currently developing), you will also have the opportunity to refine some of the skills you have practiced in your EDG 5890 Current Practices and Problems in Counseling class (such as attending to each client, employing active listening, using open-ended leads, etc.).

Because each person is unique, you will find that students' needs differ from person to person. Although the computerized guidance programs are all geared to be self-help, some students may need more direction than others to retrieve the information they are seeking.

Appointments are generally scheduled in 30 minute intervals, sometimes longer (depending on the type of request), and are based on the availability of the computers and personnel. It's a good idea to check the schedule with the receptionist at the beginning of your shift so you will have an idea of how many clients are scheduled and what programs might be used (you may not know this until you meet with the client). Generally speaking, those students that are just beginning the career exploration process or who are trying to decide on a major, may need more time and more guidance. Again, the counseling skills you have acquired (such as establishing rapport and finding out what each client is wanting to accomplish) will prove invaluable and will help you to determine which program to choose (if the student chooses to use the computers) or which direction to take.

Making a Referral

You may also encounter students for whom there is a separate issue underlying the initial presenting problem (vocational concern). You are encouraged to listen and to help the client present his or her issue, if you feel comfortable doing so. You are also encouraged to refer the person to one of the full time counselors, if you feel it would be helpful to the person. You may do this quite gracefully by explaining to the person that there are a number of other people on staff who are also very good listeners that have experience in that particular area and who would be able to help him or her pursue his or her issue further. You could then help the person make the appropriate connection to a counselor by walking with him or her to the receptionists' desk and explaining that this is where he or she could make an appointment to see another counselor. If the person is willing to do so, the receptionist can help him or her schedule a time that would be most convenient for his or her schedule.

First Steps

The best way to get started is to attend an orientation meeting with the coordinator of the Peer Counselor program. Orientation lasts approximately one hour and was designed to introduce you to the facilities and to give you a better grasp of what to expect. During orientation, the Peer Counselor coordinator will distribute information packets, give a short demonstration of each computer program, address any questions you might have, and help you schedule a mutually agreeable time period for you to come in on a regular basis. It's recommended that you review the materials in the information packet and address any questions you might have to the Peer Counselor program coordinator, the graduate assistant, or one of the counselors.

If you have the time before you officially start as a peer counselor, you might want to make an appointment (at your convenience) to experiment with some of the programs to get a feel for what each is like. You may do this after your orientation session if the computers are free (if no one has scheduled an appointment), or any time when the Counseling Center is open. If you prefer, you may make an appointment when the graduate assistant is present, instead of waiting until your first day. Either way, it's a good idea to get acquainted with these resources early on so you will feel more comfortable explaining them to students.

One special note here: You are not expected to know everything the first day. It takes a little time to get to know the ins and outs; it's all part of the learning process. If a student asks a question and you don't know the answer or if you're not sure how to access certain information, IT'S OKAY. By explaining to a student that you are learning too and that together the two of you can figure it out, makes you more human and may help an uncertain student relate to you a little better (after all, two heads are better than one).

If at any time you have any questions or run into any problems, especially at the beginning, please consult the Peer Counselor coordinator, the graduate assistant, or one of the counselors. (Remember, there are no dumb questions here and your feedback is valued.) If no one is available, you can always encourage the student(s) to make another appointment, which may give you more time to follow up any questions or concerns you encounter. If it turns out the Counseling Center does not have the career resources a student is looking for (such as information about specific companies), then it might help to refer him or her to other resource centers, such as the Career Planning and Placement Center (located in rooms 11, 12, and 13 in the Student Services building) or to Booth Library, for example.

Etc.

There may be times during the semester when you are unable to make it in during your regularly scheduled time. We appreciate your commitment and realize there may be occasions when you simply can't be here (after all, you're a student too). However, since often clients do have to schedule an appointment in advance, we'd appreciate knowing as soon as possible if you can't make it here so your appointment can be rescheduled if necessary. Please be sure to tell the receptionist ahead of time or call her at 581-3413 (during regular office hours).

Other things you may want to know about:

1. When you don't have an appointment, please feel free to further explore the computerized programs. Or, if you feel comfortable enough with them and have some free time, please feel free to study.
2. There is a restroom located down the corridor to the left, behind the receptionist's desk (just off of the kitchenette).
3. There is a drinking fountain in the alcove at the top of the ramp entrance to career resource area.
4. Also, if you're a coffee drinker, you can help yourself to a cup of coffee in the kitchenette area anytime for a dime.

Introduction to Career Exploration Programs

There are four computerized career guidance programs to choose from--SIGI PLUS, CIS or HORIZONS, C-LECT, and CASSI. Three of these programs are used for career exploration, and one is a resource for enhancing study skills. Each is "user friendly" and designed to be self-guided. We'll begin with a brief description of each of the career exploration programs, and then cover the study skills program.

Just a reminder, it's a good idea to give each of these programs a try; it's the best way to get acquainted with them. The more familiar you are with the features of each of these programs, the better prepared you will be to assist students in their career exploration journey.

SIGI PLUS

SIGI PLUS is short for the System of Interactive Guidance and Information (Plus a whole lot more). It is one of the most popular programs and is most often used to assist students with career decision making and planning. It is also an excellent resource for students who are trying to decide on a major.

As mentioned earlier, this program was designed to be self-guided; a person can go through all eight sections of the program, in any order, simply by following the prompts on the screen. It is not necessary for a person to go through all eight sections, however as students will discover, each section builds upon the others, making it a comprehensive and effective decision making package.

If a person has never used the program before, it's a good idea to walk him or her through the introduction, after discussing his or her needs or expectations of the program. If a person is trying to decide on a major or not sure what he or she would be good at doing, it might be a good idea to start at the beginning with Self Assessment and work through the remaining sections. If a person wants to investigate occupations related to his or her major, or explore features he or she wants (or wants to avoid) in his or her work, he or she may want to begin with section two, Search. Similarly, if a student wants to find out more information about a specific occupation (or occupations), he or she might do well by starting with the section after that, which is Information. A person may use the remaining sections--Skills, Coping, Deciding, Preparing, and Next Steps--to put together the pieces of his or her career puzzle to make informed decisions and to put his or her career plan into action.

SIGI PLUS also features a record keeping system so students may work through part of the program one day, quit and continue work the next day, without losing the work they previously logged.

Students should be encouraged to make print outs of their work to take home for further investigation. All print outs are free.

CIS

The Horizons package, or CIS (Career Information System), can help students to find out information about specific occupations and can also assist in conducting a local (Illinois) or nationwide college search (for both undergraduate and graduate institutions). It also contains helpful tips for those who are about to embark on a job search or who are interested in going into business for themselves.

The CIS handbook is used as a companion to this package. By following the prompts on the screen and referring to the handbook, this program can also be self-guided (although a little direction may be needed at first).

CIS features detailed occupational information (such as job description, skills and training required), including the outlook and salary range in the state of Illinois. The information may be compared to national statistics by retrieving information about the same occupation from another computer program, such as SIGI PLUS.

PLEASE NOTE: The program cannot tell a person where the best place is to find a job (as in a certain company's name or a specific state). For specific job listings and information about companies, please refer students to the Career Planning and Placement Center, rooms 11, 12, and 13 Student Services Building.

C-LECT

Another career exploration package is the Computer-Linked Exploration of Careers and Training program, C-LECT for short. C-LECT offers some of the same features of SIGI PLUS and CIS all rolled into one program. It features a record keeping system, a short self-assessment section (sort of a "mini" version of SIGI PLUS's Self Assessment), offers concise occupational information, and has a section to assist students in investigating undergraduate institutions, as well as information on financial aid and scholarships. Like CIS, it also has a companion user guide.

CASSI

Finally, the Computer Assisted Study Skills Instruction package--CASSI, for short--is a useful resource in helping students brush up on some basic study skills. Students can choose from fifteen lessons which vary from "Reading Textbooks" to "Time Management". Each lesson offers practical suggestions for improving certain skills; each takes about twenty minutes to complete. Students simply follow the prompts on the screen to progress through each segment. No print outs are necessary, but students are encouraged to take notes if they desire.

**SIGI PLUS and CIS are often used as resources for senior seminar assignments. CASSI and SIGI PLUS are also used by students in EIU 1001 freshman orientation classes.

Getting Started

Powering up the computers

If you come in and the equipment is not on, please turn on the power strip, located directly behind the printer switcher, in between the two computers. Then turn on the computers and monitors and the printer. (You'll have to reach around the back of each computer, along the right side, to find the on/off switch. The power switch for the printer is located along its lower left side.)

Type in today's date and the current time when prompted and hit RETURN or ENTER (although these are two different keys, they perform the same function). When the "C" prompt appears on the screen, enter the name of the program you wish to call up (for example: C>:SIGIPLUS) and then hit RETURN again. The program will then appear on the screen. NOTE: C-LECT and CASSI require one additional step to call up each program (see instructions for these specific programs for more information).

Making a print out

Anytime you wish to make a print out on either computer, be sure the switcher is assigned to the appropriate computer. If you are on computer A (the computer on the left), it should be in the A position; if you are on B (the one on the right), it should be in the B position. To switch from one computer to the other, simply turn the printer off, switch to the desired computer (A to B or B to A), and turn the printer back on again. This saves wear and tear on the printer. Instead of turning the printer off, you may choose instead to hit the "On Line" button (top button on the printer). By doing this, only one green light, instead of three, will be lit on the printer. At this point you may switch between computers. Before making a print out, please remember to re-press the "On Line" button again to reactivate the printer. All three green lights on the printer must be lit and the printer must be assigned to the computer you are working on in order to make a print out (otherwise nothing will happen).

Entering and exiting programs

Because each of the four computerized guidance programs were designed to be self-guided, you need only follow the prompts on the screen to progress through the desired program. However, it's important to keep in mind that each program is unique in and of itself, and therefore has its own set of operating instructions. The following is a list of guidelines for entering and exiting each program and gaining easy access to needed information. A brief outline of these procedures has also been taped to the table in between the two computers for quick reference.

TO GET STARTED ON SIGI PLUS:

At the C prompt, type "SIGIPLUS" and hit RETURN. In a moment, the title screen, displaying the words "SIGI PLUS" against a bright yellow background, will appear. Hit RETURN to begin.

The program begins by asking whether or not you have used SIGI PLUS before. You will be prompted to choose the number which corresponds to the answer that best describes you, hitting RETURN or ENTER afterwards. NOTE: Whenever a response is entered, it is always followed by hitting RETURN or ENTER. If you have never used the program before, you should choose answer number one; if you have used the program before and asked the computer to keep a record, you should choose answer number two, or the number which is most appropriate.

Next, you will be asked to type your name and then you will be given the option of keeping a record. This is only an option, it is not required. However, it is recommended for undecided majors and those who plan to do a lot of work on this program. Choose number one to keep a record or number two to not keep a record. If you choose to keep a record, you will then be prompted to enter a four digit number you will most likely remember (i.e. a phone number or birthdate). This number establishes a file in the computer banks for your use again in the future.

You will then be given a brief overview of each of the eight sections in SIGI PLUS and asked where you would like to begin. The computer can even suggest a recommended pathway through the program if you're not sure where to begin. It's helpful to remember that you can go through each of the sections in any order you choose, you do not have to necessarily start with the first section (although it is highly recommended for those who are undecided about their major or career goals).

Remember, you need only follow the prompts on the screen for directions. The function keys (F keys) located on the far left of the key board are used to help you progress through the program. The F1 key is used to back up a screen; F2 takes you to the main menu (also used in to exit the program); and the F3 key is used to make a print out.

Any time you wish to make a print out, look for the message "PRESS ENTER OR PRINT" (this message will appear at the bottom right hand corner of the screen) and then press the F3 key.

TO LEAVE SIGI PLUS:

Finish the section of the program you are working on and then press the F2 key to get to the main menu. From the main menu, choose "0" (zero) to leave SIGI PLUS. A summary sheet displaying a list of the sections completed and your user record number (if entered) will appear. After pressing RETURN to exit the program, the C prompt will then appear. Type "SIGIPLUS" to re-enter the program or type in the name of the next requested program.

TO GET STARTED ON CIS:

At the C prompt, type "CIS" and hit RETURN. In a moment, the title screen, displaying the letters "CIS" against a blue background, will appear. Type your name (first name is fine) and hit RETURN. NOTE: The computer will not let you enter the program until you have typed your name.

Four menus will appear on the next screen--INFO, QUEST, SCHSORT, and AIDSORT. CIS is designed so that you may access the information you need from any of these menus simply by following the prompts on the screen and referring to the commands listed on pages 52-56 in the accompanying Horizons User's Handbook. To see what each has to offer, type the name of a menu and hit RETURN.

INFO is probably the most popular of the four menus. It contains information about current local, state, and national occupations and career clusters. Also included are hints to help with a job search, such as putting together a resume and preparing for an interview, as well as tips for running your own business. INFO can help you find out about various programs of study and training to help you identify schools in Illinois and throughout the United States, that offer specific programs of interest. In addition to information about the services and costs of schools, you can use INFO to get the facts about various forms of financial aid, including grants, loans, work, and other sources of money to help fund your education.

The commands associated with INFO menu include: OCC, JS, OWN, PROG, APP, SCH, NSCH, and AID. Please follow the prompts on the screen and refer to the User's Handbook when more direction is needed. For example, to retrieve information about the occupation of Counselor, type the command INFO and then refer to the Occupation section of the User Handbook. Locate the occupation of Counselor (listed in alphabetical order) and its corresponding number in the left margin. At the screen prompt, type "OCC 8414" and hit RETURN. In a moment information about that occupation will appear on the screen. To get a print out of schools in Illinois that offer degrees in a particular program of study (such as Counseling), look up the specific program of study under the Program section in the User Handbook. At the prompt, type the command PROG plus the corresponding number in the left margin (ex.: "PROG 238") and hit RETURN. Information about a typical program of study in that specific field will appear on the screen. A list of schools in Illinois which offer such a program of study will appear at the end of this information.

QUEST is a 21-item questionnaire which can be used as an instrument to help students assess their interests, abilities, and work preferences. Students answer questions to help them gain a better understanding about themselves, which is the first step in the career exploration process. Once these factors are known, students can begin the process of exploring occupations and possible career options which take into account their personal attributes.

To use this section, simply type "QUEST" and hit RETURN. In a moment, the first question will appear on the screen. For more information about the questionnaire, please refer to the User's Handbook (the questions also appear in the handbook).

The SCHSORT and AIDSORT menus allow you to enter specific criteria to assist with a national school search and to locate information on funding your education. To use either of these menus, type in the same of the appropriate menu and hit RETURN. Next, choose from a list of criteria (such as location of school, program of study, financial need, etc.) to begin your search. Once again, you need only follow the prompts on the screen or refer to the User's Handbook to move through each section of the program.

To page through the information on the screen, press the "Page Down" or RETURN keys to go forward; the "Page Up" key will allow you to back up a page at a time.

To exit from a particular document, hit the "Escape" (Esc) key when prompted (this option will appear at the lower portion of the screen). Anytime you need help or wish to view the menus again, hit the F1 key.

To make a print out, press the F9 key when the computer gives you the option to print. The information on the screen will be interrupted briefly as the computer asks you to confirm this choice. To begin printing, press the F9 key a second time.

TO LEAVE CIS:

At the prompt, type "Stop" and hit RETURN. To prepare the same program for the next user, type "Yes" and hit RETURN; the title page will then reappear on the screen. To leave the program and exit to the C prompt, type "Exit" after the computer asks you "Stop?", and hit RETURN. Type in the name of the next requested program at the C prompt.

TO GET STARTED ON C-LECT:

At the C prompt type "CD CLECT" and hit RETURN. When the prompt "CLECT>" appears on the screen, type "CLECT" once again and hit RETURN. In a moment, the title "Computer-Linked Exploration of Careers and Training" will appear on the screen in white letters against a blue background. Hit RETURN to sign on and begin work.

The prompts on the screen will help you sign on to the program and tell you what to do next. The first time you use C-LECT, the computer will ask you to enter your Social Security number, the year you will graduate, and your first and last name; then hit RETURN. This helps the computer to identify you while storing all of your responses in the data base. It keeps a record for you so if you need to sign off at any point and you want to return to the program later, you can do so without having to start over (just follow the prompts on the screen).

There are nine sections from the C-LECT Master Menu. You may go through these in any order, however, when using C-LECT for the first time, it's best to start with section number one (Personal Survey and Occupational Investigation). After completing each section, the computer will automatically take you to the next section or allow you to select a different one from the Master Menu.

If you want to look at occupational or educational information without going through the program step-by-step, you can directly access this data by first choosing from the Master Menu the section you are interested in and then entering the appropriate code numbers from the accompanying C-LECT Users' Guides (Appendices I and II). For example, to get information about Counseling Psychologists, choose section number three from the Master Menu. Look up the occupation in the back of the C-LECT Users' Guide Appendix I (occupations are listed alphabetically) and enter the corresponding code number (listed as 014402). Remember to follow the prompts on the screen.

There are certain keys you will find helpful when using C-LECT. These include RETURN or ENTER, the Y or N keys (for Yes or No), Esc (Escape), and P (Print). RETURN or ENTER will help you to move on to the next screen; it also is used to enter your responses into the data base. When the computer prompts you for a Yes or No answer (Y or N), you will not have to hit RETURN or ENTER (the screen will prompt you to press RETURN or ENTER when necessary). Esc permits you to move backwards through the program and also allows you to exit a section. To make a print out of your answers, press "P" when prompted. (You will not always have the opportunity to use the Esc and P keys, however, the computer will cue you when this is an option.)

TO LEAVE C-LECT:

Choose "0" from the Master Menu to sign off; this will take you back to the title page. To return to the C prompt, hit the CONTROL + ALT + DELETE keys simultaneously, then enter the name of the next program you wish to use.

TO GET STARTED ON CASSI:

At the C prompt type "NCD CASSI" and hit RETURN. When the message "CASSI>" appears, type "CASSI" once again and hit RETURN. After the title "Computer Assisted Study Skills" has been spelled out on the screen (colored letters on a black background), hit RETURN to get to the main menu. (The screen will then change to white writing against a blue background.)

Seventeen "lessons" appear on the main menu, including an introduction to the program (which appears first on the list), fifteen different categories of study skills, and a comprehensive bibliography (listed last). Enter the number of whichever lesson you wish to start with and hit RETURN. You may begin in any order, you do not have to start with the very first lesson.

Use the "Page Down" or RETURN keys to proceed through the program. The "Page Up" or "Backspace" keys will allow you to back up one screen at a time; however, in order to get back to the main menu, you must first complete whatever lesson you are working on. If for some reason you need to leave the program in the middle of a lesson, press the CONTROL + ALT + DELETE keys simultaneously. This will reboot the computer (like turning it off and then on again). Re-enter today's date and the current time, and type in the name of the desired program when the "C" prompt appears.

NOTE: Since the length of each lesson varies (each may consist of up to 48 pages), print outs are not encouraged. Students may, however take notes at their leisure. Although CASSI has not been programmed with a command for making a print out, it may still be possible to get a print out of a page (or pages) of information only when you deem it absolutely necessary (or at a counselor's request). This may be done by pressing the SHIFT + PrtSc* keys simultaneously for each page displayed on the screen.

At the end of each lesson, a list of recommended lessons (including titles and corresponding numbers) for further study will appear on the screen. Following this page (and a brief bibliography for that lesson), the main menu will reappear. At this time you may either choose to start another lesson by entering another number, or quit the program.

TO LEAVE CASSI:

To exit CASSI, choose "Q" for quit from the main menu and hit RETURN. Type in the name of the desired program at the "C" prompt. To re-enter CASSI, follow the same procedures as before.

Printed Resource Materials

The Counseling Center also has a number of books and printed resources located on the resource table behind the computers and on the bookshelf at the bottom of the ramp to the career resource area. These materials may prove helpful in assisting students who are trying to explore additional information about certain occupations or who are interested in investigating occupations that cannot be found in any of the computer programs. In addition, there are books and reference materials for students who are trying to locate undergraduate, graduate, and vocational colleges that offer special programs or specific majors or degrees. Students may use these resources, without an appointment, to research information about colleges throughout Illinois and the United States (including location, cost of tuition, application deadline and fees, degrees conferred, and the address and phone number of a person or department to contact). Students are encouraged to follow up their own research by directly contacting the college (or colleges) they are interested in and requesting that more specific information be sent to them.

Some of the most widely used printed resources include: the Occupational Outlook Handbook; the Dictionary of Occupational Titles; the Chronicle Guidance publications (located in the hanging files to the right of the computers); bound and printed copies of occupational and school information specific to the state of Illinois, taken directly from the Horizons Career Information Systems computerized guidance program (this includes everything except national school information, which can be retrieved from the computer); books to help students investigate undergraduate and graduate colleges that offer specific majors or programs of study; and a few miscellaneous resources to help those who are exploring possible careers related to their college major.

Occupational Outlook Handbook- This book describes in detail 250 occupations covering 101 million jobs (or 86% of the jobs in the economy). The handbook may be used to find out what the work is like, what education or training is needed, advancement possibilities, earnings and job outlook, and related occupations to consider.

Each occupational description follows a standard format and includes information about the nature of work performed, working conditions, employment, training and other qualifications, job outlook, earnings, related occupations, and sources of additional information. Each description also has a Dictionary of Occupational Titles (D.O.T.) code number, used to classify occupations by type of work, required training, physical demands, and working conditions.

The beginning of the book also has a section on "Leads to More Information," which features how to obtain more information about occupations, counseling, education and training, financial aid, and finding a job (including tips on interviewing and writing a resume).

In the back of the book is a section on "Sources of State and Local Job Outlook Information." This includes the name, address, and phone number (including a contact person) of a department in each state you can write to for more specific job information.

Also included in the back of the book is a cross reference of Dictionary of Occupational Titles that correspond to the occupations listed in the handbook.

Dictionary of Occupational Titles- This supplement to the 1977 Fourth Edition of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (found at Booth Library and the Career Planning and Placement Office) contains brief definitions (roughly a paragraph long) about approximately 840 occupations. These occupations are grouped by category and listed chronologically in a designated numerical order throughout the book. To inquire about a specific occupation, a person may look up the title of the desired occupation in the back of the book. These are listed in alphabetical order in the index and assigned a specific number (a D.O.T. number). After noting the nine digit D.O.T. number, the occupation may be located by paging through the book and looking in numerical order.

The first three digits of each number define the type of occupation. They represent categories, divisions, and groups. Categories are the broadest groupings of occupations (based on traditional socioeconomic activities and industrial trade terminology). Divisions are a more specific grouping of occupations (based on general types of skills or knowledge required according to broad subject matter, technological objective, type of activity, type of service; machines, tools, equipment or techniques used, and material or product). Groups are the most specific grouping of occupations (representing breakdowns of divisions and based on technologies and material product, subject matter, or service).

The second three digits define worker functions; they represent what you do with data, people, and things. The last three digits are used to differentiate occupations, which are listed in alphabetical order.

The 1977 Fourth Edition Dictionary of Occupational Titles remains the primary source of reference. If students cannot locate a specific occupation in the supplement to this edition, you may want to refer them to the Reference desk at Booth Library or the career resource area in the Career Planning and Placement Center to consult the 1977 edition for further reference.

Chronicle Guidance Publications- The Chronicle Guidance Publications (located in the hanging files to the right of the computers) are a series of brochures that present a more in depth look at some of the occupations featured in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Occupations contained in these files are listed alphabetically in the most recent Chronicle Guidance reference booklet (kept with the files). To locate a specific occupation, a person may look up the title and note the D.O.T. number that is cross referenced in the far right hand column. Occupations are indexed by this number. The files run from 00 to 99. The first two numbers indicate which file to access, the third indicates it is a subset of a specific file (a person may look under that particular file number to find the desired occupational description). For instance, an occupation of 012. is a subset of file 01 (or 1) and may be found in the sections behind file one; 656 may be a subset of file 65. Files numbered 33 and up are kept in the second file drawer, below the open one.

The format of these brochures is similar to that of the Occupational Outlook Handbook. They feature pictures, a general description of the occupation, anticipated salary, skills required, required education, and where to look for more information.

Some of these brochures may be somewhat dated. Attempts should be made to update files as revisions are printed and distributed.

If a student is interested in xeroxing these (or any other printed resources), he or she may leave his or her student ID with the receptionist and check materials out long enough to go make copies, but not overnight (since resources are limited).

If a student cannot locate any information from any of our printed resources or from the computer, please log the title of the occupation(s) on the sheet located next to the peer counselor schedule (just above the bookcase), and refer them to Booth Library or to the Career Planning and Placement Center.

Other Chronicle publications include: The Chronicle Four-Year College Databook, The Chronicle Two-Year Databook, The Chronicle Vocational School Manual, The Chronicle Financial Aid Guide, and The Chronicle Career Index. These references, which may be found on the resource table, contain useful data about schools and careers. Students may access this information simply by consulting the guidelines in the front of each book.

Horizons Career Information Systems books- The information contained in the Horizons CIS computerized guidance program, specifically about occupations, programs of study, and post secondary schools in Illinois, is also available in printed form for quick and easy reference (in the white bound books on the reference table).

Current information about occupations throughout Illinois,

including duties performed, working conditions, current employment outlook, hiring practices, wages, and tips on how to prepare for this type of work, may be found in the book labeled Occupational Information. This information may be located by looking alphabetically in the index in front of the book for the desired occupation and noting the number assigned to it. Like the D.O.T., occupations are listed in numerical order throughout the book.

Information about schools in Illinois that offer specific programs of study and training, including general information about these schools, may be found in the two books labeled Programs of Study and Training, and School Information. Specific programs of study are listed in the front of the Programs of Study and Training book. This information lists program requirements, examples of courses required, directly related occupations, and schools in Illinois that offer degrees and training required for these specific programs, from program certificates to Doctorate degrees.

By noting the number next to the schools, a person may then find out information about post-secondary schools in Illinois, including vocational, two year, four year, and graduate schools, by consulting the School Information book. Information that may be found here includes the name, address, and phone number of a person from each school to contact for more information; costs; admission requirements; information on financial aid; and programs of study offered.

College Guidebooks- There are two reference books which are helpful aids in gathering information about undergraduate institutions outside of Illinois (for those who may be considering transferring), and one for those who may be researching information about graduate schools throughout the United States. These include The GIS Guide to Four Year Colleges (1990) and The Comparative Guide to American Colleges (undergraduate), and The Guide to American Graduate Schools.

A student may look at the alphabetic index in the back of any of these books for the major or program of study of his or her choice. He or she may then note the colleges that are listed under the desired major and then look up information about those particular colleges, which are listed in alphabetical order throughout each book. Information featured includes location of college, who to contact for more information, cost of attending, type of financial aid available, programs and degrees offered, and more. Students do not need an appointment to use these resources. However, if they do wish to do a national college search on either the CIS computerized guidance program (for undergraduate and graduate schools) or on C-LECT (undergraduate schools only), they will need to make an appointment.

Three resources that may be beneficial to those students who are trying to decide on a major are: What Can I Do With a Major in...?, I Can Be Anything, and the Major and Career Information Handbook (a reference notebook).

The book, "What Can I Do With a Major In...?" contains a listing of occupations commonly associated with specific college majors. Inside, students will find a description of popular college majors and programs of study, including a list of occupations that are directly and indirectly related to each designated area. The idea behind this book is to help students not only link a major to a desired occupation, but to also show that there are always options (a person does not always have to have a degree in one field to pursue a career in another).

Another resource, I Can Be Anything, follows a similar format. It also links majors with specific occupational titles and includes names of colleges that offer programs of study in these areas. Unlike What Can I Do With a Major In...?, this book's targeted audience is primarily women.

The Major and Career Information Handbook (Major/Career Decisions), also located on the reference table, is a notebook assembled to serve as a resource to assist Eastern Illinois University students explore career possibilities related to their college major. It contains lists of prospective occupations related specifically to majors offered at EIU.

All majors are listed in alphabetical order and are representative of EIU's individual colleges, including: the College of Applied Sciences (School of Home Economics, School of Technology, and Career Occupations); the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Botany, Chemistry, Communication Disorders and Sciences, Economics, English, Foreign Languages, Geology, History, Journalism, Mathematics, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Speech Communication, and Zoology); the Lumpkin College of Business (Accountancy/Computer Operations Management/Finance, Business Administration/Administrative Information Systems, and Management/Marketing); the College of Education (Educational Psychology and Guidance; Elementary and Junior High School Education, Educational Administration, Secondary Education and Foundations, and Special Education); the College of Fine Arts (Art, Music, and Theatre Arts); and the College of Health, Physical Education and Recreation (Health Studies, Physical Education, and Leisure Studies).

Accompanying each major is a list of occupations related to that specific area. Also included is a sample of an occupation a person with that particular major might pursue. Each sample contains occupational information selected from the SIGI PLUS national computerized guidance program. Students can access additional information about these and other occupations by consulting the SIGI PLUS, CIS, or C-LECT computer programs; by referring to any of the above listed printed resources, or by consulting Booth Library or the Career Planning and Placement Center.