Australian Journal of Career Development

The Australian Journal of Career Development is a professional journal focusing on current theory, practice and policy relating to the career and work education field. The Journal provides a national forum for sharing, dissemination and debating current careers research, practice and policy.

Editorial Notes

The audience for the Journal includes professionals in educational and academic settings, community and government agencies, and business and industrial settings. Therefore, topics should be presented with implications for practice. Authors of research reports and theoretical discussions should relate their conclusions to the realm of practical applications.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Material will be considered for publication if it meets one or more of the following:

a) it expands the body of knowledge;

b) it informs in a manner that will develop people's professional understanding;

c) it provides concrete assistance in professional practice;

d) it raises philosophical questions related to the field of careers practice;

e) it opens a new frontier of knowledge and ideas related to professional practice.

SECTIONS OF THE JOURNAL

1 Case Studies

Case studies concerning innovative programs and individual work may be submitted. They should be both descriptive and analytical, providing the merits and shortcomings of the situation. Concise presentations of less than 3000 words are preferred.

2 Articles

Articles are invited dealing with career development, planning, guidance and education, labour market and training issues, vocational education and training, occupational information, career management policy, practice and programs. They should be a maximum of 4500 words.

3 Reviews

Books, reports, packages, computer programs or any other material relevant to career practitioners are reviewed in this section. Reviews include an overview of content and critical analysis and should be a maximum of 750 words. If you know of or have material that you feel is relevant, please contact the Editor or forward it directly.

4 Research Digest

People currently undertaking or having recently completed research relevant to careers practitioners are invited to submit summaries outlining the focus of their research, and preliminary findings or final outcomes where appropriate.

5 Careers Forum

This section of the Journal is set aside to provide a forum for sharing of relevant information and stimulating discussion and debate. We invite contributions as follows:

- comments related to material in earlier editions of the journal; and
- an ‘ideas exchange’ where you can share a success story from your day-to-day work, or seek help for a problem in your day-to-day work.

Brief reports of relevant conferences, seminars and forthcoming events will also be included. Submissions should be less than 500 words.

MANUSCRIPT STANDARDS

All submissions are required in MS Word Format. Hard copy should be typed double-spaced. Submission of articles as an email attachment is also accepted.

Article and Case Study submissions should be preceded by an abstract of 100-150 words. Tables should be typed on separate pages with approximate location indicated in the text. References are given at the end of the text; only references cited in the text should be listed. Spelling should conform to the Macquarie Dictionary and language should be gender-inclusive.

More detailed information on style can be found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed).

If you have any queries, contact the Editor.

REVIEW OF ARTICLES

Manuscripts are evaluated by a blind reviewing system in which the author’s identity is anonymous to the referees and vice versa. Therefore there should be a separate title page showing the manuscript’s title, author/s names, academic position/s or employment title/s, the address of institution/s and the date the manuscript is submitted. The first page of the manuscript should include the title of the manuscript but omit the author’s names and affiliations.

ARTWORK

Contributors are invited to submit photographs or other pictorial material to illustrate their submissions. Black and white photos are preferred, but colour photos with clear definition will be accepted. Materials need to be of high quality with good resolution to allow for reproduction in printing. If you are unable to provide material but have suggestions about appropriate artwork, please contact the Editor.

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Most Australian readers would be familiar with the name Barry Jones who, along with many other notable achievements, has served in the Victorian Parliament, the House of Representatives in Federal Parliament and also as a Federal minister. A main issue in his thought-provoking book, Sleepers Wake!, is that employment levels are culturally determined and he cited this as the first of Jones’ Eight Laws relating to technology and work.

Barry Jones wrote about ‘a cultural chasm between working class and middle class expectations in employment’ (p.119) and marshalled substantial evidence in support of this proposition. He argued that we have not always evaluated the role of regional factors in career development and that differences in local unemployment are not widely publicised. When considering the effects of technology on employment, Jones emphasised this particular and damning point: ‘Postcodes shape life chances and life outcomes more than technology’ (p.10).

At the time I was reading Sleepers Wake!, a copy of The Labour Force New South Wales and ACT (Catalogue No. 6201.1) came across my desk. Printed in the top right-hand corner were the words ‘FINAL ISSUE’. They were enclosed in a small rectangle that was tilted slightly to the left to give an aesthetic impression of having been stamped. Of course, the figures would now be available on the world wide web but this was not quite the same as flicking through my well-worn quarterly copies to peruse the regional employment statistics in my state.

I had always been aware of the regional differences in unemployment. It was a familiar experience in Sydney and I suspect the same picture exists in many other large cities. Leaving aside urban–rural differences, which are also large, I did not really appreciate some of the disadvantages, power, privilege and the like. But all this is a little like explaining to me how something as large as a jumbo jet can take off and fly – I understand the principles but I never cease to be amazed every time one of those monstrous giants takes off.

Further, the search for causes may not be as helpful as one might consider. Often such causal explanations are based on circular reasoning (e.g., links between unemployment and socio-economic status) or they list factors that cannot be modified easily (e.g., age, gender). Moreover, even if one found the constellation of causes they may not help a particular client.

Career practitioners operate at a local level and they need theories and models that will help them solve problems. Unfortunately, such geographical influences are overlooked in many theories of careers. They are consistent, however, with the systems perspective of careers that was outlined by Australian researchers Patton and McMahon (see Careers Development and Systems Theory). Such large differences in unemployment rates thwart career prospects. They stifle vocational aspirations and change the course of peoples’ lives irrevocably. As a result, vast differences are perpetuated. Postcodes do make a difference!

James A. Athanasou
University of Technology, Sydney
INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD SWEET

Richard Sweet is a Principal Administrator in the Education and Training Division of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris. He has a considerable background internationally for his contributions to these fields and is probably familiar to many readers through his work with the Dusseldorp Skills Forum.

Richard, very few people might be aware of your background in vocational guidance. Would you like to say something about those early years in your own career?

I began my professional life in career guidance, although very much by accident. After I graduated I worked in the retail industry as a personnel officer but resigned after a year. The then Division of Vocational Guidance Services in the then NSW Department of Labour and Industry – commonly referred to as VGB or the Vocational Guidance Bureau – was the first organisation to offer me a job after a very pleasant four summer months of unemployment (other organisations having declined to exchange money for my services), and I began work as a guidance officer in early 1966. After four years of face-to-face vocational guidance, during which period I went back to university part-time to make up the difference between a pass and an honours degree in psychology, I transferred to the VGB Research Unit and spent three years mainly working on aptitude test construction. Then in 1973 I took over the job of running the Research Unit and became interested in career choice theories and processes (particularly in John Holland’s work, which I still like very much for its parsimonious pragmatism), in work values, in the sociology and politics of career guidance, and in evaluations of the impact of career guidance.

In 1976, when TAFE was beginning to get an injection of Commonwealth funds following the 1974 Kangan Report, I was asked to establish a research unit as part of the NSW TAFE Student Counselling Service. For a few years I continued to work on similar issues but then, working in an educational institution, I became more and more interested in the relationship between education and the labour market, and then in the youth labour market and in how the labour market works more generally. One thing led to another, and by the early 1980s I found that my work had almost entirely moved away from its origins. The upshot was that I was asked to run the Sydney Research Group for the 1984 Kirby Inquiry into Commonwealth labour market programs, and from that point I moved completely out of a counselling environment and into policy work in education, training and employment.

I know you have been instrumental in influencing employment, education and training in Australia. Some ways that come to mind are your role in the 1984 Kirby inquiry into employment and training; the role you played in the 1994 White Paper on long-term unemployment; your work at the Dusseldorp Skills Forum; and now at the OECD. How do you look back at each of these?

I look back on the period that I spent with the Kirby inquiry as one in which I learned, rather than one in which I had any influence. It was my first real apprenticeship in policy and politics, and I am immensely grateful that I was given the opportunity.

The period that I spent at the Dusseldorp Skills Forum was immensely satisfying in retrospect. At the time it was always challenging, again because there was continual learning involved, and because we were constantly working at the leading edge and trying to create the debates rather than to follow them. In the early years that had the down side of being a bit lonely, as it was hard to convince people that what we were doing made any sense at all. In part that was because of the ideas that we were trying to advance, but even more so because we were taking an approach to policy change that was quite new. Instead of trying to push ideas, separated from practice, from the top down – the typical Australian model and the reason that so many initiatives lead nowhere – we began at the grassroots. Our approach was to build a workable model, incorporating good ideas, at the local level, drawing ideas from actual users such as students, employers and teachers, testing their rigour in reality in the form of the creation of workable tools and, when we knew that we had something that we were confident fitted real people like a real glove, only then starting to expand the model and then to sell the ideas to policy-makers and politicians.

Of course, in the process we came up against a number of entrenched interests and we weren’t always very popular in some circles. However, at the time we took this as a signal that we were probably right, given how often other more bureaucratic initiatives had come to nothing. There is certainly a major consolation, looking back, in seeing what was regarded as heresy becoming the new orthodoxy. And right the way through there was the consolation of working with a small group of remarkably talented people who gave me opportunities that very few are privileged to have. Of course, one signal that heresy was becoming orthodox was bipartisan political acceptance, and I greatly enjoyed being able to work both with Simon Crean and his staff to help create the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation, and with David Kemp, who became one of its most enthusiastic supporters both in Opposition and as Minister.

The last few years at the OECD have been equally challenging. While I loved my job at the Dusseldorp Skills Forum, I think that change is good for you. And there...
CAREER PROFILE

aren't many jobs in the world that give you the opportunities that you get here at the OECD: to work internationally; to be at the leading edge of world debates and analysis; and to get access to some of the best thinkers, analysts and writers in the world as a part of your day-to-day work. Not to mention, of course, the pleasures of living in Paris and of being able to travel widely.

One thing that impressed me was your role in policy formulation with regards to youth. What do you see as the key issues in this area?

I don't think that the issues in Australia today are all that different from those that we confronted when the Dusseldorp Skills Forum was set up early in 1989. Too few young Australians receive a coherent preparation for their working lives, and too many fall through the cracks of the existing services and types of provision. The able and the enterprising do fairly well, but the less able, the poorly qualified and those in need of support too often are left to fend for themselves. Australia certainly isn't the worst in the OECD in this regard but, given the overall performance of its labour market and given its level of national wealth, it certainly could do better. Many recent policy initiatives have been in the right direction, but there is still a long way to go.

I read the OECD report with interest and it focused on the role of career guidance in the transition from school to work. What do you think needs to be done in Australia?

I presume that you are referring to our report, From Initial Education to Working Life: Making the Transition Work, which was published in 2000? There we identified well-organised career information and guidance as one of the key features of effective national transition systems, and at the same time pointed to weaknesses in the ways that these services are organised in many countries. We did not specifically look at guidance programs in Australia in that review, but Australia is taking part in the review of career guidance policies that we started in 2001, partly in response to the work on transition. We will have a clearer picture of what some priorities might be after Australia has completed its national questionnaire and after an expert team has visited it: probably in March 2002. However, there does seem to be a need to bed career guidance more solidly into schools. It would also seem, in a lifelong learning context, that there is a lot of potential to develop career guidance services for adults.

I attribute a great deal of the reform in vocational education and training in schools in Australia to your initiatives with the TRAC program. It stirred interest in the field and led to the development of the ASTF, which acted as a catalyst for reform. What were some of the challenges you faced?

There was a multitude. Developing workable, user-friendly tools that translated ideas into practice was one. For example, we spent an enormous amount of time working on basic curriculum and assessment tools, working out what competency-based education might look like on the ground well before it entered the policy agenda, and creating practical ways to develop generic workplace competencies well before anybody had heard of Finn and Mayer. Selling the basic ideas behind what we were doing was another. Here we used everything from the media to scholarly publications, as we had multiple audiences in mind: intellectual gatekeepers as much as parents and politicians. I had a monthly column in The Australian on education and training issues for a couple of the crucial years – between 1992 and 1994 – and that seemed to help a lot with the softening-up process. It helped to make a lot of the basic concepts that we were arguing for acceptable, even though I never used it to try and sell the TRAC programme as such. I was made an Adjunct Professor at the University of Technology, Sydney, during the same period, and that also helped to give some of the ideas that we were promoting a greater legitimacy. Being on bodies such as the ANTA Research Advisory Council and the ACER Council also helped. Building networks and working out ways for people to share experience so that change could occur from the bottom up were part of the same challenge. It was never really a problem to persuade students, schools or employers that what we were doing made sense. The greater challenge was working out how to bring those who were somewhat more removed from the reality of schools and firms to the same understanding, and to allow the voices of the end users of education and training – young people, their parents and employers – to be heard.

Looking back, which aspects of your own career have been most significant and rewarding?

I don't think that I would be working at the OECD today unless I had had the opportunity throughout my career to combine research and analysis, policy and practice, politics and persuasion, national journalism and international work, work at the grassroots and work with Federal Ministers, work on labour market issues and work on educational issues, work in schools, in TAFE and in universities, work in government and work in the not-for-profit sector. I really don't find it possible to separate these from one another along a scale of either significance or reward. I have been very fortunate to be part of a small birth cohort, having been born just before the baby boomers and that, as Millicent Poole taught me in one of the two postgraduate courses that I failed to complete, can be immensely helpful in opening up career opportunities that those from larger birth cohorts have to compete much harder for. I have also been lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time on several occasions.

What about the personal side of Richard Sweet? Does he like red wine, baroque music or jazz, follow cricket or drive fast cars or visit art galleries? What does he read, and what about his family?

For a foodie and enthusiastic amateur cook like myself, living in Paris is a bit like waking up in Heaven. You would be surprised at how much of my day is taken up with working out what to cook at night, shopping for food in the wonderful markets and specialty shops that exist here, cooking, eating and drinking, and working out which restaurant to go to next. Other than working on developing my waistline I read fairly eclecticly. I love most types of classical music from the 18th to the mid-20th centuries but also oddities such as French military marches, and travel is always a real buzz for me. I like art, and Paris provides plenty of opportunities to spend time in galleries. My last summer holiday was a Vermeer trek, trying to track down as many of his wonderful canvases as I could in northern Europe, as well indulging my interest in the Dutch and Flemish masters of the 17th century. Art Nouveau also has a great appeal. Patsy and I have been married for 35 years, and we have two sons aged 22 and 24. Both of them have created their own careers in ways that are of their own making, and I am immensely proud of them for doing so.

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Recruitment via the internet is a relatively new phenomenon and the orientation toward this technology has been sudden (Bartram, 2000; Frankis, 2000). Corporate research by IBN (2001a) indicated an incredible growth in electronic recruitment business throughout the industrial world. Their Electronic Recruitment Index has forecast international investment of over US$20 billion on electronic recruitment by the year 2005. This contrasts sharply with the investment figure for 2000 of just under US$5 billion. IBN estimates suggest that there were approximately 110 million job postings on the internet in 2000 (IBN, 2001b).

Australia contributed to this trend and has itself experienced a rapid inclusion of internet methods into domestic recruitment processes. In their review of Australian recruitment and selection trends, Wooden and Harding (1997) made no mention of the internet as a major tool used by employers. Australian internet recruitment has proliferated since that time. At the time of writing this report there were 453 internet employment services listed in Australia under the search term ‘employment’ using the search engine Top100 (Sinewave Interactive, 2001). A more refined search using the terms ‘employment graduate’ revealed 249 matches.

Internet technology in Australia is making a significant impact upon the employment market of university graduates. This is particularly true given that some internet recruitment companies directly target university graduates (e.g. Seek Communications). It is pertinent, therefore, to consider what pragmatic implications the internet zeitgeist has for campus career services of Australian universities. Moreover, it is important to consider how career services can maintain and enhance their role within the university infrastructure.

BACKGROUND
The University of Southern Queensland is a major provider of distance education. Its main Australian centre is located at the Toowoomba campus. It also has a smaller Wide Bay campus located in Hervey Bay and a learning centre based in Brisbane. Approximately 75% of student enrolments in 2001 were in the off-campus, external mode. The Careers and Employment Service is a division of the Student Services of the University of Southern Queensland. The Service provides counselling on matters of career direction, change and development. It also provides support in the process of seeking and securing employment through training, employment advertising, facilitating employer visits to the main campus, and a career fair. Equitable provision of services to external students is a major challenge for the Service.

Information technology has been used by the Careers and Employment Service to provide external students with equivalent employment information that is available to students located at the Toowoomba campus. Each student of the University has a free internet account within USQconnect. This account provides access to their academic records, study groups, tutorial information, links to services and a range of other resources that support study, particularly study in the external mode. Student Services has supported an internet site for the past four years in an attempt to reach external students (www.usq.edu.au/studentservices). The Careers and Employment Service has provided a broad base of information that relates to career education. This includes information on job search, résumé and application writing, selection criteria, interview performance, and links to...
employment opportunities. The Service also provides an email employment newsgroup that lists employment opportunities and application information. This mostly includes graduate programs. Despite these innovations, external students have been unable to attend employer visits to campus.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNET CAREER FAIR
The first internet career fair was held in 2000. Twenty employers presented their graduate programs in a busy market atmosphere in the University Mall. Evaluation of the fair was very positive from the perspective of students and employers. Estimates indicated that over 60% of final year on-campus students attended the fair. The central deficiency of the 2000 career fair was that external students were unable to attend. For this reason, the Service decided to utilise internet technology to take the career fair to off-campus students studying externally and at the Wide Bay campus and Brisbane learning centre. Internal students at the Toowoomba campus would have access to the career fair.

PHASE ONE: SECURING TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
Hardware/Network
The existing USQconnect system would provide the essential internet framework. The only hardware the student need supply is a computer and modem. Those students without this equipment were given access to the public computing services provided by the University.

Staff
It was decided that the time needed to develop an additional component for the website exceeded the time resources and technical skills of the Service’s staff. The Information Technology Services staff at the Wide Bay campus could appropriately subsume the work under the rationale of their cost centre (i.e. services for external students). Hence, an Information Technology Services (ITS) staff member at the Wide Bay campus adopted the project in December 2000. Fortunately, there was no charge to the Service’s cost centre for the work.

Portal
The portal to the internet career fair was positioned within the Student Services website. This site has been left open, but is inactive.

PHASE TWO: SELECTING AN APPROPRIATE FORMAT
In conceiving the internet career fair it was decided that the site should be ‘minimalist’, that is, it should consume the least amount of resources and present proportionally the most amount of useful information. Complex sites take considerable time to feed data through a 56K modem and they are expensive to construct. A minimalist design would ensure efficient data flow for students and use the least amount of ITS resources.

Static Information or Chat?
An important problem to solve was whether to use an interactive ‘chat-room’ system or to utilise a static, paged-based system. External opinion was sought on how to conduct an internet career fair. Discussions were held with colleagues from other career services (e.g. Swier, 2000). Some took a ‘virtual’ approach in that a student could pose questions and receive speedy answers through chat-rooms stationed by employer delegates. Five employers from the 2000 career fair were contacted. The concepts of a static or chat-based internet career fair were proposed to them. All recognised the benefit of an electronic service. However, they all preferred a static system because it consumed less of their labour resources. Hence, the decision to utilise a static information system was based upon limitations of cost and efficiency. A static version fell within the resources of the project and would satisfy the majority of information needs a student may have.

Three Layers
The site used three layers of information display. Page 1 was an introduction welcoming students to the fair. Page 2 displayed the employers’ logos. Page 3 presented a paragraph on the organisation, their graduate program, links to the employer’s website, recruitment information, and contact details for application forms.

Point of Contact
The Service’s Administrative Officer was made the point of contact. Students who were interested in a program would be able to email a message asking for information via an enquiry form. The email would be automatically sent to the

PHASE THREE: ATTRACTING EXHIBITORS
Given that some employers were unable or unwilling to attend the real career fair, there was considerable discussion about offering organisations a booth at the electronic fair only. The primary rationale for offering an ‘electronic booth’ only was to attract more employers to the fair. However, it was decided that in its first year of operation the electronic fair was not to be promoted to organisations that were not registered at the real fair. For better or worse, this decision was made to keep evaluation of the first fair as simple as possible.

All employers who had registered for the real career fair in March 2001 were sent a letter explaining the concept and methods of the internet site. There was no additional cost for employers to register at an ‘internet booth’. Employers were asked to submit information and files (e.g. GIF files of their logos) no later than one week prior to the fair.

Of the 30 organisations registered at the real fair, 20 participated in the internet fair. Each organisation has been presented in Table 1 with respect to the location of their employing office, graduate disciplines they were seeking, and whether they were private or public sector organisations.

PHASE 4: GOING LIVE
Promotion
The internet career fair was promoted in parallel to the real fair. Promotion activities involved:

• distribution of posters;
• five-minute presentations at the beginning of major lectures over two weeks prior to the fair (26 lectures in total);
Table 1. Characteristics of organisations participating in the internet career fair.

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<th>Organisation</th>
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<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Sector</th>
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<td>KPMG</td>
<td>Brisbane, Sydney</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seek Campus*</td>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Private and Public</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Bank</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>Business, Commerce, Information Technology</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>Queensland Police</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
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<td>Incitec</td>
<td>Brisbane, some regional centres of Qld</td>
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<td>Queensland Audit Office</td>
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<td>Stockford</td>
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<td>Lavery, Roche, Kelly</td>
<td>Toowoomba, regional centres</td>
<td>Accounting, Finance</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>British American Tobacco</td>
<td>Sydney, international</td>
<td>Accounting, Business, Commerce</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>Queensland Treasury</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>Public</td>
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<td>CITEC</td>
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<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>WPA Career Media*</td>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>Mycareer*</td>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
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<td>Private and Public</td>
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<td>The Good Guides Group*</td>
<td>Australia-wide, international</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>Nova Group</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>All, especially Arts</td>
<td>Private</td>
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<td>Defence</td>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Public</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hobsons*</td>
<td>Australia-wide, international</td>
<td>All</td>
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<td>Walker Partners</td>
<td>Toowoomba</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
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<td>Education Qld</td>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Public</td>
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</table>

* These organisations were representing a range of employer organisations.

- one global email to all users of the University of Southern Queensland computing network;
- two emails via the Careers and Employment email newsgroup;
- one promotional story in the University's newspaper; and
- a flashing button on the Student Services website.

Launch Date
The launch date of the website was two days before the real career fair. The two days gave time to eliminate any glitches in the system while in live operation. This time was considered a test period only.

OUTCOMES: ASSESSING UTILISATION
The impact of the internet fair was assessed using qualitative data (student feedback and employer feedback) and quantitative data (utilisation statistics).

Feedback Form
There were only three responses to the feedback form provided on the site. The comments were positive and supportive of the site. One offered a correction to spelling.

Employer Meeting
At a reception after the real career fair, there was discussion with employers about the concept and methods of the internet fair. All participants were pleased to have taken the opportunity. Some delegates from the ten organisations that did not participate expressed regret at not doing so, and offered their commitment to collaborate in the following year. There was some discussion about the use of static information rather than chat rooms. Most of the delegates favoured a static system because a chat-room system would consume more of their organisation's time. However, there was strong interest in the concept of chat-rooms and their use in the future.

Hits
Within 48 hours of operation the fair had received over 33,000 hits. At the end of two weeks the site had received 61,677 hits. Visitors to the website came from 18 different international internet server domains. The logos for all 20 organisations were hit. There was no way of determining who made the hits or their year of study.

Requests
The Service received 192 unique requests for application forms via the enquiry form. Some students wanted information on more than one organisation. Their contact was counted only once. The requests for information were directed to all participating organisations. (The number of requests for information from individual organisations will not be reported in this document as a measure of confidentiality.)

Student Characteristics
The contact details of students making requests were inspected to determine the status of their enrolment. Eighty-one per cent (81%) of the students were studying in the external mode. Fifteen per cent (15%) were international students.

DISCUSSION
With over 60,000 hits upon the internet career fair, it is clear that the site drew considerable interest from students. Given that the University has 20,000 students, it is reasonable to assume that the large number of hits was due to repeat visitors and students from lower years entering the site. Despite the large number of hits, there were only 192 unique requests for information via the enquiry form. Nevertheless, it was possible to sort requests by mode of study (i.e. internal or external) and national status. The percentage of external students submitting requests is consistent with the proportion of external students studying at the University (i.e. 75%). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the internet career fair was tapping into its primary client base: external students. On this measure, the internet fair was successful. The most likely explanation for the relatively low number of requests via the enquiry form is that the students used a direct route to application information (i.e. via the organisations' website links). It has always been the advice of the Service that students should directly contact an employer and learn as much as possible about them. Most organisations listed in the fair had their own website link clearly marked on the page of their booth. It is
quite possible that students visited the site links of organisations and sought application information from that point rather than indirectly from the Service's enquiry form. There is no way of testing this suggestion without the organisations providing contact data to the Service, and this information is unavailable.

There is a need to determine the variables that make graduate programs relevant or salient for external students. Understanding their employment status, mode of study, income and interest level would contribute significantly to understanding their commitment to the prospect of graduate programs. For future electronic fairs it would be useful to include some mechanism to determine the following characteristics of visitors:

- degree/major/minor;
- year of study (penultimate or final);
- current employment status (full-time, part-time, casual);
- income;
- mode of study (external, internal); and
- interest level ('just looking' or 'genuinely wanting to apply for graduate programs').

There should also be negotiations with employers to ensure that the number of requests for applications they receive via their website be recorded and reported back to the service. This data would allow investigation of the employment outcomes of the fair. Nevertheless, there should be firm restraint upon the type of data collected. The privacy of individuals using the Service needs to be preserved. The variables listed above would provide useful information without threatening the integrity of client confidentiality.

The expense of developing multimedia and websites can be a burden for any careers and employment service. This website was created at minimal cost and generated a large amount of service contact and delivery. It is reasonable to argue, therefore, that a minimalist approach to design is appropriate in context of limited resources. The 'whistles and bells' approach with chat-rooms and extensive interactive elements would require serious consideration of additional resources.

This pilot project of developing an internet career fair at the University of Southern Queensland was conceived in the context of an emerging demand for electronic recruitment services. Moreover, the project represented a partial answer to serious questions facing the campus career services of Australia. How can career services retain their potency as an important component of the overall university infrastructure? How can career services enter into the market of electronic service delivery? The internet career fair 2001 has gone some way in achieving its goals of communicating employment information to external students.

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PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A WORLD OF WORK IN CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSITION

Nancy Arthur

Global forces challenge career practitioners to prepare students for a world of work that is increasingly characterised by cross-cultural transitions. Demographic changes due to immigration and expanding markets mean that employees must be prepared to work alongside people who are culturally diverse. Our notions of who is an 'international student' must extend to prepare all students for work in a global economy. This discussion outlines the importance of helping students gain experience that will position them with the cross-cultural competencies that they will need for the workplace of the future. Essential cross-cultural competencies are described, along with ways that students can gain related experience. Career practitioners are invited to consider cross-cultural competencies as a core component of career planning in order to help students build relevant career directions for the future.

The changing world of work demands that students develop a repertoire of cross-cultural competencies to support their career development. This includes skills to be marketable in an international labour force, knowledge about cross-cultural work transitions and learning effective strategies for cross-cultural work relationships. As economies become increasingly interdependent between nations, workers require the capacity to manage in cross-cultural environments (Herr, 1993a, 1993b; Herr, Amundson & Borgen, 1990; Westwood & Quintrell, 1994). These changes in the world of work challenge career practitioners to prepare students for living, learning and working with people from other cultures.

Key questions emerge for career practitioners. How can we prepare students for a world of work that is increasingly characterised by cross-cultural transitions? What are the cross-cultural competencies that students will require for working in the global economy? This paper was developed to promote discussion among key stakeholders who are influential in the preparation of students for future work roles. It has emerged through discussion with employers, teachers and career development specialists in Canadian contexts. As we consider the dynamic interplay between and among culture, education and employment, it is timely to expand the discussion with career practitioners between nations. The discussion begins by reviewing key trends that are relevant for the preparation of students in Canada and for students in many other countries where populations and economies are shifting in response to a global economy. Points of emphasis include changing demographic trends in countries and in employment settings and the mobility of workers. The discussion will then turn to core competencies required of employees who work in cross-cultural contexts. The central theme is the need to incorporate career planning strategies to prepare students for a world of work in cross-cultural transition.

POPULATIONS IN TRANSITION
Career practitioners are faced with many challenges to prepare their citizens for work both within and beyond the borders of their nation. To illustrate this point, demographic trends in Canada are used to consider the impact of immigration and cultural diversity; trends found in several Commonwealth countries. Canada is a nation built upon cultural diversity. The immigration rate to Canada has remained relatively stable throughout the past two decades; however, source countries have changed (Esses & Gardner, 1996). The majority of immigrants arrived from Europe and North America in the earlier decades of the century. During the past three decades, source countries have extended to Asia and the Middle East, the Caribbean, Americas and Africa (Statistics Canada, 1995). With a shift in immigration from non-European countries, there is an increase in the visible minority population, now representing more than 11% of the total population. These immigrant groups have introduced diverse cultural backgrounds and customs to Canadian society. Increasing cultural diversity is also represented in the Aboriginal population, which is growing more rapidly than the general population. For example, it is estimated that by the year 2006, the population of Aboriginal youth (age 15–24) will increase by 26% and the adult population aged 35–54 will increase by 41% (Statistics Canada, 1998). The integration of people with diverse cultural backgrounds into the labour force depends upon access to training and educational opportunities. Attention must continue to be placed on ways to support employment access and mobility among a diverse citizenry.

Employers are challenged by a culturally-diverse workforce whose
capacity for effective work relationships is essential for organisational success (Goodman, 1994; Granrose & Oskamp, 1997). Organisations have a responsibility to understand the cultural influences that shape the behaviour of employees and find ways to educate the workforce about cultural diversity. Otherwise, perceived differences tend to exacerbate barriers and workplace conflict (Singelis & Pedersen, 1997).

Beyond local settings, increasing opportunities in the global marketplace have focused attention on worker adjustment to foreign cultures. Employees must be prepared for expanding job responsibilities and performance expectations associated with living and working in foreign environments. Cutting across these organisational and environmental factors is the need for employees to have effective skills for interacting with people whose background and experience are different to their own. It appears that those people who have had the foresight to incorporate cross-cultural competencies into their career development will have a tremendous advantage in the workplace of the future (Arthur, 2000; Hanso, 1990). These trends underscore the need to prepare students in ways that support their future roles as workers in a global economy.

**PREPARING STUDENTS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSITIONS**

A critical point needs to be made about preparing students for the world of work in cultural transition. Cross-cultural competencies need to be taken out of the periphery of education and career curriculum and located as a central goal in the education of students. Rather than viewing working in cross-cultural contexts as an option or exotic part of working in other countries, cross-cultural competencies need to be seen as relevant to every student for future worker roles. This requires an attitudinal shift in the ways we talk about students’ participation in the workforce. Rather than workers, perhaps students need to develop the mindset that they are global workers and view cross-cultural interactions as the norm for participation in that labour force. This will require considerable attitudinal changes in students and people who interact with students. Teachers and parents will need to be involved in understanding and talking about the career development of their students and children in unprecedented ways. Although only a portion of the adult population has begun to see the relevance of the global economy for their working roles, they can leave a legacy for workers of the future by supporting the development of cross-cultural competencies.

Beyond attitudinal change, students need direct knowledge and experience that comes through exposure to other cultures. This can be done locally and internationally. For example, career resource centres in secondary and post-secondary institutions are beginning to keep resources for volunteer, student and work exchanges in other countries. Study abroad opportunities are an underutilised resource for the education of students in many countries of the world. This is not due to lack of opportunity. Rather, it relates directly to the need for cross-cultural and international experience to be viewed as a relevant direction for student education. Options for students need to be brought to their attention along with coaching students to build global connections into their career planning (Arthur, in press).

Currently, most adults are exposed to international work on the basis of their professional expertise for a particular project. This ad hoc entrance into the international arena leaves many employees ill-prepared for the demands of working in unfamiliar cultural contexts. The increasing importance of global markets demands that we rethink our approach to preparing a workforce that is skilled not only in designated areas of technical expertise but also in their preparation for working in the international marketplace (Hanso, 1990; Herr, 1993a). Employers are beginning to reframe the benefits of international education to both employees and employers. International education is a vehicle to impact the skills acquired by students, including both the hard (job-specific) and soft (personal, adaptability) skills desired by employers (Garfarb Consultants, 2000).

Exposure to other cultures does not mean that students necessarily have to go to other countries. An underutilised source of cross-cultural expertise is students from other countries who attend local institutions (Arthur, 1997). International students can make strong contributions to the curriculum if the practices of their country are considered to be valid by the educational institution and teachers found in the host country. Student services programming can support the interchange between domestic and foreign students in academic and social pursuits. However, this needs to be a coordinated effort. Not only do international students require assistance with the cross-cultural transition to the host country, domestic students often require orientation to prepare for effective cross-cultural interactions with international students.

It is noteworthy that there are wide variations about who becomes an international student and what countries are represented in the international student population. Financial resources for foreign education within countries to sponsor students to study abroad and immigration policies in host countries are some of the factors that influence access to foreign education. As the influences of the global economy shape work structures, it is timely to review the representation of countries in international student exchanges to consider ways of encouraging higher levels of participation by larger numbers of countries. It is also timely for us to redefine whom we mean when we use the term ‘international student’. This definition needs to extend beyond our traditional notions of foreign students, or students from other countries. In preparing for a world of work in cross-cultural transition, all students need to be considered as international learners, through curricula delivered locally and through growing opportunities to learn, live and work in other countries.

**BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCIES**

Creating opportunities for students to engage in cross-cultural learning and work experiences is an important goal. In order to promote positive adaptation and learning during cross-cultural transitions, people need effective coping resources (Herr, 1993b). Not only do students require coping strategies for managing life transitions, they require specific coping skills for transitions related to their worker roles (Arthur, 2000; Brammer & Abrego, 1992). It is unrealistic to expect that education and training programs can prepare students for all situations that emerge through working in cross-cultural contexts. Rather, students can be equipped with general competencies for managing cross-cultural transition. Although many of the competencies described in the following sections are essential for daily living, the demands of
working, studying or living in new cultural contexts underscore their importance.

**Self-Awareness About Culture**

People display ethnocentrism when their behaviour is based in culturally-specific values and when they do not incorporate culturally-relevant information about the people around them. In other words, what people bring to cross-cultural transitions is as important as external factors in the environment. Self-awareness is especially important during interactions with people from culturally-diverse backgrounds. This requires students to understand how their culture represents one way of interacting in a world where there are many ways to work together. Fundamental to self-awareness is gaining an appreciation of values that guide behaviour and considering how values in other cultures underpin alternative ways of behaving. For example, familiarity with Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s (1961) model can help to uncover the cultural assumptions associated with definitions of activity, definitions of social relationships, motivation, perception of the world and perception of the self and individual. Gaining self-awareness means a willingness to engage in self-examination and to learn about the worldview of co-workers.

**Language Skills**

There are wide variations in the emphasis placed on second language education between countries. In some parts of the world it is common for children to acquire five or six different languages. In other parts of the world children are exposed to only one language in their home, community and school. As the world of work shifts beyond the boundaries of many countries, language capacity takes on increasing importance. However, advocating for second language competencies needs to be tempered with consideration of the context of language use. Like other cultural factors, language must be appreciated in the context of social and economic power. There is little doubt that language capacity to match the markets of local and global work settings will be a tremendous advantage for employees of the future. Employers often have difficulty hiring decisions among competent applicants and language capacity can be an asset to support their strategic directions in building a global workforce.

**Communication Across Cultures**

Effective communication skills, including communication among members of the same culture, are critical for success in cross-cultural transitions. As most cross-cultural employment projects require effective interactions for success, it is essential that students develop competencies for learning and working together in teams, along with strategies for managing interpersonal differences (Arthur, 2001; Saphiere, 1996). Effective communication to enhance group dynamics and problem-solving capacity are integral skills. However, students need to gain appreciation for the need to modify skills, which are usually effective for communicating with people from a similar background, when relating to people from culturally-diverse backgrounds. Communication for cultural diversity requires competencies for interpreting meanings and responding in culturally-appropriate ways (Pedersen & Ivey, 1993). For example, the ways in which people make and respond to requests may be handled along a continuum of direct and indirect behaviours. What is viewed as either reasonable or demanding may depend upon the status of the person making requests, the position of the person receiving requests, and resources available. It may be confusing for people who are accustomed to direct manners of communication for their requests to be responded to through indirect means. Efforts to ‘save face’ and not offend either party may supersede requests. Communication that might seem straightforward in one cultural context might be very complex in others. A seemingly simple response of ‘yes’ may have many meanings.

**Decision-making in Cross-cultural Contexts**

As people from culturally-diverse backgrounds come together in learning and work environments, they are exposed to contrasting values. These contrasts may create conflicts for students about ways of behaving as they consider new opportunities and choices that may differ from their culture of origin. Decisions that represent a shift to the values of the new culture must be carefully reviewed in terms of both the short- and long-term consequences. Although an individual may wish to pursue available choices, there may be severe and long-lasting consequences for going against the expectations of significant others in one’s culture of origin. For example, values of religion, ethnicity or notions of appropriate gender roles may determine style of dress, food, social activities, occupational selection and choice of friends and marital partners. A central dilemma for decision-making pivots around how far people in cross-cultural transition are prepared to go to preserve traditional values while pursuing available goals and opportunities. Decisions made in one cultural context can have profound implications for participation in roles defined by contrasting cultural values (Arthur, 1998). For example, many models of career decision-making emphasise the autonomy and independence of individuals to make choices. However, this bias may be prohibitive for people whose decision-making is embedded in family and/or community considerations. Pressing for a decision that is self-focused may have negative consequences for sustaining relationships. Although it is important to expose students to contrasting cultures, this must be done so in ways that support responsible decision-making. This requires equipping students with decision-making skills to consider the implications of their choices for relationships and roles in more than one cultural context.
Conflict Resolution Skills
Conflict management in cross-cultural relationships is made more complex by two factors. The possibility of conflict is greater due to the potential for miscommunication and misunderstandings between people who hold different cultural values. Conflict resolution may also be more difficult as competing perspectives can pose barriers to identifying mutual interests. Although confrontation and mediation are difficult cross-cultural skills, they are essential for managing cross-cultural transitions.

An innovative approach to cross-cultural conflict and mediation is the Interpersonal Cultural Grid (Singelis & Pedersen, 1997). This taxonomy of behaviours and expectations is used to help people from culturally-diverse backgrounds discover common goals. During cross-cultural interactions, behaviour can be misunderstood and become a source of distraction that breaks further communication. However, if the focus can be directed towards the intent of the behaviour and shared positive expectations, common ground can be used as the basis from which to negotiate alternatives. Through training students to see beyond differences in behaviour and to seek the common ground of positive expectations, they can be assisted to develop a stronger basis for effective interactions. Strategies such as personal awareness about views of conflict, moving beyond blame and viewing cultural norms as the source of conflict and negotiation skills for establishing common goals can minimise differences and keep the focus of interactions on similarities and areas of mutual benefit.

Managing the Stress of Culture Shock
Stress management skills have been identified as essential competencies for cross-cultural transitions (Harvey, 1997; Walton, 1990). Skill training in stress management can help people identify and mobilise coping strategies in response to the perceived demands of cross-cultural environments. Cross-cultural training programs have been developed on the premise that knowledge about other cultures eases interactions through learning about environmental conditions and cultural norms for behaviour. Information regarding cultural expectations and potential adjustment factors may be useful for anticipatory coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). However, it is recommended that cross-cultural training programs also assist students to assess their current repertoire for coping with stress. Although demands may be different and the usual coping resources may be unavailable in foreign environments, knowledge of the function and forms of coping can assist people to build temporary structures and routines. Students can also be encouraged to learn about culturally-diverse practices for resolving problems and ways that social support is accessed.

Learning Opportunities in Cross-Cultural Transitions
Transitions involve a process in which individuals experience a shift in their personal assumptions or world view (Schlossberg, 1984, 1992). In other words, the ways in which people view themselves or the world around them is challenged. During cross-cultural transitions it is exposure to norms and behaviour that contrast one’s own culture that poses challenges. A sense of loss can be experienced when familiar ways of operating, routines, beliefs or settings must be left behind in order to adapt to changing life circumstances (Bridges, 1991). However, transitions can also provide opportunities for learning about self, other people and the surrounding world. It is often through experiencing cultural differences that people transform views about themselves and the world around them. In a world where borders of trade, travel and immigration are shifting, students need cultural flexibility for interacting with people whose backgrounds are different from their own (Herr, 1993a, 1993b). In many ways, the willingness by students to learn about culture — one’s own culture and the culture of others — is a fundamental competency for the future world of work.

Fostering Cross-Cultural Competencies
The world of work is changing and so must our ways of preparing students and workers. Career education practices have to keep pace with change and maintain relevancy for the needs of our clientele. Along with the challenges of responding to cultural diversity, counsellor educators must examine how to prepare practitioners and encourage professional development. This includes examining the applicability of theory to diverse populations and settings and revisions to the content of career decision-making models to account for cultural influences. As options in our world shift due to global influences, teaching the process of developing skills in career planning for defining and exploring options are essential. Career practitioners can advocate for the importance of viewing options beyond local contexts, redefine what is considered as viable career options and assist clients to pursue choices in a world of work characterised by cross-cultural transition.

This discussion has provided a rationale for considering how integral competencies for cross-cultural transitions are to the preparation of students for the future world of work. This will require a concerted effort by career practitioners, educators and employers to collaborate in the development of curriculum and services that support students for entering work roles. In doing so, the direction of career planning services will require considerable transformation. First, it will require attitudinal change about the importance of cross-cultural competencies in the world of work. Second, it will require people who hold influential positions in the lives of students to have knowledge about changes in the world of work and shifting cultural impacts. Third, it will require people who work with students to make a commitment to developing cross-cultural competencies themselves. The premise that people who have incorporated competencies for managing cross-cultural transitions into their career planning will be better prepared for the workplace of the future is focused on the preparation of students. However, it is also timely to consider how the people who prepare students for the world of work, including career practitioners, are prepared for that same world. Awareness about the personal influence of culture in professional roles, knowledge about populations in cross-cultural transition, skills for working with culturally-diverse clients and strategies to help students and employees develop cross-cultural competencies appear to be important topics for professional development.

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To encounter challenges in the new century, Savickas (2000) suggests that the psychology of careers needs to be renovated. One of the new directions in responding to changes is the adoption of a social constructivist worldview in conceptualising research and practice (Peavy, 1993, 1997; Savickas, 1997, 2000). Narrative inquiry echoes this trend (Polkinghorne, 1988, 1992; Sarbin, 1986, 1992; Savickas, 1997, 2000, 2001). Scholars and practitioners emphasise the need for holistic models, which focus on creating a synergy between interrelated life roles. As Patton (2000) states (p.79):

*Practitioners will need to work with individuals using narratives and stories to assist them to make meaning of the experiences of work in their whole lives. Narrative can be used in individual career counselling as well as in career education programmes.*

Charles P. Chen

**The Narrative Nature of Life**

Rationale

The very essence of physical and psychosocial human existence demonstrates a narrative representation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The literature support for such a claim in social sciences can be traced back decades ago. In spite of the later academic debate concerning her methodological approach, Margaret Mead’s (1975) pioneering work in her earlier years contributed significantly to the study of anthropology in general and to the use of narrative inquiry in understanding human life in particular. Other scholars in social sciences delineated the narrative nature and function of human life in a variety of areas. Some examples of such works include topics of narrative form as a cognitive instrument in writing history (Mink, 1978), life themes through narrative development (Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979), the relationship between narrative truth and historical truth (Spence, 1982), the role of narrative influence in lifespan developmental knowledge (Freeman, 1984), narrative interpretation in critical psychology and pedagogy (Sullivan, 1984, 1990), narrative in general human psychology and functioning (Sarbin, 1986), narrative inquiry and human action...
assertion rests on the very nature of human functioning with complexity and entirety. Although events can occur in a fragmented manner, the narrative knowing draws meanings from such life segments, processing them into more unified experiences of awareness. It is not a myth, but a manifestation of primary human condition as social beings. There are at least three main reasons to consider human life as a narrative life. These reasons include subjective living, participatory experiencing and contextual meaning making.

Subjective living
The narrative nature reflects a basic and unique human psychology of subjectivity, integrating cognition, emotion and behaviour into a whole. People recall, organise and make sense of life events since they are capable of thinking, feeling and acting. Whether a deliberate attempt or an unintentional encounter, the surging information is going to be arranged and rearranged via people’s subjective processing. There is no doubt that learning through individuals’ self-observation generalisations and world view generalisations (Mitchell & Krumholz, 1996) is of pivotal importance to human psychology. Yet, one may not be able to dismiss the argument that these generalisations become alive as subjectivity interacts with the environmental events. The core of the argument here is that human perception and learning can never happen without one’s interpretation of internal and external conditions surrounding a life event or experience. Whatever the learning process might be, this interpretive nature functions along with the learning process, making subjective interpretation an indispensable component of human psychology (Sullivan, 1984, 1990). The internal and external facets collide, negate, merge and integrate within the macro-system of the subjective world, forming and enhancing dynamic social learning. Thus, the prospect of subjectivity opens a venue for dynamic organisation of a story, suggesting flexible interpretation, reflexive dialogue and, more importantly, the possibility of change, imagination and creativity.

Participatory experiencing
A narrative requires involvement and participation. A story does not shape in a conscious way without a person’s actual experiences. Experiencing is of pivotal importance, although it may be accomplished via different paths and forms. Direct engagement certainly initiates experiencing. Actions such as conducting a task, communicating with others, observing situations and participating in events are some examples illustrating this aspect. Meanwhile, indirect activities may also become means for experience attainment. For example, a person may learn others’ ideas and experiences from a variety of sources. Such information may then be analysed and utilised in making a decision, designing a plan or implementing a project. Whatever format it may take, experiencing life experiences is a must toward the making of a narrative.

Experiencing provides a person with the raw material to organise a story in the first place. Without it, the effort to construct a story will end up in vain. This denotes an interaction between the person and his or her living environments. Experiencing occurs while such interactions are present. Individuals’ awareness based on such experiencing can increase human intentionality in this interactive process, encouraging goal-oriented actions in projecting future narratives. Consequently, narratives serve as resources to promote purposeful, agentic and holistic participation defined by Amundson (1998) as active engagement, by Cochran (1991) as life-shaping decisions, by Young and Valach (2000) as action and joint action and by Chen (1997a) as career projection.

Contextual meaning making
A narrative only makes sense when its corresponding context is defined. Young and his colleagues (Young & Valach, 2000; Young, Valach & Collin, 1996) have elaborated the significant function of context. What is worth paraphrasing here are the three salient aspects that frame the context of life career experiences, namely multiplicity, meaning and interweaving (Young et al., 1996). A context represents an integral and coherent condition that recognises and encompasses a range of various situational variables. These variables are intertwined with one another, reflecting multifaceted possibilities and explanations of a life experience. It is this context that provides a narrative with a foundation or a background scene. A change or rearrangement of contextual variables can result in the narrative being adjusted, modified or rewritten. In this sense, constructing a narrative is subject to...
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context realisation. A story has little or no meaning if its very context is not described in a coherent manner. A story can also be misunderstood or even distorted should some of its context not be presented.

The contextual impact on people’s narrative formation deserves great attention. This ascribes to the fact that experiencing never occurs in a vacuum; it occurs in a personal and social context. During one’s life course, no experience can be truly explained and understood if conditions and environments where the very experience is rooted are missing from the whole picture. The context provides the experience with a background, a possibility, a reason and a necessary domain and embodiment for human interpretation concerning what has happened and/or what is going to happen. Consider the example of pursuing higher education. The first person in this case can be a recent high school graduate who has just reached her young adulthood following a traditional educational path. The second person may be a former university dropout with several years of working experience who now decides to come back to the university as a full-time student. The third person might be going back to school on a part-time basis, aiming at an additional credential that would help to advance in her current professional life. The fourth person could be a recent laid-off worker who faces the slippery slope of his current occupation and realises that the more optimal chance for the next move is to obtain re-training for something new that would correspond better to the changing labour market. The fifth person may voluntarily withdraw from her current worklife, going back to school for a deliberate career change. The sixth person could be a retiree whose whole purpose of going back to school is to achieve a long-time dream, or simply for the fun of using learning as a form of leisure and healthy lifestyle.

Many cases as such can be easily drawn from real life situations. The central intent here is not to start a meta-analysis or comparison of individual experiences, but to illustrate the variance of contexts that can exist in a seemingly easy-to-understand and similar life phenomenon. As the contexts alter, the internal meaning of an experience can vary substantially from situation to situation. This renders dynamic, colourful and diverse perceptions, feelings and explanations of experiences lived and/or going to be lived. Identifying a narrative in contexts is parallel to making a scenario under various circumstances. Very often, the scenario can be framed and reframed along with the changing circumstances that circumfuse the very scenario. Context has the similar impact on the formation of life stories. Context change brings along meaning modification. As long as contextual situations remain varied and dynamic, the meaning of people’s life experience can be interpreted in varied ways. Consequently, the scripts of human narratives can be organised and reorganised, generating a contextual meaning-making process that integrates the subjective views and participatory experiences in a situational manner that makes sense to the person who is the participant and actor in this very process. The key argument worth highlighting is the essential function of meaning making within context. A narrative loses its vigour and vitality should its context diminish from the background. Reconsider the six case scenarios illustrated in the earlier example. With each individual context, six unique meaningful stories become alive, even though they seem to share a context of pursuing higher learning.

THE NARRATIVE INQUIRY OF CAREER

Career as Life Narrative

The narrative way of being is a truth to people’s life. So it is to their career. This is because career is always a part of one’s life. Two of the key theoretical tenets presented by Super (1953, 1957, 1990) during the past five decades have illustrated the life–career coexistence with a thorough and articulate manner. The first is the notion of self-concept. According to Super, a person’s vocational self-concept or identity is a part of his or her total self-concept. This implies that the total self-concept operates as a context for one’s career self-awareness and vice versa. Career experience closely intertwines with other aspects of personal and social life experience. The second concept from Super is the notion of life career roles for a person through the entire life span. Various roles such as a child, parent, spouse, student, worker, citizen and leisurer may need to be performed simultaneously while people accomplish their career developmental tasks. These roles interact and interrelate to one another, composing a holistic and dynamic life career experience defined by Super as ‘life career rainbow’. Super’s concepts are certainly sound in explaining

A life–career relationship with a commonsense approach. Indeed, life and career can never be separated when either of them is brought into discussion. People’s work life coexists with other aspects of personal and social lives (Richardson, 1993; Savickas, 1991). This is why it makes much sense for Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1990) to integrate career and life development as a whole. The recent effort toward the development of career theories seems to echo a similar philosophy. For example, Hansen (1997) views career development as an essential part of life planning. Patton and McMahon (1999) argue that individuals interact with various aspects of their social life system, forming a dynamic multitude of life–career relationships.

Conceptualising Career Narrative

Like other aspects of life, career is by nature a narrative experience and participation. In postulating constructivist theories in career research and practice, Collin and Young (1986) proposed more than one decade ago the consideration of ecological, biographical and hermeneutical approaches in developing the new epistemology. These three approaches seem to be particularly heuristic in assisting the formation of narrative inquiry in the psychology of careers. Constructing career through narrative and context presents not only a new way of thinking, but also a viable pathway for research and practice focusing on human intention, action, interrelational development and meaning interpretation (Collin & Young, 1992; Young & Valaich, 2000). The meaningfulness of constructing a career narrative lies with the wholeness of a person’s subjective consciousness and realisation about what has happened and what may happen in the future. Narrative integrates experiences, perspectives, feelings and contextual information into a more consistent theme of organisation for meaning making, parallel to Cochran’s (1990) definition of holistic construction in forming a story. It is this function of entirety that makes narrative inquiry a sound approach to make sense of a person’s work life experience and pursuit.

Narrative inquiry as one of the key methodologies in forming the constructivist psychology of careers has been well-documented through the past decade, a decade that has witnessed and exercised the conceptual transformation of vocational psychology (Savickas, 2000). The role and function of the narrative approach in understanding people’s work
Individuals who self-consciously reflect on their objective career can construct a subjective career in the form of a narrative. A career narrative comprehends the vocational self and shapes the further elaboration of this self-conception in the work world. Narratives about subjective career foster self-knowledge and clarify personal goals. A sense of subjective career heightens self-understanding and self-definition. More importantly, subjective career guides adaptation as it negotiates opportunities and constraints and uses the self-organised personality dispositions to address self-regulatory concerns.

Literature as such has been an inspiring exploration of the narrative approach in the field of vocational and career psychology. As elaborated earlier, life experience and career experience intertwine with one another, presenting a complex picture for meaning making and meaning interpretation. Constructing career narrative should echo the narrative nature of people’s general life course. From this view, three points seem to deserve reiterating when we consider applying narrative inquiry to career exploration. First, there needs to be a recognition and respect toward a person’s subjectivity, as the subjective processing remains at the core of the narration. Second, experiences should be integrated into the narration process with an enriching manner. That is, this integration demonstrates not only an integral philosophical flow but also a coherent connection between the narrative inquiry and people’s real life career development. Of note, the scholarly debate of theoretical convergence may render more interest toward the integration of the established and emerging approaches in vocational psychology (Savickas, 1995). There seems to be some optimal possibility for traditional objectivist theoretical frames (Savickas, 2000) to be receptive to constructivist paradigm such as narrative methodology. For example, in a more recently revised version of Super’s life–space, life–space theory of careers, Super, Savickas and Super (1996) and Savickas, (1997, 2000). Savickas (1990, 1991, 1997) has presented an illustrative effort toward career research and practice. It has been demonstrated that the narrative framework can be used in a heuristic way to study a person’s life career experiences (Cochran, 1990), to enhance theoretical and conceptual understanding (Cochran, 1991) and to provide theoretical direction and practical means for helping intervention and personal growth (Cochran, 1997). Cochran’s (1997) recent elaboration of using a narrative approach in career counselling appears to hold promise and value to enhance the narrative framework in practice. The meaningfulness of this approach is that it demonstrates not only an integral philosophical flow but also a coherent connection between the narrative inquiry and people’s real life career development. Of note, the scholarly debate of theoretical convergence may render more interest toward the integration of the established and emerging approaches in vocational psychology (Savickas, 1995). There seems to be some optimal possibility for traditional objectivist theoretical frames (Savickas, 2000) to be receptive to constructivist paradigm such as narrative methodology. For example, in a more recently revised version of Super’s life–space, life–space theory of careers, Super, Savickas and Super (1996) have suggested that narrative construction should be included in the career exploration process. This certainly provides support for the emerging status of considering narrative inquiry as a viable approach for career psychology. In an effort to form a comprehensive theory of career, Savickas (2001) postulates career narratives as the focus of one of the key propositions. According to Savickas (p. 315):

In constructing career narratives, counsellors should embrace the theoretical framework of life–space, life–space theory of careers, Super, Savickas and Super (1996) have suggested that narrative construction should be included in the career exploration process. This certainly provides support for the emerging status of considering narrative inquiry as a viable approach for career psychology. In an effort to form a comprehensive theory of career, Savickas (2001) postulates career narratives as the focus of one of the key propositions. According to Savickas (p. 315):

**Constructing Career Narrative:**

**Counselling Guidelines**

The previous discussion is helpful to lay a philosophical foundation for understanding a basic human phenomenon. Utilising narrative in making sense of life career experiences is not a myth but a human way of growth that is supported by both lay persons’ commonsense knowledge and well-documented intellectual insights and theories. The narrative format conforms to our essential psychological functioning in life career journey. Like telling a story of a personal life, to construct a career narrative is to organise and refine one’s work life-related experiences into a meaningful flow. Forming this flow takes into account a series of aspects that influence the very experiences. It may be beneficial to put some of these influential facets into perspective as we consider some guidelines of utilising narrative construction in vocational and career psychology practice. The terms ‘career counsellor’ and ‘career psychologist’, used interchangeably in the forthcoming subsections, are intended for convenience rather than exclusiveness. Indeed, professionals specialised in vocational and career psychology practice (e.g. vocational psychologists, vocational consultants, counselling psychologists, counsellor educators and career counsellors) are certainly served as the primary audience for such a discussion. Yet practitioners in other areas such as vocational education, personal guidance, academic advising and organisational and human resources development may also draw insights from this discussion. A further note is that constructing narrative can become a self-helping and self-guidance process for people in life career exploration. A better comprehension of related facets enables people to be more competent in making their life career narratives.

**Strengthening narrative perspective**

Although the significant role of the narrative approach has been proved and illustrated in literature and in our life experience, there is hard work ahead to fortify and expand this perspective in practice. Counsellor educators in the field and career psychologists may need to examine their own level of awareness and knowledge concerning the narrative inquiry. Their realisation of the vital relevance of the narrative approach can lead them to give more effort toward this end. First, they may gain more knowledge of the narrative approach as a whole. This assists them to update their professional knowledge by incorporating narrative philosophy into their theoretical orientation. As a result, more content of narrative inquiry such as Cochran’s (1997) model will be either infused into the counsellor training program or the vocational and career counselling process. Counsellor trainees or practitioners going back to training courses for their professional development will benefit from a training program that can address theoretical and technical issues with a narrative perspective. A key point worth emphasising is that counsellor educators
and career counsellors need to be knowledgeable in utilising the narrative concepts and methods in their contexts. Integrating the narrative inquiry in training and in career counselling will only occur if counsellor educators and practitioners feel ready or competent in delivering this service model. It may be helpful that educators and practitioners ask themselves whether they see the value of looking at their own life career experience as a narrative flow. The narrative worldview needs to make sense for them before it can be communicated effectively to trainees or clients.

Second, the narrative approach is an inclusive rather than exclusive endeavor. As an essential form of human psychology, the narrative philosophy and methodology can be used coherently along with other theoretical and clinical frameworks. This is true for the training process as well as the counselling process. Counsellor educators and career counsellors are encouraged to be creative in their practice. Parallel to its dynamic nature, narrative inquiry can be practiced with an open and flexible state of mind. This denotes that the existing ideas may be renovated, ideas from other disciplines may be borrowed and adopted and new ideas and methods may be generated and developed. For example, the narrative and conception of meaning making from ethnography may be quite heuristic to the narrative way of exploration in career counselling (Chen, 1998). Keeping an open mind and maintaining a sense of curiosity will likely broaden the scope and enrich the content while implementing narrative inquiry in training and in career intervention.

Third, attention to synthesis is advisable. Very often, many principles and methodologies in training and practice are closely connected to the basic philosophy of narrative inquiry. Professional training and helping strategies such as case study, personal reflection and other experiential exercises (e.g. lifeline, family tree, genogram, personal story, letter writing, guided-imaginary etc.) are to some degree narrative-oriented activities. This suggests that the narrative method is not supposed to be an unfamiliar idea to many practitioners. The key point is that the educators and career psychologists, especially the latter, may need to increase their awareness of synthesising aspects of their current work. In other words, a deliberate attempt is called upon to reflect on existing practice norms with narrative characteristics and intention, summarising these applications into a more refined, systematic and consistent framework for possible theoretical and practical development. The aim is to build a bridge between theory and practice. The latter will enrich the former while the former will validate and guide the latter, conforming to a transferable and constructive linkage between scholarly concepts and clinical interventions.

Facilitating narration process
Single plots and points rendered from life career experiences do not generate significant meaning until they are organised into a sequence of interrelated narration. The goal of forming a narrative is not so much of describing events as the way they were or they are, but rather to present a coherent development of events through an intentional and interpretative effort. This development requires a process to complete. The process nature of career counselling seems to provide a basic format that is parallel to the organisational needs of a narrative. Yet, this does not necessarily promise an automatic warrant that the counselling process would aid effectively a congruent and consistent narrative development. Career counselling should aim at making this process happen. The psychologist may want to function as a constructive process facilitator while working with the client through the narrative construction.

A constructive process facilitator in this context means that the career counsellor assumes a combination of roles including an empathic listener, an attentive observer and a thoughtful participant. While this combination of roles needs to be functioned as a whole, it is perhaps helpful to pay a bit more attention to the task of thoughtful participation. Some counsellors with constructivist philosophy in general, and narrative approach in particular, may feel more need to let the client tell his or her story. They feel reluctant to interrupt in the middle of the story. While such concern is legitimate, counsellors are encouraged to become more proactive in the narration process. A key rationale is that a constructive process facilitator is to some degree a co-constructor in the narration process. I have observed in my clinical work that very often the client really needs the assistance from the counsellor while the narrative is being shaped. This is because, in addition to the professional helper’s role, the biggest advantage the counsellor has is being in the position of an observer, or in Cochran’s (1990) term, a spectator. The spectator is usually in a better position to observe things with a broader scope, or from different angles (Cochran, 1991). This extra advantage can be an invaluable addition to the counsellor’s professional knowledge and skills, contributing to help the client make the narrative a more coherent account.

Although the experiences and events described initially are valuable, they are unpolished raw materials. They are like a huge chunk of valuable jewelry stone that has been just dug out from the mine. Much hard work is needed to refine, carve and polish the material until it finally becomes a piece of jewelry. The better the selection and organisation of the raw information shared during the counselling encounter, the better the opportunity that a well-refined narrative would be constructed. An ideal career counselling process intends to reach such a conclusion. As the co-constructor, the career counsellor contributes his or her insights into the narration for the sole purpose of shaping a story that is truly meaningful or even enlightening to the client. The client may feel particularly appreciative when points are clarified and highlighted and plots are linked with the help of the counsellor. A caring, thoughtful, articulate and skillful counsellor can have a very positive impact on forming and enhancing such an exploration process; that is, a process of constructive facilitation. A key reminder worth mentioning is that as long as there is a good client–counsellor work alliance in place, the counsellor should not feel hesitant to be actively involved in the making of the client’s life career narratives, echoing Amundson’s (1998) notion of active engagement.

Elaborating narrative ecology
Life career experiences never happen without their contexts. Facilitating exploration toward the formation of a meaningful narration is to make sense of contextual experiences and organise them into a coherent flow. Context reflects a complex interaction among various personal and environmental variables, factors and situations accompanying the very experiences. To understand the context is to comprehend the ecology of a narrative account. Following Chen’s (1999) illustration of ecology in social sciences, the notion of ecology here can be defined as the total interrelationships involved in a life career context. Sorting out and elaborating this ecological frame remains one of the key tasks to achieve for
career counselling of a constructivist narrative framework. The nature of the narrative meaning making necessitates this requisition as the counselling process is intended for a more holistic awareness. The reality, however, is often quite the opposite. A commonly shared psychology among many clients is that they feel the urge to solve a ‘career problem’ such as finding out a personal preference, a right type of retraining, a direction for a career change or a new job. The slippery slope of this overly concentrated attention could easily lead to ignorance of many other complicated contextual variables in the whole picture. Thus, a focus on the narrative ecology is necessary.

In facilitating the narration process the career counsellor can help the client draw attention to the examination of a series of relational aspects and issues entangled in a life career context. More elaboration may be directed to:

- points that are not very explicit and easily to be overlooked;
- the linkage and interconnection between the various aspects; and
- the multifaceted and dynamic nature of these interrelationships.

Reconsider one of the examples used earlier. This person intended to voluntarily withdraw from her current work life, go back to school and pursue a new career goal. What was the trigger(s) for this intent? How did she feel about her current profession? What would others such as friends and colleagues say about this? What would be her plan for funding the retraining? Which kind of decision might this decision have on her family, both psychologically for possible changes financially? What was or would be the reaction from her family members? How much did she know about her new career option? What is the connection between this new career option and the current or anticipated labor market situation? What would this decision mean to her in the long run?

In this case, a series of issues need to be elaborated in order to organise a more satisfying and creative story. Being in the position of an intentional spectator and constructive facilitator, the counsellor should contribute effectively in pinpointing and highlighting the essential facets that form the ecology of a narration. The primary goal is to focus on the wholeness of the narrative so that the making and interpretation of the narration will reflect a more integral representation of a person–context interaction. Consequently, such an endeavour enriches and validates the structure and content of a narrative, assisting the client to attain comprehensive and meaningful insights on his/her life career journey.

Cultivating narrative projection Career counselling is future-oriented, and so is life career narration. Past and present narratives are important, yet they are only important in the sense that they will contribute to the formation of a more constructive and meaningful future narrative for one’s life career development (Chen, 1997a). In proposing the narrative approach for career counselling, Cochran (1997, p.1) suggested the future projection as the core for career counseling:

*The basic subject of career counselling is a person’s future. The present is not neglected, but it becomes important precisely because it is fraught with implications for the future. Although career counselling might involve a variety of immediate adjustments, the most fundamental outcome is a person’s design for his or her future career, a projection of a course of life in working to produce ends.*

With this goal in mind, the career counsellor can help the client develop a future orientation through the entire counselling process. That is, when past and present experiences are incorporated into the narration, the central intention is to make them as foundational episodes that can be used copiously in the construction of the future narrative.

Several points may be worth noticing with regard to future narrative projection. First, helping the client gain a good understanding of the past and present personal stories is important. Without the insights rendered from past experiences, it will be impossible to form meaningful plots and episodes for the future projection. Second, some attention to realistic originality should be encouraged. As the future projection is based on the past and present, the client would be much better off if he or she could design the narrative plots such as options, decisions, plans and contexts in a way that is rooted soundly in the past and present stories. Keeping a sense of originality and creativity toward the future narrative is desirable. Meanwhile, it is equally important that an envisioned future projection will reflect realistically a person’s unique context so that the projected blueprint will be obtainable, similar to what Schneider (2001) defines as a state of ‘realistic optimism’. Third, there is a need to maintain a flexible attitude. Narrative projection denotes a future tense; the future will bring changes that we may or may not be able to envision at the present. The counsellor helps the client to be better prepared psychologically for possible changes ahead. The client will realise that the future projection is an open-ended narration. As the narrator, the person can modify the content of the projective narrative when contexts alter, going through the process of ‘framing’ and ‘reframing’ suggested by Amundson (1995). Instead of feeling lack of control, clients may welcome and enjoy experiencing growth as they make narrative projection into their future life career course.
Initiating narrative enactment

Chen (1997b) defines life career enactment as intentional action to encounter challenges surfacing from the world of work. Narrative enactment, in this view, represents the person’s effort to make things happen. As has been argued, constructing a life career narrative is to take action for future projection. The very essence of projection is that the ultimate actualisation of the projection rests on the human action represented by an individual sense of agency (Bandura, 2001a, 2001b). Meanwhile, the narrative enactment also reflects a contextual endeavour of joint action with others involved in the narrative projection and implementation (Young & Valach, 2001; Young et al., 1996). In projecting a future life career narrative, a person is not a passive target or object that is waiting to be selected or rejected/phased-out by the environment. On the contrary, the person actively takes the ownership of his or her vocational destiny by repeatedly designing and launching self into the ongoing career making process’ (Chen, 1997c, p.7).

Action initiation is a key component in the making of a holistic and meaningful narration. The narration process loses its vitality if action is not to take place. The career counsellor may need to empower the client to become more action-oriented in constructing the narrative.

First, the entire career counselling process must aim at promoting personal agency. This is to say that encouraging a sense of personal agency should be the main agenda at every stage of narration. For example, in reflecting on a painful story of involuntary job loss, the client may be given an opportunity to describe how he or she made an effort to cope with the difficult circumstance, even though the effort seemed to have little impact on turning the adversity around at the time. This kind of intentional focus and portrayal can make a substantial difference in setting up the tone or theme of the narration. It stimulates a genre of an actor and agent fighting a battle, rather than a script of a patient and victim who gave up the trial (Cochran, 1997).

Second, career counselling should facilitate a sense of joint action. A skilful career psychologist can demonstrate to the client that the counselling process itself is an effort of joint action. That is, the client works together with the counsellor in making narratives that will be meaningful to a future career projection. Meanwhile, in designing his or her own action plan, the client comes to the realisation that in a broad personal and social context, an individual action is very often actualised in a context of joint action. Family members and significant others can be co-actors in the narrative projection and thus they need to be included in the whole spectrum of narration and planning. For example, thinking about launching a small-scale printing business, the prospective partner may need to be counted as a part of the scheme for action implementation, implying the need for considering narrative ecology.

Third, there is a need to encourage a sense of open perseverance. Enacting on a future-oriented life career narration calls for an agentic endeavour or – in Chen’s (1997c) term, an attitude and stance of perseverance – in action implementation. Perseverance is still a sound practice to reinforce a sense of personal agency. However, perseverance should embrace an openness in a fast-changing, extremely dynamic and competitive work world. A stance of open perseverance entails both an agentic role and a sense of flexibility for change. Future life career narratives are open-ended. This openness implies opportunity as well as uncertainty, expressing both the beauty and the challenge of narrative projection. A pertinent guideline to keep in mind is that people need to make the necessary contextual adjustments while persevering in career enactment. A dogmatic and mechanical resolution may not lead to a fruitful end, but a roadblock or an impasse. Hence, open perseverance combines negotiation into determination, maximising the opportunity for a more feasible end. To empower a theme of perseverance in a future narrative, the counsellor can help the client to adopt a more open attitude. Projection negotiation may be conducted through ways such as envisioning different scenarios, using varied perspectives to examine the same plot and considering feedback from the live enactment experiences (Chen, 1997b).

CONCLUSION

Viewing life career development as a narrative flow appears congruent to the very essence of human existence. It conceptualises vocational psychology in general and career psychology in particular, with a broad epistemology of life career integration. Through narrative construction, career actions and experiences are connected with other personal and social life aspects in a coherent manner. Life episodes nourish career narratives and career growth enriches life quality, generating a two-way transferable reflexivity for meaning making, meaning interpretation and meaning enhancement. A continuing attempt toward the development of new intellectual insights is no doubt important. Yet it is equally, if not more, important that a considerable effort is devoted to actualising sound theoretical framework in practice.

The guidelines proposed for constructing career narrative in this analytical discussion reflect such an effort. Of important note, these guidelines are intertwined facets within a multi-faceted and complex system analogous to the three-dimensional ‘cube model of action theory’ presented by Young and his colleagues (see Young & Valach, 2000; Young et al., 1996). These facets interplay concurrently and they overlap, supplement and complement one another, forming career projection and enactment. Scholars and practitioners in vocational and career psychology are called upon to work more closely for a common cause; that is, translate constructivist tenets such as narrative approach into more explicit and tangible explanations. As a result, the narrative way of meaning making can be integrated more vigorously and vividly in the real helping process of career exploration and vocational development.

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REFERENCES

Chen, C. F. (1997a), Career projection: Narrative in
career development: Applying contemporary theories
The counselling profession has been challenged to respond to the demands of an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world. In personal counselling, the response has seen the increased adoption of principles, processes and approaches informed by the constructivist worldview, such as solution-oriented counselling and narrative counselling. Such a response is less evident in career counselling, which continues to be dominated by the approaches of the traditional positivist worldview. However, the early stages of a transition in career counselling are becoming more evident. This article overviews the antecedents of transition in career counselling and explores the influence of the constructivist and traditional positivist worldviews on elements of career counselling. Further, it examines the possible contribution of solution-oriented counselling and illustrates its application to career counselling.

THE ANTECEDENTS OF TRANSITION IN CAREER COUNSELLING

Globalisation, rapid growth in technology, sociological and demographic changes and the ways in which governments and organisations have sought to adjust to an increasingly competitive and complex economic environment have resulted in a world of work in transition. The eventual outcome of the transition is unknown and, to an extent, unpredictable (Thite, 2001). However, some features of its eventual shape are emerging. These features include a flexible approach to organisational and work group structures (Charland, 1996; Feller, 1996), a progression of emerging and declining occupations and related skill requirements (Elyard, 1998), more flexible and transitory employment patterns (Woodd, 2000), longer transitions for new entrants to the employment market (Arnold & Jackson, 1997; Villar, Juan, Corominas & Capell, 2000) and a shift from a psychological contract to a negotiated contract between employers and employees (Killeen, 1996; Krumboltz, 1998; Sonnenberg, 1997).

The emerging characteristics of the new world of work have important implications for both workers and career service providers. The major implication for workers is that they now face an uncertain employment future characterised by occupational mobility, recurring career transitions and an imperative for retraining and new skill acquisition. They can no longer rely on the traditional concepts of job security, job for life and linear career progression. They must reframe these concepts or invent new concepts to guide the management of their own careers. Many will choose to seek the services of a career practitioner to assist them with this process.

For career practitioners, the implications of the new world of work present several challenges. Traditionally, client concerns have revolved around career decision-making, and job search and practitioners have depended heavily on their knowledge of occupations and of the workplace to address these concerns. They are no longer the experts. They must adopt a client-centred/process approach in which they become a participant with the client in making meaning of the client’s ongoing career (Collin, 1997).
Another challenge relates to the fact that clients may need the services of a career practitioner several times during their working life and may expect that the resolution of their concerns occur in a ‘one off’ session. The latter expectation is particularly relevant to the increasing number of clients who have to pay for the service. Consequently, pressure is being placed on practitioners to ‘perform’ in a shorter time. There is now an imperative to provide an effective and efficient service for practitioners to examine new ways of resolving their concerns occur in a career practitioner several times during their working life and may expect that the increasing number of clients who have to pay for the service. Consequently, pressure is being placed on practitioners to ‘perform’ in a shorter time. There is now an imperative to provide an effective and efficient service for practitioners to examine new ways of providing an effective and efficient service to their clients.

**Table 1. Influence of the logical-positivist and constructivist worldviews on career counselling.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of career counselling</th>
<th>Logical-positivist worldview</th>
<th>Constructivist worldview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The role of the client</td>
<td>Passive responder</td>
<td>Active participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the counsellor</td>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Interested, curious and tentative inquirer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of the counselling relationship</td>
<td>Counsellor-dominated</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counsellor knows best</td>
<td>Interactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test and tell</td>
<td>Mutual involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem-solving approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The place of career assessment</td>
<td>Used as a starting point</td>
<td>Story and meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Meaning is co-constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment scored and reported by ‘expert’</td>
<td>Subjectivity is valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facts valued over feelings</td>
<td>Feelings as well as facts are valuable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of career information</td>
<td>Emphasis on facts</td>
<td>Emphasis on information-seeking process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provided by ‘expert’ counsellor</td>
<td>Client becomes information gatherer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of change</td>
<td>Sequential or linear</td>
<td>Recursive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on outcome or end point</td>
<td>Emphasis on process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discontinuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nature of knowledge and learning</td>
<td>Knowledge is imparted by experts</td>
<td>Knowledge is created within individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Language is critical to understanding and the creation of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholes and parts</td>
<td>Focus on traits such as personality, ability or interests</td>
<td>Holistic approach – subjective experiences and feelings valued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little attention payed to context of client’s life</td>
<td>Context is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work and life viewed as separate</td>
<td>Work and life viewed as a whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The counselling process</td>
<td>Counsellor-dominated</td>
<td>Counsellors enter the client’s life-space through dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sequential</td>
<td>Expectation of client-driven change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectation of an objective outcome such as an occupational title</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from McMahon & Patton (2001) and Hale-Haniff & Pasztor (1999)

**Further reading:**


**INFLUENCE OF THE LOGICAL-POSITIVIST AND CONSTRUCTIVIST WORLDVIEWS ON CAREER COUNSELLING**

Corresponding with the changes in the world of work and changes with the expectations being placed on career counsellors has also been increased recognition of the importance of career counselling to individuals and society (Watts, 1996a, 1996b). While this represents good news for the profession, it also presents many challenges. Indeed some writers have questioned career counselling’s ability to meet the complex needs of individuals and society (Krumholz, 1994; Patton & McMahon, 1999; Peavy, 1996; Savickas, 1996) as little has changed in the conduct of career counselling in almost a century of practice (Peterson, Sampson & Reardon, 1991).

Fundamental to the challenges facing career counselling is the dominant worldview that influences its conduct, the traditional logical-positivist paradigm, one of two philosophical positions on which theories of career choice and development are founded (Brown & Brooks, 1996). Essentially logical-positivism is a position that supports logical proof and empirical bases and claims that scientific method is the accepted way of identifying facts about human behaviour that can be objectively observed and measured (p. 9). Further, it considers that the context or environment in which an individual is located is neutral or relatively unimportant (p. 9).

Nowhere is this paradigm illustrated more clearly than in the trait and factor approach to career counselling, the predominant approach used since the early 1900s. The term ‘trait and factor’ implies a matching between individuals and jobs, and career selection occurs as a result of understanding the relationship between knowledge about self and knowledge about occupations (Chartrand, 1991). Thus trait and factor counselling focuses on problem-solving with an emphasis on diagnosis and assessment (Rounds & Tracey, 1990), which has earned it the unflattering description of the ‘test them and tell them’ approach. Table 1 illustrates the influence of the logical-positivist worldview on elements of career counselling practice.

While widely used, this approach has been much criticised (Krumholz, 1994), with oversimplification being one of the most common criticisms (Patton & McMahon, 1999). The criticism of oversimplification originated in the conceptual framework for career decision-making developed by Parsons (1909), which became the first guide for career...
In contrast, counselling approaches derived from the constructivist worldview have been slow to find a place in career counselling, despite their increased acceptance in personal counselling and their capacity to address some of the shortcomings of the traditional approach to career counselling as illustrated in Table 1. Constructivism represents the second of the philosophical positions on which theories of career choice and development are founded and is based on the tenet that ‘people actively construct their own reality rather than passively accepting a given reality’ (Brown & Brooks, 1996, p. 9). Thus understanding is ‘contextually embedded and interpersonally forged’ (Neimeyer & Neimeyer, 1993, p. 2).

Table 1 may be viewed as opposite ends of a continuum of practice along which career counsellors operate. Indeed, career counsellors may not operate completely from either of the worldviews. Rather the worldviews may inform their practice according to the needs of their clients. As evidenced in Table 1, the worldview informs the construction of the counselling relationship and consequently the roles of the client and counsellor. Under the traditional worldview, the counsellor was viewed as an expert to whom the client deferred and from whom they sought answers. Thus the counselling relationship was not equal and career counselling was a top-down process (i.e. counsellor-directed). One of the fundamental reasons for this was the primary role that career assessment played. Essentially, assessment instruments were administered and scored by counsellors who reported the scores (facts) to clients and conducted diagnosis and prognosis on the basis of the assessment. Career counselling was widely viewed as an objective and logical process because career decision-making was seen as being rational and step-by-step.

Contrasting with this, the counselling relationship is constructed differently under the constructivist worldview (Table 1). The relationship is more equal as the client is viewed as an expert in their own life with a career story to tell. Thus the counsellor and client collaborate to explore the client’s story from which they co-construct meaning. Career assessment, when used, is negotiated with the client who is more involved in constructing meaning from the results in terms of their own life story. In constructing life stories, greater use is made of the context of the client’s life. For example, non-work-related experiences, family of origin information and life circumstances such as socioeconomic status are interwoven in the career story. By contrast, under the traditional approach, assessment may have focused on personality or interests and context was commonly neglected as career was viewed as separate from life. Thus counsellors working from a constructivist worldview are likely to be more holistic in their approach and more likely to value the subjective experiences of clients. Feelings are much more likely to be acknowledged.

**The Possible Contribution of Solution-Oriented Counselling**

A constructivist approach to counselling that has gained in popularity and credibility over recent years is solution-oriented counselling. The term ‘solution-oriented counselling’ is used in this paper to encompass principles and strategies derived from positive, competency-based approaches such as solution-focused therapy, narrative therapy, possibility therapy and other related counselling methods.

Despite the availability of a wealth of useful literature on solution-oriented counselling, very little has been written about the application of solution-oriented counselling specifically to career counselling. Given the shift in personal counselling from positivist to constructivist approaches, the recognition that people present for career counselling with a range of ‘complex problems that involve personal, emotional, family as well as career concerns’ (Krumholz, 1998, p. 562) that their career issues are embedded within wider individual, social and societal systems, it would seem valuable to explore the potential contribution that approaches to personal counselling such as solution-oriented counselling can make to the work of career practitioners.

In a climate of increasing emphasis on accountability, with clients expectations of successful, time- and cost-effective counselling outcomes, the efficacy of solution-oriented counselling approaches is being consistently proven. Research by de Shazer and others (O’Connell, 1998) indicates that solution-focused therapy is effective for more than 70% of clients, with clients meeting, to their satisfaction, the goal(s) they set in counselling. One concern with solution-oriented counselling is that counsellors may reduce the approach to a series of simplistic, step-by-step techniques that can be learned from a textbook. While solution-oriented counselling is based on approaches that at first glance may appear deceptively simple, it is important to keep in mind the constructivist principles on which this counselling approach is founded. Solution-oriented counselling is underpinned by the key characteristics of being collaborative, constructivist, competency-based and change-oriented (Axten, Guy & Lowe, 1999). These characteristics parallel Peavy’s (1992) themes of relationship, meaning-making, agency and negotiation. Each characteristic will now be discussed and illustrated with sample questions. These questions are intended only as examples as it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss their incorporation in the counselling process. The authors recommend that readers interested in adopting solution-oriented concepts into their counselling work seek appropriate training.

**Collaborative**

The emphasis in solution-oriented counselling is on the working alliance formed by the counsellor and client. ‘Solutioning’ (Walter & Peller, 1992) is seen as something counsellors and clients work on together as partners via a therapeutic conversation. Counsellors initiate problem-free talk to gain a sense of the client’s world outside of the problem that has brought them to counselling.
usually enables counsellors to discover aspects of the client’s life from which to draw client strengths further in the counselling session. Counsellors maintain a curious, respectful, empathic, accepting, caring and encouraging stance towards their clients. This enables counsellors to acknowledge and work with the goals, beliefs, language and level of motivation of clients rather than the counsellors’ own priorities, agendas and diagnosis of the problem. Clients’ situations and problems are not pathologised but viewed as normal life setbacks that can be either overcome or dealt with more effectively. Joining with clients in this way means that counsellors do not assume an expert role in the counselling relationship but work collaboratively with clients at their pace, using their language and inviting clients’ feedback on the session’s progress during and at the end of each session. Questions such as the following are helpful in encouraging clients to articulate clear, specific outcomes and ensure that counsellors keep the focus on clients’ goals:

1. What is your goal in coming here today?
2. What specifically would you like to be doing differently?
3. What was different about that time?
4. What would people who know you well think would be a useful strategy to access information.

Utilising questions such as these in career counselling can be valuable in a range of situations, such as when clients are experiencing a lack of motivation, anxiety and decreased ability to set priorities and manage their time in situations such as unemployment and job-seeking. Helping clients to explore how they have coped in previous times of difficulty and what they are doing differently when they are feeling more motivated provides valuable tools for clients to use in their current situation. When clients require occupational or other information, or assessment as part of a career counselling session, counsellors can check what the client already knows, how they have accessed this information previously and what they think would be a useful strategy to access the required information in this instance. In this way, counsellors are ‘facilitators of continuous learning’ (Krumboltz, 1998, p. 560) rather than simply providers of information.

**Change-oriented**

One of the premises of solution-oriented counselling is that if something works, clients should keep doing it. If it’s not working, they should stop and do something different (Quick, 1999). There is no expectation that major changes need to be made to solve complex problems. Changes made need not necessarily even be related to the problem to be effective. Counsellors help clients to notice what they are doing when things are working for them and continue or amplify these actions or thoughts in the process of working towards solutions. Clients are also assisted to notice what is not working and to make small changes to patterns of interactions to change outcomes. The emphasis is on changes that clients can make in the here and now, that don’t depend on others to change first and that encourage momentum for further desired change. Useful questions could include:

1. What did you do?
2. How did you do that?
3. What was helpful about what you did?
4. Who or what helped you to do that?
5. What was different about that time?

When clients present a problem story, constructivist problem-focused counselling assume that clients are not deficit-based, but have access to unique strengths and resources. Clients are assumed to be experts at solving the problems in their lives and counsellors are experts at helping clients set goals and facilitating clients’ recognition and utilisation of their own resources to meet their goals. Counsellors ask questions to elicit clients’ stories about times when the problem is not happening (exceptions to the problem) and what they were doing, thinking and saying differently then. Exploration also encompasses how the client might have dealt successfully with similar problem situations in the past. Even if these situations were dealt with unsuccessfully, exploration can help clients and counsellors know what is not helpful action to take in this situation. Questions such as the following enable clients to focus on the strengths and resources they bring to difficult situations, which they often dismiss or forget about when they have a problem.

1. What would you be doing differently?
2. What are you saying?
3. What would people who know you well notice about you in this situation?
4. How is this different to what you’re doing now?
5. What else?

Clients’ responses to these questions provide rich data to link future possibilities to clients’ current goals.

**Competency-based**

Counsellors utilising solution-focused problem-focused counselling assume that clients are not deficit-based, but have access to unique strengths and resources. Clients are assumed to be experts at solving the problems in their lives and counsellors are experts at helping clients set goals and facilitating clients’ recognition and utilisation of their own resources to meet their goals. Counsellors ask questions to elicit clients’ stories about times when the problem is not happening (exceptions to the problem) and what they were doing, thinking and saying differently then. Exploration also encompasses how the client might have dealt successfully with similar problem situations in the past. Even if these situations were dealt with unsuccessfully, exploration can help clients and counsellors know what is not helpful action to take in this situation. Questions such as the following enable clients to focus on the strengths and resources they bring to difficult situations, which they often dismiss or forget about when they have a problem.

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5. What was different about that time?

Utilising questions such as these in career counselling can be valuable in a range of situations, such as when clients are experiencing a lack of motivation, anxiety and decreased ability to set priorities and manage their time in situations such as unemployment and job-seeking. Helping clients to explore how they have coped in previous times of difficulty and what they are doing differently when they are feeling more motivated provides valuable tools for clients to use in their current situation. When clients require occupational or other information, or assessment as part of a career counselling session, counsellors can check what the client already knows, how they have accessed this information previously and what they think would be a useful strategy to access the required information in this instance. In this way, counsellors are ‘facilitators of continuous learning’ (Krumboltz, 1998, p. 560) rather than simply providers of information.

**Change-oriented**

One of the premises of solution-oriented counselling is that if something works, clients should keep doing it. If it’s not working, they should stop and do something different (Quick, 1999). There is no expectation that major changes need to be made to solve complex problems. Changes made need not necessarily even be related to the problem to be effective. Counsellors help clients to notice what they are doing when things are working for them and continue or amplify these actions or thoughts in the process of working towards solutions. Clients are also assisted to notice what is not working and to make small changes to patterns of interactions to change outcomes. The emphasis is on changes that clients can make in the here and now, that don’t depend on others to change first and that encourage momentum for further desired change. Useful questions could include:
• What positive changes have you noticed since you made the appointment to come here?
• What could be one small step that you could take to get started towards this goal?
• On a scale of one to ten, where one is the most hopeless you’ve ever felt about your job search and ten is where you’re positive that success is just around the corner, where would you rate yourself today?
• What would you need to do to move one step further up the scale?
• What’s stopped you from being lower on the scale?
• How did you get from a three to a five? What did you do?

Homework activities can also help to continue clients’ momentum for change. Utilising clients’ language and ideas generated from the counselling session, a simple homework activity can be set. Activities such as ‘Between now and the next time we meet I’d like you to take notice of the times you’re feeling more hopeful about planning your career direction and note what’s different about these times’ can help clients to focus on the ‘differences that make a difference’ (de Shazer, 1988). Counsellors do not need to follow through with further sessions until clients reach their goals, but rather leave the option of further contact open for clients to decide if another counselling appointment would be helpful. As career counselling is often limited to a single session, this open-ended approach can be very useful, especially if counsellors invite clients to ring, e-mail, write or drop in (where appropriate) to give counsellors feedback on homework and progress towards their goals.

CONCLUSION

If career counsellors are to effectively and efficiently meet the increasingly complex needs of their clients in a rapidly changing world of work, they must face the challenge of exploring a range of theoretical constructs and associated counselling strategies. This article has examined the applicability of adopting a constructivist perspective through a solution-oriented counselling approach. This approach offers a worldview based on working collaboratively with the client using a holistic approach that acknowledges the strengths and resources of the client and aims to produce client-determined change directed towards achieving client-generated goals. The solution-oriented counselling approach is a possible option in an environment in which the counsellor can no longer be the expert and where change has become the norm.

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REFERENCES

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ROTHWELL-MILLER INTEREST CATEGORIES AND ABILITIES

Sally A. Carless and Barry Fallon

This study examined the relationship between vocational interests and abilities. The Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank (Miller, 1958), a self-report instrument that measures 12 career interests (outdoor, mechanical, computational, scientific, personal contact, aesthetic, literary, musical, social service, clerical, practical and medical) was used to assess vocational interests. Abilities were assessed by two group-administered objective tests of ability: the Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven, Court & Raven, 1992) and the ML-MQ (Australian Council for Educational Research, 1981). The sample consisted of 3446 individuals (880 females and 2566 males). A weak to modest relationship between interests and abilities was found. The pattern of relationships was consistent with our predictions. Although ability assessment has not traditionally been an important part of vocational assessment, it was concluded that objective ability assessment, together with vocational assessment, assists the development of self-knowledge and realistic career decision-making.

Assessment has traditionally played an important part in vocational counselling (Campbell, 2000; Hood & Johnson, 1997). It has been generally agreed that assessment enhances client self-understanding, promotes self-exploration and assists realistic decision-making (Hackett & Lonborg, 1994; Hood & Johnson, 1997). Campbell (2000) proposed that psychological testing assists these processes by providing feedback, new perspectives and information. Based on the person–environment fit approach to career development (e.g. Davis & Lofquist, 1984; Holland, 1985a, 1992, 1997) that positive work outcomes (e.g. achievement and satisfaction) occur when there is a fit or match between individuals' characteristics and the salient features of their work environment, career assessment has most commonly consisted of interest assessment. The assumption is that interest assessment helps people to become aware of their dominant type or personality and thus facilitates the career decision process.

Interest assessment provides the client with information about their interest type and preferred work environment, but it is also important that clients develop a realistic and accurate understanding of their level of abilities (Betz, 1992; Chartrand & Bertok, 1993). Recently, it has been argued that ability assessment is an integral part of career assessment (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Hackett & Betz, 1981) that personal choice behaviour is determined by the individuals' level of confidence that they can perform that behaviour. Because self-estimates of ability vary in their accuracy (Lowman & Williams, 1987; Westbrook, Sanford, Gilleland, Fleenor & Merwin, 1988), it is recommended that objective ability testing is an integral part of career assessment (Chartrand & Bertok, 1993; Lowman, 1991; Swanson, 1993).

Prediger (1999) argued that the best use of tandem or joint use of interest and ability assessment is to assist clients to estimate their similarity to members of various work groups. For some clients, ability assessment provides a ‘can-do’ dimension to interest scores. He further argued that the joint use of interest and ability assessment enables the counsellor to verify interest scores, as well as provide clients with unique information over and above that provided by interest assessment. This raises the issue of the relationship between interests and abilities.

INTERESTS AND ABILITIES

Although there has been considerable interest in the relationship between interests and abilities, few studies have reported the magnitude of the relationship in terms of correlational data (Ackerman & Heggestad, 1997). This is because early studies reported only...
occidental scores rather than interest scores or, alternatively, profile analysis was used. More recently a small number of studies have reported the relationship between Holland’s vocational interests and abilities (e.g. Ackerman, Kanfer & Goff, 1995; Carless, 1999; Kanfer, Ackerman & Heggestad, 1996; Lowman, Williams & Leeman, 1985; Rhandahl, 1991; Rolhus & Ackerman, 1996). In general, these studies reported a weak to modest relationship between interests and abilities. In a summary of six of the studies, Ackerman and Heggestad (1996) concluded that the data showed that:

- Investigative and Realistic interests tend to be positively associated with mathematical and spatial ability scores;
- Literary interests (Artistic) are positively associated with verbal ability;
- Social interests tend to have negligible or negative correlations with abilities;
- Enterprising interests tend to correlate negatively with abilities;
- Conventional interests and abilities tend to have a negative relationship; and
- Verbal abilities tend to be most strongly correlated with Artistic and Investigative interests.

The aim of the present study was to examine whether the previously reported patterns of relationships occur when an expanded model of interests is used.

### ROTHWELL-MILLER INTEREST BLANK

The Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank was developed by Miller in 1947 for the purpose of career assessment. It is similar to the Vocational Preferences Inventory (Holland, 1985) in that occupations are listed and individuals are asked to indicate their preferences. It was designed to assess 12 interest categories:

- Outdoor – an interest in outdoor activities (e.g. ship stewardess, wool dresser);
- Mechanical – an interest in working with machines (e.g. civil engineer, jewellery repairer);
- Computational – an interest in working with figures (e.g. cashier, auditor);
- Scientific – an interest in analytical and investigatory activities (e.g. meteorologist, laboratory assistant);
- Personal contact – an interest in talking with people and persuading and discussing with others (e.g. radio announcer, publicity officer);
- Aesthetic – an interest in artistic activities (e.g. stage designer, window dresser);
- Literary – an interest in reading or writing (e.g. librarian, historian);
- Musical – an interest in playing musical instruments or hearing others play (e.g. music store salesman, music teacher);
- Social service – an interest in people’s welfare and a desire to understand others (e.g. primary teacher, vocational guidance officer);
- Clerical – an interest in routine office work (e.g. postal clerk, bank officer);
- Practical – an interest in working with one’s hands, constructing, making or mending things (e.g. plumber, hairdresser); and
- Medical – an interest in healing people, (e.g. doctor, mothercraft nurse).

Although, it has been revised several times (Miller, 1958; Miller, Rothwell & Tyler, 1994), the authors have retained the assessment of 12 interest categories. Based on the descriptions of Rothwell-Miller interests, the overlap between these and Holland’s hexagonal model were identified. Table 1 shows the apparent overlap between these two models.

In summary, based on previous research, the following relationships were expected (when speculating about possible relationships we took into account that a low score on the Rothwell-Miller indicates a high interest):

- The interests of outdoor, mechanical, practical, scientific and medical will negatively relate to general abilities and numerical abilities;
- Literary interest will negatively relate to verbal abilities;
- Social service interests will positively relate to general, verbal and numeric abilities;
- Personal contact interests will positively relate to general, verbal and numeric abilities; and
- Computational and clerical interests will positively relate to general abilities and numeric abilities.

### METHOD

#### Sample

The sample consisted of 3446 individuals (880 females and 2566 males). The mean age of the females was 31.28 years (SD = 8.43) and for the males was 35.45 years (SD = 9.35). No other information was available to the authors about the participants.

#### Measures

**Raven’s Standard Progressive Matrices**

Raven’s Progressive Matrices are non-verbal tests of ability and are probably the most widely used culture-reduced tests of ability (Murphy & Davidshoffer, 1998). The most popular form of the matrices, the Standard Progressive Matrices (Raven, Court & Raven, 1992), was used in this study. It was designed for use with children older than five and adults. It has 60 matrices grouped into five sets of 12 matrices. The solutions for each set involve similar principles, but vary in the degree of difficulty. Evidence indicates that the Standard Progressive Matrices reliably measure a single factor: abstract reasoning ability or Spearman’s g (Winfred & Woehr, 1993).

**ML–MQ**

The Australian Council for Educational Research Higher Test ML–MQ (ACER, 1981) was used as a measure of verbal and numerical cognitive ability. The verbal scale (ML) has 34 items comprised of verbal analogies, vocabulary, similarities and verbal reasoning, to be completed in 15 minutes (KR20 = 0.86). The numerical scale (MQ) has 34 items comprised of number series, arithmetic reasoning and number matrices to be completed in 20 minutes (KR20 = 0.91). As is recommended in the manual, the ML and the MQ tests can be summed to obtain a total ability score (68 items, KR20 = 0.92).

**Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank**

The Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank (Miller, 1958) presents individuals with a list of occupations and they are asked to indicate their preferences. It was designed to assess 12 interest categories:

- Outdoor;
- Personal contact;
- Computational and clerical;
- Verbal and numerical;
- Scientific; and
- Artistic.

### Table 1. The overlap between Holland and Rothwell-Miller’s vocational interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holland</th>
<th>Rothwell-Miller</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>Outdoor, Mechanical, Practical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigative</td>
<td>Scientific, Medical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic</td>
<td>Aesthetic, Literary, Musical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Social Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprising</td>
<td>Personal Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>Computational, Clerical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 2. A comparison of female and male scores on the Rothwell-Miller, Standard Progressive Matrices and ML-MQ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Female Mean</th>
<th>Female SD</th>
<th>Male Mean</th>
<th>Male SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rothwell-Miller Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor</td>
<td>61.61</td>
<td>15.50</td>
<td>51.88</td>
<td>16.01</td>
<td>15.678</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>72.09</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>49.86</td>
<td>21.46</td>
<td>29.669</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computational</td>
<td>65.56</td>
<td>19.04</td>
<td>57.66</td>
<td>16.76</td>
<td>10.925</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific</td>
<td>54.96</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>49.36</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>7.744</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Contact</td>
<td>46.32</td>
<td>17.97</td>
<td>47.30</td>
<td>18.72</td>
<td>1.378</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
<td>43.92</td>
<td>16.23</td>
<td>53.59</td>
<td>15.51</td>
<td>15.772</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary</td>
<td>43.11</td>
<td>18.28</td>
<td>55.43</td>
<td>19.08</td>
<td>17.048</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>61.08</td>
<td>20.08</td>
<td>68.98</td>
<td>22.19</td>
<td>7.972</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>48.361</td>
<td>58.02</td>
<td>16.28</td>
<td>56.02</td>
<td>15.383</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>71.41</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>75.95</td>
<td>16.29</td>
<td>6.758</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>78.61</td>
<td>13.61</td>
<td>79.02</td>
<td>13.36</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>54.97</td>
<td>17.04</td>
<td>54.96</td>
<td>16.87</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Progressive Matrices</td>
<td>48.99</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>49.10</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML Verbal</td>
<td>21.68</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>22.20</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>2.237</td>
<td>&lt; 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MQ Numeric</td>
<td>18.72</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>22.06</td>
<td>7.19</td>
<td>12.392</td>
<td>&lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Lower scores on the Rothwell-Miller Interest indicates a strong preference for the interest type. Degrees of freedom for all t-tests = 3444.

Table 3. Correlations between interests and abilities for females and males.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest Type</th>
<th>SPM Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Numeric Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Verbal Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical</td>
<td>-0.10**</td>
<td>-0.08***</td>
<td>-0.08*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.06***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computational</td>
<td>-0.15***</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.22***</td>
<td>-0.16***</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific</td>
<td>-0.18***</td>
<td>-0.17***</td>
<td>-0.13***</td>
<td>-0.10***</td>
<td>-0.15***</td>
<td>0.17***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Contact</td>
<td>0.16***</td>
<td>0.12***</td>
<td>0.11**</td>
<td>0.05**</td>
<td>0.13**</td>
<td>0.12***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.06**</td>
<td>0.06*</td>
<td>0.09***</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.09***</td>
<td>-0.22***</td>
<td>-0.26***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.09***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service</td>
<td>0.13***</td>
<td>0.14***</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.13**</td>
<td>0.14***</td>
<td>0.10***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>0.10***</td>
<td>0.15***</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.09***</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
<td>0.22***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.10***</td>
<td>-0.08***</td>
<td>0.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.06**</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.06***</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.06**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• mechanical;
• computational;
• scientific;
• personal contact;
• aesthetic;
• literary;
• musical;
• social service;
• clerical;
• practical; and
• medical.

The Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank consists of a single foolscap page on which occupations are listed in groups of 12. There are nine groups of occupations. Each group contains a representative occupation from each of the interest categories. Individuals are asked to rank each group of occupations from 1 to 12. Hand scoring is very simple, the rank numbers for each job representing the different interest categories are summed. Thus, low scores indicate a strong preference for the interest category. Separate forms are used for males and females. Although the author tried to have as many occupations in common for both sexes, the number of occupations in common vary for each interest group from none to nine (the maximum number possible). The Rothwell-Miller Interest Blank is suitable for secondary students and adults. The test–retest reliability coefficients for three weeks, three months and five months for an adult sample vary from 0.44 to 0.94, with most of the coefficients reasonably high. Norms are given for high school students, psychology university students and adults, but the data were collected in 1955.

Procedure

The data were made available to the authors from an Australian company of psychological consultants that specialise in selection and recruitment. The data were collected between 1994 and 1999 in Australia for selection purposes for a range of organisations and positions.

RESULTS

Gender Differences

Evidence indicates that females have significantly different SDS interest scores compared with males (Carlss, 1999; Holland, Powell & Fritzschke, 1994; Swanson, 1993). As there is no evidence on the Rothwell-Miller inventory, the first step in our analyses was to use t-tests to examine for gender differences. The findings are presented in Table 2. It can be seen that for the majority of interests, females and males have significantly different interest scores, the exception being personal contact, practical and medical. A fairly stereotypical pattern of differences emerged. Females were more likely to express a preference for aesthetic, literary, musical and social service interests, while males were more likely to express a preference for outdoor, mechanical, computational and scientific interests. There were no gender differences on the Raven’s Standard Progressive Matrices. However, males scored significantly higher on the verbal and numerical test of abilities.

Interests and Abilities

The Pearson correlations between interests and abilities are presented in Table 3. In general, the findings show a weak relationship between interests and abilities. The strongest correlations were between literary interest and verbal ability ($r = -0.22$, $p < .001$ for females; $r = -0.27$, $p < 0.001$ for males), computational interest and numerical ability ($r = -0.22$, $p < 0.001$ for females; $r = -0.15$, $p < 0.01$ for males) and clerical interest and verbal ability ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$ for females; $r = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$ for males). The negative relationship between computational interest and numerical ability suggests that individuals who have a preference for occupations that involve working with figures are likely to have strong numerical abilities. Scientific, personal contact and social service interests correlated weakly with all measures of abilities in the expected direction. Five of the six coefficients between clerical interests and abilities were significant. These findings are consistent with our expectations. Outdoor interests did not correlate with any of the ability measures for either the males or the females. There was only one
Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the support of Chandler and Macleod, in particular Jon Bate and Fiona Brown who made the data available to us.
REFERENCES


Assessment and the person-centered approach. Journal of Career Assessment, 1, 541–554.


**Reviews**

**Workforce preparation: An international perspective**


The book is essentially about how different countries use their schools and public and private resources to prepare people for work. The importance of this workforce preparation to the social and economic well-being of nations is not just a national issue but now has an international perspective, particularly with the integration of local and national economies into a world economy. Fundamental social and economic changes worldwide are leading planners, policymakers and educators in most countries to address common issues. Among these issues are the need to restructure education and training programs to be more responsive to employment requirements.

Part 1 of the book examines the major policy issues that planners and decision-makers must grapple with as they seek to redefine the outcomes of workforce preparation programs. Included are rational planning models with their objectives contrasted with political and consensual approaches to program development and implementation. Value-laden decision-making is identified and exemplified along with functional and structural differences between major players in key partnerships such as that between the education and business sectors.

Other issues addressed, particularly in the VET area, are economic efficiency, rate-of-return analysis, certification, financial resourcing, constraints and opportunities, and different pathways that can be adopted to address labour market development.

Part 2 takes a case study approach to policies and practices of specific aspects of workforce preparation in selected countries. Included are the Nordic countries, Germany, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Latin America, Australia, Japan, Singapore and Laos.

Given recent OECD criticism of the piecemeal approach taken to workforce preparation together with limited resourcing for this in Australia, the book is a timely reminder of the global nature of the issues, approaches and practices to workforce preparation.

Because it is a collection of articles by a variety of authors, with seemingly minimal common structure, the quality is extremely variable among the chapters and it is difficult to enable comparisons between countries to be made easily.

However, it does begin to give us some insights into the foundations upon which more informed decision-making could be made regarding how best to prepare all people for work. More importantly it takes us for a short trip out of our parochial and narrow focus to a place with width, perspective and global examples.

Col McCowan
Careers & Employment
Queensland University of Technology.

**Finding a job on the web**


**Writing a great résumé**

(Peter Weddle, Warriewood, NSW: IDG Books, 2000, ISBN 0 7645 8546 0, 121 pp.)

Both of these books are part of a series aimed at students of various secondary and tertiary studies. CliffsNotes are identifiable by their bold black and yellow cover design. Appropriately, given their content, both can be downloaded from a...
They are concisely written but packed chances by using computer technology. image, and wanting to maximise their who is seeking a career change, wanting to job on the web was one of the top 10 bestsellers from Worklife's Catalogue (2000–2001).

Why has this title been popular? It is related to our desire to make our computer communications work for us more effectively. If the internet on your computer is working well, you can make it work for you as a job-searching tool.

This book describes strategies for helpful research, job-searching, résumé distribution, using electronic networking, and adding to your qualifications. The strategies that job-seekers will use depend on whether they are an active job-seeker, a passive job-seeker or a career activist. The book describes different strategies for these three different user profiles. Issues of confidentiality are addressed and ways to protect privacy are suggested.

So what is some of the useful information to be gained from this book?
• When researching a job on the web, the key is to use a great starting point that will give you accurate and up-to-date information and good links to other data. The book suggests some of these and discusses the effective use of search engines.
• To find a new or better job on the web, learn how to use commercial job boards and career portals as well as sites operated by federal and state governments, large corporations, affinity groups, publications and newsgroups. Starting points for all of these are suggested.
• A résumé suitable for the internet must be both internet- and computer-friendly. Specific advice is given about how to create an electronic résumé (e.g. no graphics and no underlining or italics).
• You can distribute your résumé on the internet yourself by identifying prospective employers, acquiring e-mail addresses and sending messages. However, you can also use a résumé distribution service or a résumé bank. The book describes how to do this.
• When you post your résumé on the Internet, where should you post it? Some guidelines are suggested for what to post and where, depending on individual needs, including the need for privacy.
• The internet is an effective tool for networking. The essence of online networking is the exchange of e-mail messages. Learn the principles of 'netiquette' from this book. The key to success is a good address book. It is possible to make new friends using newsgroups, listservs, chat groups, affinity groups and virtual communities.
• The internet can be used for further education (e.g. formal education, professional development and commercial training). This book will help you get started.
A book such as this is only useful while the information it contains remains current and accurate. The internet is a constantly changing environment. Website addresses change, great new sites come along, others cease to be updated and become useless. Even a book dated 2000, like this one, can seem dated toward the end of 2001 and may become useless in 2002. The website quoted for the Australian Association of Career Counsellors is a case in point. The URL quoted no longer takes one to the site. (Instead, go to www.aacc.org.au).

Despite these reservations, this book meets a need and is an extremely useful resource. It makes a great starting point for the job-seeker with a modem who wants to explore possibilities beyond the usual.

Those same job-seekers will find Writing a great résumé a useful companion volume. Its goal is to help you select the best résumé format for the job that you want, and then the content needed.

What are your choices? There are three basic styles of résumé described: the chronological résumé; the functional résumé and the hybrid résumé.

A chronological résumé describes your work history from the most recent job to your first. It is the most prevalent type. A functional résumé is organised around your capabilities, skills and abilities. Your work history is included in support of these. This type of résumé is harder to write, but can be particularly effective for those who don’t have an unbroken work history (e.g. those who have taken time off for further education or parenting).

The hybrid résumé tries to combine the best elements from both, and is able to provide almost everything a recruiter needs to evaluate a job-seeker. It is considered difficult to write, but good advice will be useful.

This book goes into these three styles of résumés in depth, giving examples and advice. These résumés can then be formatted as either electronic or internet.

An electronic résumé is one that is user friendly for employers who rely on scanners to feed résumé into computer-based résumé management systems (i.e. an electronic résumé is computer-friendly).

The internet résumé is one that is configured for online transmission. The book gives good advice on how to do this.

Peter Weddle, the author, has a background in business, as well as journalism, online recruiting and
employment websites. He puts his interests and experience to good use in this book.

Those interested in helping adult job-seekers will find both books helpful. I’d read Writing a Great Resume first, and then Finding a Job on the Web. Both would be valuable additions to the careers library, but I’d wait for the next edition of the latter title.

Laura Summerfield
Enterprise and Training Company

Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth Research Report No. 16

Non-completion of school in Australia: The changing patterns of participation and outcomes


Non-completion of school in Australia: The changing patterns of participation and outcomes provides careers practitioners, in particular those who work with at-risk young people, with some policy, program and counselling implications in terms of assisting their entry into either the labour market or education and training. For school-based careers practitioners the profiling of these young people who are likely to be non-completers provides research evidence that could be used to inform preventative strategies to encourage completion. The report is timely as the school retention rates for Australia appear to be declining after the strong growth of the 1980s and despite the changes that have taken place in the senior school curriculum.

This research report is part of the series of Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth by the Australian Council for Educational Research. The report focuses on the issue of non-completion of secondary schooling in Australia and the changes in terms of the characteristics and post-school experiences of these young people that have taken place across the 1980s and 1990s. The final chapter of the report examines the policy implications of non-completion of school in Australia. Career counsellors would find this chapter useful for informing the strategies they may use with these clients.

The initial chapters provide a profile of those who do not complete Year 12 and how the characteristics have changed between the 1980s and the 1990s. This information could be useful to careers counsellors as it provides the characteristics of who non-completers are likely to be today. Although these young people in both decades were most likely to come from low SES families, in the transition into the labour market. According to the report, the experiences of non-completers undertaking further education and training has become more positive, particularly TAFE participation, although strong competition coming from those who complete Year 12 has narrowed course choices for non-completers. The participation of young women in apprenticeships has also declined, and this affects their options for successful entry to the workforce through training. The research material on the experiences in the labour market provides a comparison between non-completers and those who do complete Year 12, with the evidence augmenting the proposition that early school-leavers face a more difficult time entering the workforce and the characteristics of those identified in the earlier chapter intensify the transition problems for young people with these characteristics.

While the final chapter raises issues for policy-makers, it also provides ideas for those who work with young people at risk. The issues for the young people who choose not to complete Year 12 include working to overcome the problem of poor school experiences, as this becomes a significant barrier to their re-entry into education and training in order to develop their skills to enter the labour market more successfully. This issue impacts on the work of careers counsellors when exploring future options with this type of client. For school-based careers practitioners there is the need to work with their school to develop programs and strategies that reduce the negative experiences occurring and increase the awareness of the disadvantages faced by those not completing. The report also raises the question of equity, particularly for female non-completers who still face significant issues in finding employment or training opportunities.

As the final statement suggests: ‘There is a need to ensure that young people are not just participating in education and training to occupy their time but are engaged in programs … that will help lead to secure jobs and better futures’.

Naomi Corlett
Curriculum Corporation
When I told a colleague I'd been asked to review a book called *Job Hunting for Dummies*, she looked askance and asked, ‘Who wants to admit they’re a dummy?’ Well, I don’t mind – I already own a couple of books from this stable, and have been thoroughly impressed by this latest offering from Dr Jim Bright. The book is divided into six parts, following a logical progression from deciding to look for work, through job searching and networking, written applications, interviews, negotiating with employers, and lists of do’s and don’t’s. It claims to provide ‘help for finding a job at any stage of your career’, and while this sounds like a tall order the book does contain information relevant to everyone from school-leavers to TAFE and university graduates, career changers, part-time workers, volunteers, people juggling work with parenting, and near-retirees. Users can read it from cover-to-cover, or rely on the comprehensive index to provide advice as required. *Job Hunting for Dummies* has a refreshingly practical flavour, interspersing tips on how to do things and where to find resources with plenty of examples and illustrations. Research findings from Dr Bright and others appear as vignettes throughout the book, adding weight to his assertions. In keeping with other volumes in the Dummies series, this book is broken into bite-sized, easy-to-read portions, and features humorous headings and pertinent cartoons throughout. I suspect that parts three and four, on written applications and interviews, respectively, will be particularly well-thumbed by students visiting my office as they feature plenty of specific advice, especially to the questions that students often consider too trivial to ask! Another thing that often trips students up is negotiating with employers, and the etiquette required when handling, say, multiple job offers. Again, this book provides valuable guidance. Note that, true to its title, this is a book about job hunting. It does not attempt to provide any form of career counselling, although it includes helpful pointers to these services if readers do require them.

*Job Hunting for Dummies* is a one-stop solution for job-seekers at all ages and stages of life. It offers intensely practical assistance, packaged with humour and plenty of interesting case studies. It is a new ‘must have’ for any careers library.

Karin Hosking
Career Information Officer
The University of Sydney
Adult students: Recruitment and retention

How to attract and retain adult students is an enduring question for providers of adult education. Adult students must juggle competing demands on their time from study, family, work and other commitments; their learning goals are often different from those of educational institutions and providers; and their needs and aspirations may change during the education process, sometimes as a result of it. This brief reviews recent research related to adult student recruitment and retention and provides guidelines for recruiting and retaining adult learners.

Recruitment

Adult participation is shaped by access to program information. Recruitment should be viewed as a multistep process of drawing people into programs rather than motivating them to sign up for a single course (Bond, Merrill & Smith, 1997). That process begins with promotional information to prompt participant contact; it continues with a prompt response to initial contacts, providing details by phone or print and inviting potential participants to a local information session. Follow-up on initial contact is crucial; one study of adults who contacted literacy programs found that the most common reason for not enrolling was not getting a call back (Long, 2001).

Promotional materials should be inexpensive and eye-catching. They should provide basic information that speaks to potential participants (e.g. ‘It’s fun, it’s free, it’s local and there’s assistance with child care’) (Bond, Merrill & Smith, 1997, p. 9); and they should stress the non-school nature of programs. Program information can also be provided in face-to-face contacts by knocking on doors in local neighborhoods or staffing an information booth at a community fair (Lankard, Nixon-Ponder & Imel, 1995), on the shop floor (Hellman, 1995), or in neighborhood churches, unions, or human services agencies (Gerardi & Smirni, 1996).

Essentially, adult education providers need to market their programs (Michael & Hogard, 1996). Marketing includes defining a mission statement, developing measurable program objectives, identifying discrete market segments, developing a marketing mix of specific programs for specific market segments, and conducting promotional activities tailored to target segments. In particular, adult educators should avoid the mistake of assuming that everyone understands the benefits of education, especially literacy education; the intent of marketing should be to inform.

Orientation for Retention

Orienting adult students to educational programs is viewed by many as the first step toward retention. Adult students reporting a specific goal for adult education activities show increased persistence compared with those without one (Comings, Parrella & Soricone, 1999). An orientation can provide a wide range of program and other information that allows adult students to make informed decisions and establish realistic goals and assess their own circumstances.

Program Information

Adult students need full information about the relevant details of education programs’ purpose, goals, activities, responsibilities, schedule, logistics and so on. For example, adult basic education (ABE) students often need information about credentials like the General Educational Development (GED), including what the GED is, its value in the labour market and alternative credentials.
available (Jensen, Haleman, Goldstein & Anderman, 2000). In addition, ABE students often need to understand the reason for acquiring knowledge and skills they see as academic and not relevant to their own lives; they may need to know specifically how learning about percentages or geometry can improve the quality of their lives (Pritza, 1998).

Likewise, adults participating in workplace education programs need to know not only about program content and its relevance to their lives but also about program policy and employer intentions (e.g., that programs are offered not to identify low-skilled workers but solely to improve worker skills and that classroom work remains confidential unless otherwise specified) (Virginia Adult Education Workplace Workgroup, 1997).

Similarly, adults in distance education degree programs need information about the technology and procedures used to provide content and establish and maintain communication (Chyung, Winiecki & Fenner, 1998; Nelson, 1999). Even adult students in traditional, on-campus doctoral programs need clear and full information about the process, milestones and time frame for completing their research, dissertation and degree (Kehrhahn, Shedley & Travers, 1999). All in all, programs must ensure they provide whatever information their adult students need to form clear, realistic expectations, set targets and monitor progress.

Other Information
Adult students also need information on services available to help them meet their individual needs. Adult literacy program participants may need to know about support services (e.g., child care, transportation, health care, employment) provided by the program or community or human services agencies (Rettinger, 1996). Adult students at post-secondary institutions need information about the range of academic and student services available (e.g., financial aid, tutorials, academic advising, counselling), particularly career counselling, career exploration and job placement (Baker, 1998). Students need to know about any specific program services offered, writing clinics, support groups, task teams, seminars, regular meetings or listservs (Gerardi & Smirni, 1996; Kehrhahn et al., 1999).

Self-assessment
Adult students often need to assess themselves and their own circumstances realistically. Adult college students, for example, may need to assess their own cognitive and affective readiness for learning (Chyung et al., 1998). ABE students may need to assess their own educational and employment goals in light of the local labor market (Jensen et al., 2000). Even adult students who have already decided what goals to pursue reported that in-depth, interactive goal-setting orientation activities helped them gain confidence and identify what areas to work on first (Snider, 1999).

Follow-up for Retention
Early and continuous follow-up and attention, both inside and outside the classroom, form a constant theme in adult student retention. Quigley (1998) calls for both teacher and counsellor immediacy; that is, prompt response to adult learners’ needs to sustain motivation, particularly in the first three weeks. Teachers and counsellors should initiate contact because some adult students will not request assistance. Program features such as seminars, work groups, support groups and cohorts can serve as a natural forum for follow-up contact (Cunningham, 1996; Kehrhahn et al., 1999).

Beginning with recruitment, the adult learner should be seen as a partner in a learning process that builds on motivations, counsellors rather than tests, emphasises relevance and recognises resistance (Jensen et al., 2000). Adult education providers must also make a commitment to adult student retention with specific goals, effective tracking systems, timely reports of at-risk indicators and a strengthened advisory system with clearly defined staff responsibilities and standards (Ben-Joseph, Ryan & Benjamin, 1999). A wider definition of persistence that includes interrupted educational activities is needed ‘to allow practitioners to focus on helping adults become persistent learners who use episodes of program participation as critical parts of a comprehensive learning strategy’ (Comings et al., 1999, p. 66).

Michael E. Wonacott
ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education

REFERENCES

We think it is timely in 2002 to celebrate the achievements of Australian career practitioners. To this end, we are proposing to edit a collection of practical ideas from Australian career professionals, including career counsellors, career teachers, human resource personnel and others from a range of settings including schools and universities, private practice, large and small companies and government departments.

We will collate the collection and publish it as a resource book in November 2002.

What we need for the resource book are brief, step-by-step instructions on original career counselling activities, career lessons, career programs, or other processes and activities that have worked well for you. You don’t have to be a writer to contribute – just be able to get your ideas down on paper.

We see this publication as showcasing excellence in Australian career practice. While we will do the editing, all contributors will be appropriately acknowledged and retain authorship of their work. Our aim with this project is to develop collegiality, collaboration and cooperation among career professionals and celebrate excellence in career practice.

Contributions will need to be to us by the end of April 2002 in order for us to finalise publication by November 2002.

For further information and guidelines please contact Mary McMahon at m.mcmahon@qut.edu.au or Wendy Patton at w.patton@qut.edu.au

The following Careers Trivia Review was developed by Malcolm McKenzie and Marijke Weight of the Careers Service at the University of Technology, Sydney. For a similar idea see also Beale (1998).

**Question 1**

CICA stands for:

a) Careers Information & Curriculum Assistant
b) Careers Industry Consortium Australia
c) Certified Industrial Careers Advisor
d) Cranky Irritable Careers Advisor

**Question 2**

Who of the following is NOT a career theorist:

a) R. W. Davis
b) E. Bordin
c) S. H. Black
d) J. L. Holland

**Question 3**

Which of the following is responsible for the careers thoughts inventory:

a) S. Ginsburg & E. Ginzberg
b) A. Watts & W. Law
c) J. Sampson et al.
d) J. D. Krumholz

**Question 4**

Who developed the main concepts of sociodynamic counselling:

a) J. Lentz
b) R. V. Peavy
c) M. McMahon
d) W. Patton

**Question 5**

Who developed the main concepts of systems theory:

a) A. Angus & J. Robertson
b) D. Brown & L. Brooks
c) M. McMahon & W. Patton
d) The Two Ronnies

**Question 6**

How would a professional careers counsellor respond to the following comment: ‘I don’t know what to do with the rest of my life’?

a) ‘Tell someone who cares!’
b) ‘You could try the Foreign Legion.’
c) ‘Not tonight, I’ve got a headache.’
d) ‘Tell me a little more about those feelings.’

**Question 7**

Who was responsible for the updated version of the SDS:

a) W. Patton & M. McMahon
b) M. Shears & A. Harvey-Beavis
c) W. Patton & M. McMahon
d) D. Hutton

**Question 8**

Which graduate job has the highest starting salaries as identified by the Graduate Destination Survey:

a) A. Angus
b) B. Shears & A. Harvey-Beavis
c) J. Athanasou
d) M. McMahon

**Question 9**

Which science-based career has not been identified as an occupation of the future:

a) Nanotechnologist
b) Bioinformatician
c) Geneticist
d) Osagamatician

**Question 10**

How many careers counsellors does it take to change a light bulb:

a) 1
b) 2

**Acknowledgement**

This project was funded at least in part with Federal funds from the US Department of Education under Contract No. ED–99–CO–0013. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views and celebrate excellence in career practice.


**Celebrating excellence in Australian career practice**

2002 is a landmark year in the history of the Australian career industry as our own journal, the Australian Journal of Career Development, is 10 years old.
a) None, because they can’t decide who has the right type.
b) None, because there is a skill shortage of light bulb changers.
c) None, because they work better in the dark.
d) None of the above.

**Question 11**
Why did the career counsellor cross the road?

a) to mail their subscription to the AJCD
b) it just happened
c) to catch a bus to their other job
d) to avoid yesterday’s client

**Question 12**
2001 has been deemed The Year of the:

a) Careers Counsellor
b) Volunteer
c) Child
d) Aged

**Question 13**
What is the most common reason for being left out of the selection process at the résumé stage:

a) not including a blank cheque in the application
b) including a photograph of your pet guinea pig
c) spelling and grammatical errors
d) listing all your achievements at primary school

**Question 14**
Which of the following is the more dangerous job:

a) staying at home with the kids
b) construction worker
c) theatre usher at the opening of a *Harry Potter* movie
d) quality controller in a chocolate factory

**Question 15**
CAGS stands for:

a) Careers advisor gone shopping
b) Computer-aided graduate surveys
c) Computer-assisted guidance surveys
d) Capability assessment of graduate skills

**Question 16**
Which tool could be used to gain family of origin information:

a) genogram
b) SDS
c) PF16
d) COPS

**Question 17**
Name three editors of the *Australian Journal of Career Development*:

a) Aremus, D’antagion and Porthos
b) Shears, Patton & Athanasou
c) Hewie, Lewie & Dewie
d) Curly, Moe & Larry

**Question 18**
Who was Frank Parson:

a) the first commercial chicken farmer
b) one of the first careers theorists
c) an honest cleric
d) father of the Year 1999

**Question 19**
Which of the following is based on fact?

a) Older workers: are less flexible
b) Older workers: will be less happy working for a younger supervisor
c) Older workers: have diminished strength and learning capacity
d) Older workers: have more health problems

**Question 20**
Which of the following is NOT a variable underlying social cognitive career theory

a) self-efficacy
b) outcome expectations
c) goals
d) happenstance

**SCORING**

0–5 See a career counsellor. You need another job
6–12 Get a mentor
13–17 You know your stuff. Hang out your shingle
18 + Get a life

**ANSWERS**

Q1 b; Q2 c; Q3 c; Q4 b; Q5 c; Q6 d; Q7 b; Q8 d; Q9 d; Q10 d; Q11 All answers are correct; Q12 b; Q13 c; Q14 b; Q15 c; Q16 a; Q17 b; Q18 b; Q19 d; Q20 d

**REFERENCE**


**NEWS**

*Career educator’s online community*

The Enterprise and Career Education Foundation’s (ECEF) online discussion list for career educators and advisers aims to keep users up-to-date with all of the latest in career education. ECEF’s online community for career educators and advisers has been set up to give you an opportunity to chat online with colleagues and experts from all around Australia. It is a great way to discuss challenges and issues, find out new ways of doing things, gain inspiration and motivation and learn from other career educators. Over several weeks some 140 career practitioners joined the list. Members come from across Australia, from rural and urban areas, and from schools, TAFEs and universities. To join simply click on http://www.ecef.com.au/careers and fill in the ‘join the forum’ form.

**FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES**

Sydney, 5 March 2002
Return on Investment in Training – National Centre for Vocational Education Research. Forum on the subject of the return on a training investment. To register your interest e-mail forums@ncver.edu.au or telephone NCVER on (08) 8333 8484

Melbourne, 24–27 March 2002
Second World Congress of Colleges and Polytechnics
E-mail: wf@meetingplanners.com.au or congress@homesglen.vic.edu.au

Warsaw, 29–31 May 2002
International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance
Counsellor: Profession, Passion, Calling?
E-mail bsctechnika@kongresy.pl or bsc@ikp.com.pl

Chicago, 7–10 July 2002
National Career Development Association
See www.NCDA.org

London, 11–12 July 2002
First International Conference on Training, Employability and Employment
See http://www.monash.edu.au/oce/ctee

Homebush Bay, Sydney 14–16 August 2002
AUSTAFE Conference: Developing Future Leaders of VET in Australia
E-mail: heather.crawford@tafensw.edu.au
TAFE and university graduates: At a glance

(National Centre for Vocational Education and Research)

This ‘at a glance’ presents data on TAFE graduates and university bachelor graduates collected in the 2000 Student Outcomes Survey and the 2000 (Higher Education) Graduate Destination Survey. It provides a profile of these graduates, as well as characteristics such as qualifications, employment and further study, occupation, industry, earnings and overall satisfaction. It concludes that, for the most part, the two sectors tend to service different industries, preparing graduates for employment within different occupations.

Source: http://www.ncver.edu.au/cgi-bin/srchCat.pl?action=show&list=659

Statistics 2001: Survey of employer views on VET – At a glance

(National Centre for Vocational Education and Research)

Released on 18 October 2001, this publication presents a summary of information from the 2001 Survey of Employer Views on VET. It contains results of surveys among approximately 6821 employers, including 3271 specially targeted employers of recent VET graduates. For all employers it includes information on employers’ characteristics, their general views on VET, as well as some information on their organisations’ training practices. Additional information on specific aspects of VET delivery was sought from employers of recent VET graduates. A more detailed report is also available in Statistics 2001: Survey of Employer Views – National Report.

Source: http://www.ncver.edu.au/cgi-bin/srchCat.pl?action=show&list=669

Women in vet 2000 – At a glance

This publication provides summary information on female students who studied in Australia’s public VET sector in 2000. It includes data on student numbers and major characteristics, training activity and employment outcomes.

- In 2000, females made up 49.2% of all 1.7 million students in the public VET sector, up from 45.1% in 1991.
- From 1991 to 2000, the number of female students increased by 95.6%, compared with 64.1% for males. This corresponds to an annual growth rate of 7.6% for females and 5.7% for males over the same period.
- Over 13% of working-age Australian women participated in VET.
- Of all Australian young women (15–19-year-olds), 25.9% undertook some kind of VET.
- Of all female VET students, 63.8% were enrolled in courses that lead to a recognised AQF qualification.
- Female students accounted for 48.0% of 12.3 million subject enrolments undertaken by students in public VET.

Source: http://www.ncver.edu.au/statistics/aag/women00/women00.pdf

New report from Dusseldorp Skills Forum

How young people are faring: Key indicators 2001 is an update about the learning and work situation of young Australians.

This report continues the Forum’s commitment to promoting a heightened public understanding of the contemporary learning and work circumstances of young Australians. This latest report, prepared for the Dusseldorp Skills Forum by Dr Richard Curtain, updates to 2001 the indicators proposed in Australia’s youth: Reality and risk (1998), which has been re-visited each year.

One of the more striking features of this year’s update on key indicators is the very familiarity of some statistics for, in spite of the remarkable economic growth of recent years, a consistent 15% of 15–19-year-olds and as many as one-quarter of young adults remain ‘at risk’ in the ‘clever country’.

At the same time some of the news is good, with Australia having well exceeded the target set in 1991 that by 2001 60% of 22-year-olds will be participating in education and training programs that lead to what is generally regarded as a qualification to denote a skilled worker. In addition, we continue to perform well in terms of the proportion of tertiary graduates in the adult population (sixth out of 28 OECD countries).

How young people are faring 2001 is available free from the Forum’s website (www.dsf.org.au): simply click on the link in the ‘What’s New’ section, which is on the right side of the home page. The report is also available in hard copy for $15, including GST and postage within Australia, from Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Suite 6, 13–15 Small Street, Ultimo NSW 2007, Australia. E-mail: info@dsf.org.au

Graduate futures

Graduate futures is a new publication produced by the Good Guides Group in partnership with the Graduate Careers Council of Australia (GCCA). It is aimed at pre-final year students.

The booklet contains information about various aspects of career planning and job seeking, industry profiles and details of career opportunities. The GCCA has copies available for sale at $9.90 (including GST). Complete the order form at www.gradlink.edu.au/gradlink/gcca/order.htm or call (03) 8344 9333 for an order form.

Student outcomes survey 2001

This publication presents a summary of the results from the 2001 national survey of students who undertook vocational education and training (VET) during 2000. This is the third survey of its type and covers both TAFE graduates and module completers (TAFE students who have successfully completed some training and left the TAFE system at the time of the survey). The first such survey was...
conducted in 1999. Previous surveys covering only TAFE graduates were carried out in 1995, 1997 and 1998 (graduate destination surveys). Availability: http://www.ncver.edu.au/cgi-bin/srchCat.pl?action=show&list=689

Successful longer-term career outcomes for VET participants

(Peter Dwyer, Aramiha Harwood & Debra Tyler)

The aim of this project by Peter Dwyer, Aramiha Harwood and Debra Tyler was to investigate and document successful longer-term career outcomes of a selected sample of VET graduates. The sample was taken from the Youth Research Centre database of 29,000 Victorians who have completed their schooling in 1991.

For the quantitative analysis, a target group was chosen from the database comprising the 400–500 VET participants who indicated they had established themselves in full-time ongoing employment or jobs that they considered to be career jobs. In addition, the researchers interviewed more than 200 young people with VET qualifications and analysed these data and also drew on interview transcripts from 80 interviews with young people.

The data in this report cover such issues as how success in a career is defined, what percentage of young people are in jobs and what kind of jobs they are in three years after they completed their studies, how they assess their career success, how secure they feel in their career and the extent to which their studies have contributed to their success. Availability: http://www.ncver.edu.au/cgi-bin/srchCat.pl?action=show&list=683

The employer perspective

AMR Interactive for Enterprise and Career Education Foundation (ECEF) conducted a quantitative telephone survey of 2998 businesses across Australia to determine the levels of employer awareness of and participation in structured workplace learning (SWL) programs. The following key conclusions have been drawn from the findings of the survey.

- The SWL program concept is very well accepted: 97% believe it’s a ‘good idea’, while 42% accept the concept as suitable for their specific organisation.
- Actual participation in the past year remains low at 5%.
- Larger capital cities (that have the majority of students) have lower rates of awareness and acceptance of the program, as well as lower levels of recent participation and loyalty.
- Few businesses appear likely to initiate participation. Also, when pressed, employers are predominantly unsure of whom they would contact other than the local school. Further evidence from the survey indicates that employers rely on being approached directly by schools or coordinators and that this is the key to winning participation.
- The 42% who rated the program a ‘good idea for my organisation’ came to that view after a relatively brief description during the telephone survey.
- Comparisons with the 1998 survey showed that there had been no change in the proportion of businesses rating the program a good idea for them.

The complete document is available at: http://www.ecef.com.au/employer_perspective

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education announces two new major publications, both of which are available in full text on the ERIC/ACVE website.


From the Journals

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Implications of sociopolitical context for career services delivery. Eduardo J. R. Santos, Joaquim Armando Ferrera & Anna Graves
Frank Parsons and the progressive movement. Donald G. Zywolski
The legacy of Parsons: Career counselors and vocational psychologists as agents of social change. Karen M. O’Brien Ninety years of the world of work in America. Camille De Bell

A test of Gottfredson’s theory using a ten-year longitudinal study. Andrew A. Helwig

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International Journal of Educational and Vocational Guidance, Volume 1, No. 3, 2001

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