SI 645 / SI 745 - Information Use in Communities, Fall 2009

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Anticipating Information Needs of the Unemployed: Job & Career Centers (Part 1) 
Part 2 (11/2) will focus on model components

SI 645 WEEK 5
OCT 12, 2009
Earliest Job Information Center
Cuyahoga County PL’s INFOPLACE

1975
- Responded to rising unemployment
- Developed a variety of services designed for unemployed-underemployed
- Coordinated by professional with counseling credential
- Served as a model for other emerging job info services (resource materials; career assessment, career counseling, workshops)
1980s W.K. Kellogg Foundation Initiative: Education & Job Info Centers (EJICs)

- Kellogg funded innovative projects in four states in late 1980s
  - New York (original grant-mid 1980s)
  - Michigan
  - Nebraska
  - Washington
  - Pennsylvania (called Workplace Centers)
- Aim: Help states respond to economic downturn
Kellogg Contributions to EJICs

- Dedicated computers in community library
- Computer-based career assessment software, plus a variety of related software packages (word processing, etc.)
- Funds for staffing and model development in communities
- Funding of program coordinator in each state
- Intensive training of state coordinators who would then train staff;
- Selected state wide staff training (interviewing skills, introduction to work of career counselors)
- Loose coordination in the four states
JCD Role: Analyze and Document This Innovative Practice—“EJICs”

Activities

• Interview key personnel

• Attend, observe major training sessions early in the project

• Examine periodic reports from states and their sites

• Site visits (observations, interviews, etc) to 40 sites in all five states

• Develop and disseminate the components of this innovative practice model
Components of Kellogg-Funded Job Centers

- Resources
- Reference and need/problem-centered information service
- Appointment based activities
  - Training/Workshops
  - Advising based on career software
  - Career counseling
- Collaboration with relevant agencies
- Changing the facility to better respond to the needs
- Marketing and raising awareness
- Evaluation and reporting
Characteristics of Job Center Staff

• Focus toward the community
• Connections with job related agencies in community as well as other relevant services and consultants
• Skilled in listening and interviewing
• Ability to sort out a variety of needs
• Help people overcome barriers to information
• Help people assess their skills/options
• Provide training as needed
• Know when to refer
Site Visits & Interviews Provided JCD With Data to Document

- *Emerging practice* being developed in these 40 libraries in the 5 states (Starting with Kellogg training, staff at various sites developed variations to the practice over time)

- Types of *needs expressed by clientele* of EJICs to staff (typically librarians at reference departments are not able to identify specific needs)
Strategies Wheel

- Staff
  - Increase access to resources
  - Provide reference & NEED-CENTERED assistance
  - Raise Awareness about library services
  - Create links and make referrals
  - Provide skill building workshops & help

Raise Awareness about library services

Create links and make referrals

Provide skill building workshops & help

Provide reference & NEED-CENTERED assistance

Increase access to resources
Rationale: People have different skill levels; many laid off workers had never written a resume.

• Workshop foci were atypical for libraries at that time—need-based rather than how to use the library
  – Resume clinics
  – Interviewing preparation
  – Career decision making
  – Job seeking strategies

• Workshop Leaders often from community (collaborators)
Strategy Example: Career Counseling

Why? To facilitate the assessment process.

Career counselors:

– have the knowledge and skills needed to go beyond materials and training.
– help people with self-assessment and options.
– often start with assessment software and other tools.
– either hired by library, contracted part time, brought to the library through a collaboration
Strategy Example: Change the Facility To More Effectively Respond to Needs

- Libraries weren’t designed for these kinds of services so make it easier to focus on the needs of the clientele
- Rearrange the furniture
- Find a place for conversations
- Find a place for training
- Let the facility help market the service

We’ll discuss this ‘model’ on 11/2