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Last Tuesday was one of the hottest days on record for many years in Sydney during November. The mercury reached a sizzling 40 degrees Celsius, or more depending on which area you live.

You can imagine my delight that I found myself for four days last week in Melbourne, where the temperature was almost half as much. I enjoyed the chance to walk through gentle Parkville each day to and from the conference I was attending at the pleasant campus of the University of Melbourne. I listened a lot in the leafy quadrangles and with some uninterrupted time was able to catch up on a little reading, do some planning and make a few notes.

Well, I am back in Sydney at my desk. The weather is moderate and in the cool mornings I look out past the flowering peach onto the quiet street outside my house and watch the world go by.

Looking out the window, we can see him as he passes each workday. He goes by at eight, striding like a sergeant-major on parade. You might note the polished shoes, the silk tie (a touch askew), or the suit quite neatly pressed. Are these the hallmarks of his trade?

Some children playing on their way to school glance at his briefcase and for a moment store this image of adult life. A friendly neighbour will nod and say hello—a touch of grace in a barren world.

The birds and trees that mark his path are accustomed to this daily rite, but few spectators would ever imagine that within the briefcase there is a packed lunch next to *The Iliad* and a cryptic crossword.

Not for him the auspicious dreams his parents had for him as a baby, nor has he realised the aspirations of his youth. The struggle to achieve and learn have ended with a blotter on a formica desk, some dusty files, a flickering PC, a growling supervisor and a swivel chair to circumnavigate his world. Is this what he was meant to be—a clerk, grade 10?

Neither a Super nor a Strong can really represent this world. Our career development theories did not predict each day at eight or the supervisor that grows. They did not describe *The Iliad* or the crossword in his world any better than he could have done all by himself. True, they catalogued his type, classified his talents and told us that his life was circumscribed—but to what avail?

It is not enough to say that the careers field is just beginning, because we have been around for almost 100 years. As far back as 1907, Jesse B. Davis established systematic guidance in Michigan public schools and in 1908 Frank Parsons founded the well-known Boston Vocational Bureau. His influential *Choosing a Vocation* was published posthumously in 1909. Moreover, in 1913 the National Vocational Guidance Association was formed and some 30 years later E. G. Williamson offered the first counselling theory, which built upon Parsons’ ideas. Around this time the US Employment Service published the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*. People’s lives have been filled with endless inventories and tests—in 1974 more than 53 million people had completed one of the Kuder interest questionnaires, and I recall the publisher PAR Inc. stating some years ago that 21 million *Self-Directed Search* inventories had been sold. Even in Australia, there are public archives...
relating to vocational guidance from 1914–15, and the first Vocational Guidance Bureau in NSW was established in 1926.

These pioneering services were established largely on a belief in the value of guidance and placed their trust in a trait-factor approach, which is better known today in the form of person-environment fit theories. The field of career development is now dominated by at least eight well-known theories: Holland’s theory; the theory of work adjustment; life-span approaches; the theory of circumscription and compromise; social-cognitive perspectives; learning theories; and values-based approaches or contextual explanations, to name but a few that vie for prominence. You cannot blame the author of the Rubaiyat (1889) for being confused:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

(verse 27)

Our existing career theories describe a landscape that is largely Western and middle-class, and—dare I say—North American. They do not even see large murals in the labour market, let alone the mundane features in the portrait of a person at work. High school pupils and the university student are studied eagerly, but the unknown industrial worker remains ignored. When was the last time you read an article in this journal about heavy truck drivers? There are 102,551 of them and it is the most popular male occupation in Australia; or an article about sales assistants—there are some 330,555 female assistants in the country!

Career theories abound, but facts are few and far between. Theories should describe more than the words and terms they use. They should be capable of predicting better than the average person; and, like all good science theories, they should explain phenomena that are contrary to everyday thought. It is not helpful for theories to hide behind metaphors, nor is it appropriate to turn theoretical constructs into intervening variables that do not exist, or to reify constructs and operationalise them with ratings from a questionnaire. We can do better than that. So what criteria could one use to select an approach? Well, for a start, any worthwhile career development theory should be capable of being tested and disproved.

Are we any better off than 100 years ago or have we lost our way? Didn’t Parsons give us a start when he recommended that self-knowledge and knowledge of the world of work, with ‘true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts’ (1909, p. 5), would provide assistance in career planning. Maybe we have focused too much on the ‘self-knowledge’ and the ‘true-reasoning’ or variations on these themes. Have we forgotten about the knowledge of the world of work? Maybe we should become experts first in career education, since we know a good deal about the 986 occupations listed in the second edition of the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations. And we know a good deal (thanks to the Australian Bureau of Statistics) about the labour market and the world of work. Would that have helped our grade 10 clerk? I don’t know.

Well, our friend did not pass by at eight this morning. There is no briefcase with The Iliad or a cryptic tucked inside. I have not seen the polished shoes or the silk tie for quite a while. So I asked the neighbour—the one who nods and says hello—and he told me that he left for Melbourne where it’s cooler. I’m told he now drinks macchiatos in Lygon Street and wears white flannel trousers along St Kilda beach. I hope he hears the mermaids singing each to each.

James Athanasou
University of Technology, Sydney
Anna, tell us a little about your career experience.
The career portfolio and career transition experience is a predominant part of my life at present as I’ve moved into a new area of work as Deputy Principal and Dean at St Mary’s College, University of Melbourne. Making the life/work change is difficult and challenging, but it is also an invaluable experience that ensures I fully understand the career challenges that so many people find an inevitable reality in contemporary society.

Since I started work as a secondary teacher in Victoria there have been many moves and twists in my career journey.

Victoria
Secondary teacher (3 years)

Northern Territory (NT)
Secondary teacher with Aboriginal students in NT—vocational education and work experience (2 years)

Vic/NT/Overseas
Ongoing, casual hospitality and ski resort work and post graduate studies (1 year)

USA, Illinois
Post graduate studies and research (University of Illinois) (4 years)
University research assistantship as Co-ordinator of the Council of Graduate Students in Education (University of Illinois) (2 years)

Western Australia
Lecturer, Nedlands College of Education (5 years)

NT
Head General Studies, Community College of Central Australia, Alice Springs (2 years)

WA
Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Co-ordinator of Career Education at WA College of Advanced Education (WACAE), now ECU (18 years)

Vic
Project manager, Curriculum Corporation (1 year)
Dean and Deputy Principal, St Mary’s College, University of Melbourne
At what stage was your interest in career and vocational education involvement strengthened?
At Yirara College I taught a range of vocational subjects, organised work experience, coached sporting teams and provided pastoral care for a group of students from a defined area. While in Alice Springs I learned a great deal about local Aboriginal culture, as well as the history and culture of the Gurindji students from Wave Hill. During my work in Alice Springs, and also while travelling overseas in 1976, I completed further post graduate studies.

Can you tell us about experiences at the University of Illinois?
Through personal interest and the support of a mentor, I enrolled in a masters program of study in the Department of Vocational Education, where my interest in career choices of young people was sharpened. During this time, I needed to work part-time to survive, and the co-ordination of the Council for Graduate Students in Education provided me with opportunities to counsel, to organise events and seminars, and to network. On invitation, I continued in a doctoral program continuing to work on longitudinal research that explored the factors contributing to the stability or change of career choices of adolescents. It was an extraordinary few years for me—learning from and working with some well-known people in career and education such as Lenore Harmon, Helen Farmer, Thomas Hastings, Robert Stake, Martin Maier and many more inspiring people. After four years it was time to return to Australia and to the reality of a more mainstream world and work.

What can you tell us about your work at Edith Cowan University in the following two decades?
The next twenty years (from the 1980s to 2000) involved the development and consolidation of university teaching in the secondary education program, as well as the provision of programs to support teachers in career education and development roles in schools.

Along with my university work, there was a need to promote and encourage the acceptance of career education within schools and systems. Policy makers, decision makers, teachers, community members, employers and parents had a limited understanding of career and its value. A greater understanding of the important role of career-related studies in curriculum was needed. People accepted the challenge of developing curriculum and programs that better prepared young people to live and work in an ever changing society.

The strategies we used included actively interacting with and involving local community organisations, and also local, state, national and international professional associations. We promoted the importance of national professional collaboration and unity through a national forum, and we also raised the visibility and profile of career work through state, national and international events, such as conferences and visiting scholars.

In 2003, a number of my earlier experiences were intertwined: I was involved in project managing an Australian National Training Authority funded project ‘Developing Career Resources for Indigenous Students’ at the Curriculum Corporation (the web site is still available at www.curriculum.edu.au/indigenouscareers/); I supported the editor in preparation for the Australian Careers Service (ACS) Newsletter; organised a series of career practitioner seminars in the eastern states, and managed the preparation of materials for the recently launched DEST Resource for Career Practitioners (ReCaP).

I understand you have a new role at St Mary’s College currently?
Although I retain my position at Edith Cowan University, for personal reasons I have relocated closer to my family. For the past two years I have worked in areas and projects related to career but not as a career practitioner or educator. As Deputy Principal and Dean at St Mary’s College, I have a greater academic and pastoral care role. However, with the completion of a brand new academic centre, we are beginning to develop a ‘career information corner’ and the extended support program will include career development sessions.

What is your philosophy or orientation to work as a career practitioner?
I believe the task of determining life and work decisions is complex and unique for each individual. Career work cannot be approached as a simple and static system that can be controlled by an ‘expert’ who
Career Profile holds all the relevant information and knowledge. Career practitioners are facilitators using a range of insights, experiences, strategies and approaches, which will help individuals move towards greater self-understanding and clarity of the optimum decisions for them at a particular stage of life. The support and facilitation skills of career practitioners are often most sought after and appreciated by individuals during major life transitions. Assisting clients requires acknowledging the complexity of the task and the individuality of clients’ career project and decisions. A career practitioner must ensure that individuals understand:

- the career process;
- the important factors that influence their career decisions and preferences;
- that career work requires making difficult decisions and committing to implementing actions; and
- that ultimately each person will need to take responsibility for their career decisions and action.

Current approaches utilising narrative, active engagement, constructivism and socio-dynamic strategies (to mention a few) acknowledge this shift in approach. This is the shift from ‘expert giver of advice’ to facilitation and empowerment of an individual’s career projects. Allowing the individual control over their life story and direction poses challenges to the career practitioner, who no longer holds the power or authority. There is also the challenge to resist the need for many people to hand over their difficult decision making to an outside ‘authority’.

Who was influential in your thinking about careers?

When I first started to explore career work in the 1970s in the USA, the work of influential career researchers—such as Donald Super and John Holland—provided the foundation for my study and research work in exploring the occupational choices of high school students in Illinois. The work and thinking of Professor Helen Farmer and Professor Lenore Harmon, who were on my doctoral committee at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, also were influential.

Over the years, the limitations of the earlier approaches have become more evident. In more recent times, the complexity of the area has begun to be captured through the acceptance of a range of alternative approaches that do not depend totally on assessment and testing. Narrative, constructivist and phenomenological approaches are emerging through the work of people such as Mary McMahon and Wendy Patton in Australia, and internationally through Richard Young, Norman Amundson, Vance Peavy and Mark Savickas.

We need to become more flexible in our approaches, and provide strategies that are individualised, so that clients better understand the process, and accept ownership of their career projects and decisions.

I believe that the systems approach enables people to better understand the complexity of career development and what it entails. The constructivist and narrative strategies have great potential in leading people to greater personal commitment, action and sense of personal control.

What changes have you seen in career services in Australia over the past 30 years?

Inevitably reflecting the complex and fast moving world we live in, career work and understanding has changed over the past few decades. A number of major shifts that I have noticed since the mid 1970s include:

- a greater understanding of the complexity of this aspect of human development;
- in career-related research, evidence of flexibility and willingness to move away from quantitative and empirical research approaches to explore variety of approaches and avenues of understanding;
- a shift towards strategies and approaches that consider narrative, constructivism with action, and systems theory underpinnings;
- career practitioners breaking free from the ‘psychology-measurement mentality’ and willing to consider and try a variety of approaches in career work;
- acceptance that career development is an individual activity and approaches need to be adapted to suit each client/student;
- understanding that people come from diverse cultural backgrounds (strategies to best support these clients are yet to be fully developed); and
- at a government, policy and decision making level, a greater valuing of the importance of
individual career development to ensure longer term benefits to society and the nation.

What changes do you think are needed in the education of career counsellors and practitioners?
All teachers working with young people need to have a basic understanding and knowledge of career development processes and strategies to facilitate growth. Teachers and youth workers need career-related course work, of at least one semester, in their professional undergraduate preparation.

The importance of policy and marketing skills will need to be included in career education programs. Inevitably, careers is an area where the ‘user pays’ and market forces cannot always apply. Government support and provision of resources will continue to be an issue and one that can fluctuate with changes in government and priorities over time.

All practising career practitioners should have completed appropriate undergraduate qualifications (as decided by relevant professional bodies). To maintain their eligibility ongoing professional development should be maintained through active involvement in formal and informal activities, and professional events (such as membership of professional associations, subscribing and contributing to professional journals, regular attendance and contribution to professional seminars and conferences, and ongoing networking).

What are the future needs of our profession?
Given the reality of the very global community that we live in, it is important that career practitioners broaden their professional horizons and look beyond their local community and region. An international perspective and active networking with professionals in other countries will be most important—we seem to be dealing with similar problems though in varying degrees of information and communication technology intensity.

With the recognition of client diversity and growth in the complexity of work environments and expectations, career practitioners will need more support and greater recognition from community and decision makers. Given career work demands, the ‘burn out’ rate for career practitioners could become a major challenge, if the support and attention to providers is overlooked. Systematic processes and structures need to be considered to ensure ‘burn out’ is avoided, to ensure quality and effectiveness of career programs, and to ensure the wellbeing of career practitioners.

Transparent career paths need to be identified for career practitioners so that established information bases, expertise, networks and related skills are not lost through career practitioners moving to other positions and work.

A continuation needs to occur of the momentum created from the current dialogue and positive policy developments (in Australia and internationally), through effective communication and community education (marketing) stressing benefits to individuals and the community.

Can you say a little about Anna Lichtenberg outside her formal careers role?
I have a wonderful son who has grappled with dashed dreams and is still exploring his career options. He ensures that I never feel overly confident as a career supporter.

I love to read, listen to music, watch films, walk, ski and enjoy staying fit. Friends, people, relationships and security are important to me. I appreciate a challenge, the value of always testing and stretching one’s capabilities, and exploring opportunities and alternatives. I believe it is important to contribute when I can and not to waste a day.

Anna Lichtenberg, on behalf of all the readers of the Australian Journal of Career Development, I would like to thank you for your time and contributions to the field of career development. May I also thank you personally for your many efforts on behalf of the AJCD.
Welcome. The aim of this column is to report on the latest news, changes, trends and activities that are likely to impact on the work of career practitioners, as well as on the implementation of a more cohesive national career development system in Australia.

**CHALLENGES**

At the top of the hit parade in 2005 is the likely effect of ongoing industry skill shortages on careers work. Back in 1995, DEET reported 'there is little prospect of skill shortages over the next decade'. It concluded that the education system was able to provide industry with a sufficient supply of skilled workers to meet the demand. Predicting the future is precarious and a reminder of the broader uncertainties in the labour market, and, so, 2005 finds us in the midst of significant skill shortages and a plan to spend $289 million on 24 technical colleges in an attempt to address the problem (see the discussion paper at: www.detya.gov.au/schools/technicalcolleges/default.htm).

It has become one of the curiosities of a rapidly growing knowledge economy that many of the skill shortages are in areas outside of traditional ideas of knowledge work (e.g. DEWR (2004) reports no national ICT shortages). Knowledge workers now represent 39.2 per cent of the Australian workforce (ABS, 2004), but what seems probable is that an even larger number of jobs have shifted their skill set requirements to include knowledge work-related tasks. A better understanding of the changing tasks and skills underlying occupations is required (EWRC, 2003).

Given the complexity of issues Australians face, it is clear that access to professional and sophisticated levels of career services is necessary for individuals and for economic development. There is a significant understanding of this need, and in the 'Sticky Notes' section I have included some of the exciting initiatives due to occur in 2005.

**STICKY NOTES: NEWS UPDATES**

The Australian Career Development Studies

This professional development package has just been released at the AACC 14th national conference and has three components that are available free of charge:

- **Awareness of Career Development**—an introductory package, including self-teach and helper’s packs, for anyone wishing to learn or teach the basics of career development;
- **Elements of Career Service Delivery**—three accredited units at Certificate IV level of the Australian Qualification Framework; and
- **Career Development Studies**—an accredited unit at postgraduate certificate level.

Why not try it out. For further information: info@milesmorgan.com.au
Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers
Over $100 million is being made available ($27.5 million in 2005–6) to establish an Australian Network of Industry Careers Advisers aimed at supporting young people from 13 to 19 years of age to achieve successful transitions. This system will tap into the existing network of Local Community Partnerships and greatly expand their role. The network will partner with industry and professional career advisers to ensure that all secondary students have access to career information, advice, support and planning. Contact robyn.bergin@dest.gov.au or see: www.liberal.org.au/default.cfm?action=plaintext&id=424

Judith Leeson awarded AM
Congratulations to Judith who was awarded an AM on Australia Day in recognition of her support for lifelong learning and career development.

RMIT renews its postgraduate careers education programs
RMIT recently consulted with a range of stakeholders (industry, employers, alumni, current students and community) as part of its process to renew its postgraduate programs in 2005. As our profession develops, we need to support continuous review and upgrading of courses by key providers. To find out more, contact michael.hastings@rmit.edu.au

Progress of National Quality Standards and Accreditation Project
The development of national quality standards is a step closer following the completion of the first consultation phase in January. This CICA project has the direct support of the Minister of Education, Science and Training and is sponsored by DEST. Miles Morgan’s evaluation of responses is available and planning is taking place to ensure the project continues. For more information, contact Judith Leeson: vector@adelaide.on.net. For access to key documents and discussion see: www.edna.edu.au and register on the communities section.

Australian Blueprint for Career Development
It’s been a while coming, but all states have now agreed to support a trial of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development in 2005. More information will follow in the next column. For a copy of the blueprint see: www.detya.gov.au/directory/c_and_t.htm#Careers

New DVD for schools—Steve Waugh presents: Chase Your Dreams
This DVD features Steve Waugh interviewing Layne Beachley, John Maclean, Michael Clarke, Cathy Freeman, Shannon Noll and Pat Rafter. The project is underpinned by the ‘high five principles of career development’: change is constant, learning is ongoing, focus on the journey, follow your heart and access your allies. The interactive DVD is packaged with a video, poster and 36 pages of teacher support materials. Contact Jennifer.Coughran@Dest.gov.au

Going to Uni? Information for students about higher education in Australia
What is a CHESSN? Visit the ‘Going to Uni’ site (www.goingtouni.gov.au) and find out. The site offers more acronyms than alphabet soup, but is a must view for career practitioners. It gives an interesting insight into cost sharing arrangements of lifelong learning.

The International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy
The Belgian centre is intended as a resource for policy developers and researchers, in association with career development practitioners and employers, to improve career development systems that support lifelong learning and workforce development goals. The centre has the support of OECD, World Bank and European Commission (its research agency CEDEFOP is hosting the centre in its initial three year pilot phase). The Irish Ministry of Education and Science is supporting the pilot by seconding John McCarthy to help establish the centre. One of its key activities is to support the dissemination of the results of previous international symposia for guidance and to support the initiation of a follow-up symposium, possibly in Australia. John’s email address is jmc@cedefop.eu.int

CONTACT Peter Tatham with news entries for this section by May 1st for the Winter Issue at Peter.Tatham@utas.edu.au. Entries should be no longer than 100 words, and may be edited for space reasons.
REFERENCES

Are you interested in writing?

ACER Press is keen to expand its list for professionals in Human Resources and Career Development. We would like to talk to you about any ideas you may have. We are particularly interested in manuscripts that are practical and help professionals to develop and implement their skills and knowledge.

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The Australian Education Council (1991) highlighted the issue of rurality in its major report on young people’s participation in post-compulsory education. Furthermore, research by the National Board of Employment Education and Training (NBEET) (1991) found evidence that the provision of post-compulsory education to rural Australians was seriously lacking. Subsequent research has identified rurality as a significant factor regarding access and participation in higher education (e.g., James et al., 1999; Martin, 1994; NBEET, 1994; Rhoden & Boin, 2002; Shaw & Larson, 2003; Williams, Long, Carpenter, & Hayden, 1993).

Much of this research indicated that there has been a differential in educational resources for rural and isolated students in contrast to their metropolitan counterparts. Furthermore, there has also been some exploration of the psychological aspects of rurality and their impact on access. James et al. (1999) inspected crucial, but subtle, variables underpinning the global, and somewhat stereotypical, notion of ‘rurality’ in the context of students’ choices relating to higher education. Their research indicated that the decision to apply for a university place was embedded in a nexus of interpersonal and cultural themes. This research implied a need to address students’ psychosocial status (namely, attitudes and expectations), as distinct from purely structural or material service initiatives aimed at mitigating the impediments of rurality.

Harvey-Beavis and Robinson’s (2000) research revealed a theme within participants’ perceptions of university students and staff as being socially and intellectually remote and strange. The data also indicated errors in students’ understanding of administrative processes and daily activities of university life. Overall, the research found that the students’ conceptions were related to their understanding of the people at universities and to their understanding of the prospect of creating a career through study.

Rhoden and Boin (2002) have outlined an important program developed at the University of Southern Queensland.

CASE STUDY

FACILITATING TRANSITION FROM RURAL SCHOOLS TO UNIVERSITY

Peter McIlveen, Tanya Ford and Bradley Everton

University of Southern Queensland

This case study describes a career education program that has engaged rural secondary school students with the experience of university. The residential experience program included learning exercises for career exploration, attending university, and social experiences related to living in a city. Evaluation indicated that rural schools and students have engaged with the program, and that there was tentative evidence indicative of a positive impact on the participants’ career aspirations and decision making.
Case Study

Melbourne, called ‘Uni for a Day’. Rural students were taken to the university for a day of exposure to the environment and activities of the campus. This program had lasting effects on the participants’ decisions to attend university. Direct contact with the university was highlighted as an important feature of the program. The program has made considerable progress towards a model of mitigating psychosocial barriers to university.

In summary, the applied literature has indicated two important facets of impaired access to university because of rurality: resources and mindset. The program presented in this paper addressed some of these issues on a practical level through a three-day residential career education program for rural secondary school students at the University of Southern Queensland (USQ).

PROGRAM PROCESS

In order to raise rural students' awareness of university life and of the potential educational and career options available, the program addressed issues surrounding rurality and students’ mindset in relation to university. This annual program has been in operation since 1999, with sponsorship from the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA)—previously the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority.

Target Population and Student Selection

The catchment area for the program included the districts of northwest, central-west, and southwest Queensland, as well as the Darling Downs. USQ and Toowoomba have significant educational, cultural and commercial links with these regions. The driving distance from the participating students’ hometowns and Toowoomba has ranged from one hour to 20 hours. The QSA and local teachers selected students who were deemed to be at risk of not attending university because of personal or community impediments, and these students were given priority for selection.

Staffing

The Careers and Welfare section of USQ’s Student Services managed the majority of the program. Student Services’ staffing contribution included two counsellors, student mentors and administrative staff. In most cases the mentors were previous students of the program. The QSA representative played an important role in the program’s logistics and conducted an information session for the students. The program also included lecturers, faculty liaison staff and university marketing staff.

Career Education Materials

An evolving range of career counseling and career education resources has been used during the life of the program. In the 2002 and 2003 programs, students used the Internet to access the career information website, myfuture (www.myfuture.edu.au). The Australian Interest Measure (Short Form) (Naylor & Care, 2001) was administered in 2003, and in previous years the Self-Directed Search (Shears & Harvey-Beavis, 2001) was administered. A copy of Parents Help with Careers (DEST, 2002) was supplied to the participants’ parents after the program was completed.

Participant Feedback

In earlier years, the participants completed a feedback survey which was unstructured and used open-ended questions regarding satisfaction. In 2003, the students completed an evaluation survey of the program during the final session of the last day. This survey was used to procure feedback from students to determine their level of satisfaction with the program and to assess their opinions on a range of variables related to university. The survey used a Likert scale of 1 to 5, for which 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree, across the seven items.

PROGRAM CONTENT

Career Exploration Seminar and University Application Information

Students participated in a three-part career exploration seminar. The division of the seminar into three components allowed students to break out for other activities and to undertake practical exploration work. The seminar was based on a modified version
of the Stevens’ Model of Career Development (Stevens, 1993). Although the Stevens’ model is most apt for adults, we were able to modify it sufficiently to suit secondary school students by removing reference to common adult issues (e.g., children, employers).

The first part of the seminar focused on self-exploration issues (e.g., interests, values). The seminar also included a section on the jargon of university. Students were informed of the terminology necessary to navigate their way through university handbooks and brochures. For instance, there was a description of the meaning of words like ‘bachelor’ and ‘credit-point’. At the end of the first part of the seminar, students were given the psychometric inventory. The inventory was completed within the class setting and then returned to the counsellors for scoring.

The second part of the seminar involved a discussion of the results from the psychometric inventory, and brainstorming on how the results may open possible pathways for exploration in the assignment. The assignment required the students to access the website myfuture and search for information about their interest areas, including possible educational options. The final part of the career exploration seminar was a group discussion of the results of their exploration.

The career exploration seminar was followed by a presentation made by a representative of the QSA. This involved an open discussion forum on how to apply for entry into university through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre. This presentation was a powerful vehicle for clarifying any concerns or questions about the admission process.

Faculty and Student Guild Presentations
The USQ faculties provided a detailed understanding of the content of degrees, particularly degrees common to most universities (e.g., Bachelor of Arts). A lecturer also presented a lecture in one of the main theatres. This provided the students with an understanding of how university lectures were different from school classrooms. Students were given a hands-on demonstration of the facilities within the main library of the university. This included use of the electronic catalogues and Internet searching. The Student Guild described the role of student unions on campus and how they contribute to the community of a university.

Campus Living and City Tours
An inherent component of the program is its requirement for students to experience living in the city and university environment. Students were accommodated at one of the USQ colleges. Mentors conducted tours of the university campus and city. The campus tours were interspersed between program sessions. Public transport was used as a way of familiarising students with the concept and practice of intracity transit. Students were taken into the city for activities such as ten-pin bowling, going to the cinema and shopping.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Participant Feedback Survey
The descriptive statistics for students’ feedback on the 2003 program are presented in Table 1. The median rating for each of the items indicated a strong level of satisfaction with the program.

The level of agreement with each item has been expressed as a percentage of the number of participants in Figures 1 to 7. These graphs indicate that the majority of participants strongly agreed with the items.

Sixteen participants wrote statements about the program on their survey sheet. General positive statements have not been reported here; however, the following quotes have provided some additional feedback: ‘I hope to come here next year’; ‘It was a great experience which has been a wonderful help’; ‘This place makes me feel more comfortable than I am at school’; ‘A bit boring at times, but otherwise very beneficial’; ‘Would have been better with more practical activities’; ‘I would recommend this to anyone’; and ‘The experience was one I will never forget’.

DISCUSSION
This case study described the process and content of an experiential career education program that introduced the concept of university to rural secondary school students. The program has been conducted for six years and the number of schools and participants has been progressively increasing. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that rural
Case Study

### TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR FEEDBACK SURVEY OF 2003 (N = 41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.64</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>0.55</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 1: PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS AS A FUNCTION OF AGREEMENT RATING FOR ITEM 1 OF THE FEEDBACK SURVEY.**

**FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS AS A FUNCTION OF AGREEMENT RATING FOR ITEM 2 OF THE FEEDBACK SURVEY.**

**FIGURE 3: PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS AS A FUNCTION OF AGREEMENT RATING FOR ITEM 3 OF THE FEEDBACK SURVEY.**

**FIGURE 4: PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS AS A FUNCTION OF AGREEMENT RATING FOR ITEM 4 OF THE FEEDBACK SURVEY.**
schools have engaged with it as being a valuable adjunctive curricular experience for their students. This increase in participation has been interpreted as a strong indicator of the program’s value to the actual communities it is meant to serve.

Feedback from the participants indicated that the program has satisfied some of their needs for information and experience related to university education. Moreover, the high level of agreement with the feedback statement, ‘Being at university has made me feel confident that I could study for a degree’, reinforced the argument that real life exposure to university had a positive impact on the participants’ aspirations towards higher education. Future evaluation should attempt to determine the impact of the program by comparing the rate of applications to higher education institutions from participants against the application rates of the geographic regions from which the students are drawn.

In conclusion, this career education program has demonstrated one practical way in which universities could respond to the needs of rural secondary school students. It has provided tentative evidence that such a program impacts on the psychosocial factors that affect students’ decision to attend university. Finally, it has provided a working model that other agencies could implement and improve on.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Mary Weaver and Inese Tenisons from the QSA have supported the program. Kathleen Ellerman-Bull, Ellen Gibson and Dr Kurt Timmins instigated the program at USQ.

REFERENCES

Case Study


A U T H O R S

PETER McILVEEN is a psychologist and manages the careers service at USQ. His interest in rural students stems from his clinical work with rural mental health services.

TANYA FORD is a psychologist with the careers service at USQ. She is a keen advocate for the provision of counselling services to rural communities.

BRADLEY EVERTON is a psychologist with the career service at USQ. His background in sports psychology underpins his performance-enhancement approach to careers.
## Theory and Practice

This section is designed as a brief professional review of the article. It provides relevant study questions and answers for readers to test their knowledge of the article.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are some factors that make ‘rurality’ a psychosocial impediment to university?</td>
<td>The usual costs of university study are compounded by the expense of relocating from a rural community. The distance from home can moderate a student’s adjustment, because the expense of returning home to catch up with family could be prohibitive. Significant others in a student’s hometown may create a negative impression of university through lack of information and concern about ‘brain drain’ from the town, particularly given that employment after university would most likely be in a metropolitan centre. The difference in university language and city culture may present some concern for students already anxious about leaving home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How could universities better enhance access for rural students?</td>
<td>Universities could engage in community education programs in which representatives visit rural towns to share information, diminish stereotypes and seek information on how to better engage with regional Australia. Universities could develop loan schemes specific to equity groups, which redress some of the impediments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How could rural schools assist with the transition into university?</td>
<td>Schools could include a visit to a university as part of the career education curriculum and make use of university events such as open days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How could career counsellors involve family in the transition process?</td>
<td>Career counsellors could operate a ‘family information seminar’ during the main university orientation program. Career services could devote specific pages on their website to issues relevant to family and include links to websites such as myfuture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What experiences would improve a career counsellor’s ability to work with university students from a rural background?</td>
<td>Exposure to a rural school and community (including meetings with staff, students and parents) would provide a counsellor with a rich source of contextual information. Conducting focus groups on-campus with rural students would assist a career counsellor to understand the issues faced by these students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the perpetual complaints of both writers and practitioners in the career development field is the gap between theory, research and counselling practice. To their credit, a range of recent contributions to the career development literature have sought variously to address this complaint (e.g., Peterson & Gonzalez, 2000; Sharf, 2002). Typically, the approach has been to append a case study to a theoretical adumbration to illustrate some of the conceptual tenets of each formulation. While this can be helpful in understanding the practical implications of a theory, it does not actually provide the practitioner with specific techniques that could be used in the career counselling context. On the other hand, some compendia of techniques are available (e.g., Patton & McMahon, 2003), but these are not tied to any particular theoretical formulation.

One of the challenges for any new theory of career development such as the chaos theory of careers (Pryor & Bright, 2003a, 2003b) is to integrate theory, research and counselling practice. If this challenge is not met, theory will lack applicability; research will lack relevance, and counselling practice will lack conceptual explanation. Some attempts have already been initiated. These include research on contextual influence and career choice (Bright & Pryor, in press), and the role of chance in career decision making (Bright, Pryor & Hapham, in press). Some of this
research work has been the basis for the development of the circles of influence technique (Bright & Pryor, 2003).

However, in order for a new conceptualisation of careers to find acceptance among practitioners in the career development field, demonstrating the practical relevance and application to counselling of such an approach is virtually mandatory. This paper seeks to present further techniques for use in career counselling derived explicitly from dimensions of the chaos theory of careers. In order to do so, the chaos theory of careers will be briefly outlined, along with some of the immediate counselling implications. Specific techniques will then be presented to illustrate ways in which these implications could be used in the counselling context. Finally, some further directions in which the chaos theory of careers is being taken (which may be of interest and relevance to career counsellors) will be briefly outlined.

THE CHAOS THEORY OF CAREERS

Contrary to what may be implied by the title, chaos theory is fundamentally about order rather than disorder (Gleick, 1987). However, order is understood as an emergent property from the functioning of complex dynamical systems. As a consequence, the chaos perspective is not reductionist, rather reality is seen as needing to be investigated and understood in its complex, multivariate interrelatedness (Kauffman, 1995). It can be understood as an open systems approach, emphasising interaction and interdependence of influences in continually changing and often non-linear ways. The non-linear focus of chaos theory contradicts the accepted wisdom of Isaac Newton that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Chaos theorists point to the frequently disproportional link between cause and effect and some theorists question whether cause and effect are actually separable in explanatory terms (Stacey, 2001).

Complex dynamical systems often respond to change by adaptation, in order to preserve the stability of the system. An immune system responding to infection is an obvious example. If effective in defeating the infection, the system preserves its biological homeostasis. The emergent order is the continuing health of the person. However, complex dynamical systems tend to be inherently capable of change, which may result in transformation of the system—what chaos theorists usually call a ‘phase shift’. A phase shift is a change that causes a reconfiguration of the system—often, but not necessarily, after a period of uncertainty and perturbation. For example, the experience of trauma may change a psychologically stable individual into someone exhibiting extreme post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. As a consequence, the functioning pattern of the person has been maladaptively transformed. More process-oriented complexity theorists view phase shifts as inherent in human experience and dispute the possibility of being able to extricate the observer from the system (Streatfield, 2001).

Perhaps the most salient aspect of chaotic systems is that at least some elements within such systems behave in unpredictable and often apparently random ways. This is what is called the ‘strange attractor’ phenomenon. The notion of an attractor is common to general systems and complex process theories, and can be thought of as the end state to which a dynamical system moves. The strange attractor is a description of the functioning of a system’s elements in self—similar but never exactly repeating ways. As a consequence, a general pattern emerges as the overall functioning of the system, while specific elements of the system are neither in principle nor in practice predictable. The weather is a classic example in which the overall pattern is clearly discernible as climate and seasons, but the level of predictive accuracy for specific periods is rarely accurate beyond about four to seven days.

Chaos theory has had comparatively little application in career development up to the present. In the context of learning in organisation, Wieland-Burston (1992) drew on the chaos notion of phase shift in discussing ongoing change in human experience. Sanders (1998) utilised complexity and non-linearity as bases for strategic thinking in organisational change. Brack, Brack and Zucker (1995) utilised chaos theory to indicate its potential in...
counselling for conceptualising clients’ problems in new ways. Similarly Duffy (2000) drew attention to the potential of chaos theory for the career counselling of career plateaud workers. In particular, she highlighted the usefulness of chaotic concepts such as unpredictability, flexibility of responding, tolerance for ambiguity and chaotic disequilibrium leading to new forms of self-organising. Perhaps the most thorough outline of the potential of chaos theory to career counselling is to be found in Drodge (2002). Drodge saw the emphasis on change and uncertainty found in chaos theory to be especially applicable to the ‘new career’, which writers such as Arnold and Jackson (1997) believe includes more job changes and greater uncertainty than traditional notions of career. Drodge concluded,

The complexity science metaphor invites career counselors to embrace uncertainty and chaos as a precursor to order and change. In practical terms, complexity science provides a broad strategy that involves working with clients to recognize patterns evolving in the work career domain and patterns in their own personal and interpersonal functioning as a first step towards a bifurcation (change) point (p. 60).

In terms of counselling, chaos theory places emphasis not only on the commonalities across individuals as revealed in various diagnoses, but also on the uniqueness of each person—because chaos theory highlights the potential of small differences to have major effects iteratively through complex systems. Chaos theory also incorporates the theoretical validity of notions of self-creation, personal reinvention and cognitive restructuring of situations in terms of possibility and resourcefulness. For chaos counsellors the future is not some distant horizon, it is in fact the individual’s next thought, belief or action. The reality of the unplanned and serendipitous in human experience is also pointed to by chaos theory, thereby exposing on one hand the limitations of human foresight and control, while on the other hand pointing to strategies for utilising chance and randomness productively as they are encountered in human experience.

Some Applications of the Chaos Theory of Careers

In the remainder of this paper, four techniques are presented to demonstrate the application of the chaos theory of careers to counselling practice, and to provide career counsellors with materials and ideas for introducing some chaos theory dimensions into their work with clients and students.

1 Reality is Chaotic—A Reality Testing Exercise

Reality testing has long been a goal of career counselling. An individual seeks assistance and often brings with him mistaken conceptions about himself, others, particular occupations, the world of work as a whole, how to make decisions and so on. One of the goals of the counsellor is to have the person examine these ideas, as well as the beliefs and assumptions that may underlie them, in order to be able to explicitly test their reality and logic. The chaos theory of careers presents a range of perspectives and strategies which may contradict traditional notions of simply matching the characteristics of the person with those of an existing occupation. The ‘reality checking exercise’ is a way of seeking to achieve for counselling clients a truer, more relevant and ultimately more accurate view of the realities of 21st century career decision making.

Reality checking exercise

This exercise is presented as a group technique, but it can be easily adapted to an individual counselling situation if required. Instead of the plenary work outlined below, the counsellor can simply ask the person to explain some or all of his responses, leading into a discussion about underlying assumptions and beliefs.

Aims:

1 To have participants consider the nature of the decision making context in which they make decisions by reflecting on their own experience.
2 To expose some of the shortcomings of the assumptions constituting the basis for traditional matching approaches to decision making.
3 To suggest that the principles of chaos theory are already in common practice but often just not recognised.
Materials: Reality checking checklist—handouts and an overhead transparency of the checklist (see Appendix I); an overhead projector; and an overhead marker.

Procedure: Hand out the checklist. Allow clients time to complete the checklist by putting a Y or N after the question mark for each question. With a show of hands, ask participants to indicate who put Y or N for each question. Record the answers on the overhead checklist. Focus on questions with high levels of agreement (the most Y responses). Ask participants how agreement for a particular question might undermine the traditional matching model, or what agreement tells you about the reality of our decision making. ‘Yes’ responses indicate agreement with propositions derived from, or consistent with, a chaos theory approach to career decision making.

Now focus on questions where there is some disagreement. Invite a discussion from both sides to enable both groups to understand a different perspective and consider whether they can be reconciled. Invite those who gave Y or N responses to give an example to illustrate how they see this aspect of decision making reality.

Invite participants to add up their Ys. From these answers ask participants what the overall responses tell us about the current realities of career decision making. Invite a show of hands for the Y scores. Suggest that if their score exceeds 12 (i.e. two-thirds), then they are probably chaos theorists without knowing it.

The ideas, principles and issues from the responses that a counsellor is likely to draw out include:
1. our limited knowledge and control of the future;
2. the non-linear nature of some changes;
3. the influence of unplanned events;
4. the inevitable limitations of our current information;
5. the strengths and weaknesses of goal setting;
6. the value of intuition in decision making;
7. our capacity to distort reality; and
8. the necessity of risk taking.

2 Complexity Limits Our Knowledge in Decision Making
The immense complexity and changeability of dynamical systems make it virtually impossible to have anything like complete or even sufficient knowledge for totally rational career decision making. For example, labour market information at a very detailed level for a specific occupation in a specific geographical location for a particular period of time and then projected into the future is notoriously unreliable.

However, some people facing significant career decisions think they need to have a comprehensive and accurate information base on which to choose. Of course this is desirable and it is useful to collect as much information as reasonably possible about options. However, it is unrealistic to believe that totally accurate and comprehensive information is ever going to be available (Isaacson & Brown, 2000).

Coming to terms with this uncertainty is the goal of this second exercise (see Appendix II). The exercise is a group activity for decision makers. However, this technique can be used in an individual career counselling context as well—with the counsellor replacing the other group members and omitting the plenary session. The technique described works best with a client who has some experience of having made significant decisions for himself. Thus, it may not work as well with junior secondary school students.

3 Non-linearity and Chance—Using Media
The emphasis in chaos theory on the interconnectedness of complex dynamical systems gives rise to the notion of non-linear change. Essentially, in a complex world a small change may give rise, as it percolates through complex dynamical systems, to other changes far more dramatic and far reaching than the initial change. Viruses are obvious examples from both the biological and cybernetic worlds, with a small change on one computer able to seriously damage international information technology services.

Krausz (2002) has suggested that popular media such as film could be used to illustrate aspects of career decision making. He reported the beneficial impact from the use of film in career education context. Some films are beginning to make reference to chaos theory: the most obvious example is ‘The Butterfly Effect’ (Bender et al., 2004), which commences with a quote from chaos theory.

However, the film ‘Sliding Doors’ (Pollack, Braithwaite, Horberg, & Howitt, 1997) provides an
excellent illustration of the principle of non-linearity of change derived from an apparently insignificant chance event—whether a train door stays open long enough for someone to get on the train or not. The principal character, Helen, has just been fired from her advertising job as the film begins. She decides to take the train home. As she comes down the stairs, her train has pulled in at the platform. As she goes towards the open door, it slides closed excluding her. Making her way home, Helen is assaulted waiting for a taxi and then has to have hospital treatment before arriving home—narrowly missing discovering her partner’s other lover. The film replays the opening scene, with Helen just getting in the train before the door closes and having a brief encounter with James who will later become her lover.

From this point of the ‘sliding doors’ opening or not, the film bifurcates into two different scenarios. In one, Helen loses her boyfriend and another relationship develops which eventually results in her death. In the other, she continues in ‘the fool’s paradise’ of the deceived lover, while her boyfriend comically tries to keep both relationships going with disastrous results for himself and eventual discovery in a staged confrontation by the other woman.

The film demonstrates how an incidental event involving just a few seconds has the capacity to transform a whole life. The scenario of Helen’s life continues to diverge as the implications of the non-linear change ripple through the fractal of her experience of living two outworkings of an apparently insignificant incident.

In chaos theory terms (although not recognised at the time), the sliding doors incident becomes a phase shift experience, transforming the pattern of functioning of one system—Helen’s life up till then—into a new pattern of her subsequent experience. The non-linearity is exemplified in the continuing development of difference between the two scenarios.

Considering the central premise of the film, a range of potential practical implications could follow from non-linearity of change for career development purposes:

- initiate small experiments in decision making and see what happens. Examples might include going on a job visit even though you do not think that occupation is of interest to you; subscribe to the industry journal and see what you can learn; go to a trade fair and talk to some of the exhibitors; ask friends and relatives about their work—what they do, how they got there, what they like about it, what they dislike about it, where they think the occupation or industry might go in the future, etc.; and
- get into the mindset of attempting to ferret out small changes in an industry, occupation or society as a whole, and then develop the likely longer term consequences of such changes—since these may become the major changes and opportunities for the future.

4 The Forensic Interview in Chaos Counselling

Kahneman (2000a, 2000b) made the point that most of our life is experienced through reflection on past events. George Miller (1956) claimed we could remember about seven chunks of information at a time (plus or minus two) before we become overloaded. Trying to remember a phone number told to you longer than seven digits is very difficult. Kahneman (2000a, 2000b) argues that because we have these limited capacity memory systems, the most we can experience as immediate or live is about two minutes at a time. After that, information is sent into long-term memory to free up space for more incoming information. This means most of life is experienced and filtered by memory. This is all very well, but our memories are notoriously unreliable and subject to influences when reconstructing events. Put simply, the phrasing of questions used to elicit memories combines with the recalled memory to produce a new composite memory. The brain mistakes this new composite for the original memory and thus the individual can feel adamant of some detail during an event, which may never have happened!

In a famous study, Loftus and Palmer (1974) showed people a video of two cars in a crash. They then asked people to recall a detail from the video using variations on the same question. The question was: ‘How fast were the cars going when they … each other’. The variations included: ‘hit’, ‘smashed
into’, ‘collided with’, ‘bumped’, and ‘contacted’. The speed estimates elicited ranged from 64 kph for ‘smashed into’, down to 51 kph for ‘contacted’. The more the word implied force, the greater the speed estimates. People’s memories of the event were systematically influenced by the nature of the question to produce a new constructed memory.

Law enforcement agencies have long known about such biases and as a result psychologists in this area have developed cognitive interviews (CI) (Memon, 1999). To improve reliability of people’s recollections, three elements are included in the CI: context reinstatement, report everything and change perspective.

**Context Reinstatement**

From our earlier research (Bright & Pryor, in press) we found four major contextual influences on students’ career decision making, which can be used as a basis for reinstating the decision context. For each career decision of interest, use the following script and questions to reinstate the context of media, teachers/advisers, family and friends, and unplanned events.

‘Close your eyes and take your time. Think about the setting when you decided to become an accountant. How old were you? Where were you living? Who were you living with? What were they doing at the time? What friends were you seeing then? What were you reading? What were you watching on TV? If you were at school or university, what teachers did you admire and spend time with? What was your favourite subject at the time? How were you feeling (happy, anxious, confused etc.)? How was your health then? Were you smoking/drinking alcohol/using recreational drugs? What were your hobbies then? Tell me about your parents/husband/wife/children/friend/partner etc.—how often did you see them? How did they feel about your career? Did you have any unplanned meetings with people that influenced your decision? Was there anything unexpected that happened that influenced your decision?’

**Report Everything**

For each career decision of interest, encourage the client to be expansive and to recall as much detail as possible—specifically including trivial, unusual or whimsical elements as they happened.

**Change Perspective**

For each career decision of interest, encourage the client to look at the career decision from another perspective. For example: What would your mother have been thinking about this decision? Imagine you were her, what would she have seen you doing and what would she have thought?

**Application to Chaos Career Counselling**

The CI is a tool that could have been purpose designed for chaos theory career counselling. In the chaos model, it is acknowledged that individuals will socially construct their worldviews and this extends to their memories. However, in our formulation (Pryor & Bright, 2003a, 2003b) meaning is not solely constructed. Reality is also acknowledged. For instance, reality testing is an important aspect of the chaos theory of careers. The CI is an attempt to minimise the impact of post-hoc social construction of memories.

The chaos model also acknowledges the effect of contextual influences on career decisions. Bright and Pryor (in press) have highlighted the influence of four contextual factors on students’ careers (media, teachers, family and friends, and chance events). The CI aims to garner an accurate recollection of events by reinstating the context of the original events. Tulving and Thompson (1973) originally developed the ‘encoding specificity hypothesis’—that retrieval cues to memory are successful as a function of the degree to which they overlap with the encoded information. So mentally re-creating as much detail as possible about some previous event will increase the chances of the accurate recall of that event. In career counselling terms, recalling the circumstances under which a previous career decision was made will serve to elucidate the dominant influences that were operating. This technique will reduce the tendency towards post-hoc rationalisation of events or overlooking subtle but important influences. For instance, a series of poor career choices may have been due to the client experiencing financial exigencies at the time. Looking back, these issues might not be as salient for the individual, and career decisions that were actually financially driven are now recalled as being driven by interests or some other post-hoc and rational view.

In career counselling terms, it is important for the client to recall details without filtering to allow the
counsellor the opportunity to put together a pattern of influences. A client who ‘censors’ out a recollection that his mother had been hassling him for the previous year to get a ‘respectable’ job, but instead chooses to focus on his maths ability and how it matched accountancy may be withholding a critical clue as to his true career patterns of influence.

Finally, the CI recognises non-linearity in the sense of multiple perspectives. The interview encourages the client to consider the events and influences from the perspective of significant others. This can be valuable in elucidating additional valuable insights.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
As chaos theorists we are necessarily wary about making future predictions, especially long-term ones. However, we have already begun to look at how the chaos theory of careers might translate into career assessment and career counselling (Pryor, 2003).

Career Assessment
Chaos theory confronts traditional psychometric assessment with a series of challenges including:

- Is it possible to predict the unpredictable?
- Is testing too segmental to encapsulate the richness and complexity of human experience?
- If testing tends to classify people into groups or classes, how can the uniqueness and idiosyncrasies of the person be investigated?

Some possible solutions consistent with chaotic perspectives include using mind maps, fuzzy logic and genograms to accommodate complexity; using open-ended exercises with card sorts to investigate meaning making; using interactive card sorts with ‘what if …’ conditions to explore risk, chance and opportunity awareness; and using inventories completed as a person was (at some specified time in the past), is now and expects to be (at some specified time in the future) to explore change.

Career Counselling
Chaos theory eschews simplistic models of explanation and counselling for career decision making and development. Using mechanistic matching approaches and rationalistic career decision models alone fails to do justice to a reality composed of complex dynamical systems.

Thus, the chaos theory of careers has a range of counselling implications including: non-linear change suggests small experiments as an action strategy (Sanders, 1998); emergent qualities imply an emphasis on meaning making and life purpose; uncertainty implies the need for goal setting that is ‘focused’ and ‘flexible’ (Gelatt, 1991); complexity demands that decision makers recognise the reality of risk and the inevitability of their limitations of knowledge and control; and constructivism implies the reality of different perspectives and an individual’s capacity for reinvention of himself, his past and his future.

Beyond these applications of chaos theory lie further articulations—among other things, into rehabilitation, the legal system, labour market policy, educational and training initiatives, financial planning, social change and political economics. It is a fundamental mistake to think that chaos theory is merely an understanding of reality that is relevant to our time. Complexity has always been a part of human existence. As we increase our knowledge of our world, and less certainly of ourselves, what becomes evident is not what the hubris of 19th century science concluded—that we were becoming masters of the universe—but rather how limited and small we are in the vastness of reality. This is not a cause for despair, just humility.
References
Droge, E. N. (2002). Career counseling at the confluence of complexity science and new career, M@n@gement, 5(1), 49–62.
APPENDIX I
REALITY CHECKING CHECKLIST (constructed by Dr Robert Pryor)

Answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the following questions:

1. Have you ever made a decision that later had some outcomes you had never thought of at the time of deciding?
2. Has the fear of taking a risk ever prevented you from doing something important in your life?
3. Have you ever wanted something, obtained it and found out you preferred something else?
4. Have you ever had the experience of seeing a situation one way and finding out someone else sees it in a totally different way?
5. Have you ever experienced an unplanned event that had a big impact on your life?
6. When making a decision do you sometimes just choose an option without worrying about whether it is the very best choice or not?
7. Have you ever found it an advantage not to know something?
8. Have you ever had a crisis or conversion experience that changed your life in some significant way?
9. Have you ever had the experience of being in either the right or wrong place at the right or wrong time?
10. When taking action do you ever just follow your instincts or your intuition?
11. Have you ever relied on information when making a decision, only to discover later that it was incorrect?
12. Have you ever distorted the truth either to yourself or to others?
13. Have you ever set a clear goal or a precise objective and discovered a better one along the way to the original goal?
14. Have any major decisions in your life been made on a basis that was not totally rational?
15. Have you ever had the experience of being told something personal about yourself of which you were completely unaware?
16. Do you ever act before you think as a way to investigate a situation or to make a decision?
17. Have you ever experienced a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’?
18. Have you ever made a small mistake that resulted in a big problem later on?
19. Have you ever found wishful thinking to be an advantage?
20. Have things occurred in your life that you never thought would have been possible?
**APPENDIX 2**

**THE LIMITATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN DECISION MAKING EXERCISE**

**Principle:**
Chaos theory emphasises the complexity of the range of influences on career development and that our knowledge is always incomplete at the point of decision making.

**Learning message:**
We always make decisions with incomplete knowledge: we learn as we experience the implications of such decisions and adapt as well as possible as we go along.

**Activity:**
1. Ask participants to recall two or three important decisions they have made in the past. (They do not have to be work related, but they can be.) Some examples could include a change of residence, an exotic holiday destination, a choice of partner, a change of job/employer/career and so on.
2. Ask participants to write down these decisions, and for each decision write their answers to these questions:
   a) What did you know about the alternatives you had at the time of your decision?
   b) How did you find out more information before choosing? (What strategies, if any, did you use?)
   c) What did you find out after you had made the decision, which you did not know before?
   d) What changes did this new knowledge cause you to make? (Allow 5–10 mins)
3. Invite participants to pair up to share and discuss their answers to one decision each. (Allow 5–10 mins)
4. Plenary session: invite participants to provide general answers to the four questions. Focus on the initial incompleteness of their knowledge and on ‘the surprises’ that they discovered after choosing.

**Wrap up:**
- Most important decisions we make in our lives are made with incomplete and occasionally inaccurate knowledge;
- Inevitably this means that our decision making cannot be rigorously logical or totally rational;
- As a consequence, virtually all our important decisions have a degree of uncertainty which we tend to disregard or suppress;
- We often think we know more and are more in control of our decision making than we actually are;
- To continue this illusion, we often rationalise the benefits of a decision after we have made it to make our decision seem more reasonable and logical. Psychologists call this the process of ‘cognitive dissonance’;
- We learn from our decisions as we live with them. This learning may be helpful or destructive;
- As a consequence of this learning, we adopt strategies of adaptation. We may change ourselves, we may influence others, and we may change our circumstances, situation or environment;
- The direction of such adaptation is likely to be in order to contribute to the initial overall goal from the beginning of the decision-making process. This is what some chaos theorists refer to as a fractal pattern of the strange attractor;
- However, the experience of decision making, learning, adaptation and change may have been radical enough to cause us to redefine or even jettison one or more of our goals. Chaos theorists usually designate such radical changes as phase shifts; and
- These experiences and processes then become the basis on which the next decision or series of decisions will be made.
How can some of the fundamental concepts of emerging perspectives on career development, such as chaos theory, be translated into career counselling practice?

Answer: For the chaos theory of careers to find acceptance among practitioners it must be demonstrated that it has practical applications in career counselling. A checklist is presented in this article which challenges people to reconsider the assumptions they make about their experience, rationality and decision making to highlight chaos theory ideas such as happenstance, intuition, phase and reality distortion. A second included technique requests people to examine a decision-making experience to help them realise the limits of their knowledge and control when making decisions, and how we constantly have to live with uncertainty. The third technique uses an illustration from a popular film to identify the non-linearity of our life decisions and its inevitability in our experience. The fourth technique adapts an interviewing technique used in the forensic context for career counselling. The technique emphasises the importance of context and completeness as ways to uncover complexity of influence, to minimise rationalisation of recall, to pay attention to details and to uncover indicators of patterns of influences.

What are some of the career practice challenges that the chaos theory of careers raises for the future?

Answer: The role of chance, the limits of predictability, the emphasis on individuality and the complexity of human experience suggest that more emphasis in career practice will need to be placed on qualitative as well as quantitative assessment. Emergence, uncertainty, non-linearity and risk imply that a chaos theory approach to counselling will focus attention on meaning and life purpose, on flexibility and revision of goal setting, on recognition of the risk and fallibility of all—including the best decision making and the constructivist value of multiple perspectives—as a way to open up new possibilities to be explored in career development. The chaos theory of careers also points to the value of immediate behaviour—for each of us, the future is our next action.

Authors

DR ROBERT PRYOR has taught and researched career development at UNSW for over 15 years. He has published extensively on career choice, decision-making, assessment and ethics. Through his company Congruence, he has developed numerous career assessment instruments that are used widely across Australia in government and private enterprises. He is also a Director of the Vocational Capacity Centre—a multidisciplinary medico-legal practice that specialises in assessing the vocational capacity of injured workers.

DR JIM BRIGHT has taught and researched career development at UNSW since 1995. He has published many papers on job applications and career choice theory. He is author or co-author of several international career books. He also runs training courses for career counsellors around the country and conducts individual coaching, vocational assessment and medico-legal work.

Theory and Practice

This section is designed as a brief professional review of the article. It provides relevant study questions and answers for readers to test their knowledge of the article.
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DECOLONISATION THROUGH CRITICAL CAREER RESEARCH AND ACTION: MAORI WOMEN AND ACCOUNTANCY

PATTY McNICHOLAS, Deakin University
MARIA HUMPHRIES, University of Waikato

The call for a just social order in Aotearoa (New Zealand) includes the transformation of mono-cultural institutions such as the accountancy profession. Maori women accountants in this research expressed concern about maintaining their identity as Maori while participating in the corporate culture of the firms in which they are employed. These women helped form a Maori accountants’ network and special interest groups to support and encourage Maori in the profession. They are working within the organisation and the discipline of accounting to create new knowledge and practice, through which their professional careers as accountants may be enhanced without the diminishing of those values that give life to te ao Maori (a Maori perspective).

Worldwide there are approximately 250 million indigenous peoples who live in more than 70 countries (Burger, 1990). Colonisation has been their common experience. Processes to address the undesirable consequences of colonisation include consciousness-raising activities at the community level, programs of education and economic development, and pressure for legal and constitutional reforms at a national and an international level. A ‘Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples’ is considered annually by United Nations member states and at meetings of the inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights (Quentin-Baxter, 1998). Maori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa (New Zealand), are active participants in this process (Durie, 1998; Love, 1997). This research and the activity it encouraged is a contribution to this process from a group of Maori women with careers in accountancy. Through a participatory research process, we investigated the
nature of the group’s participation in the profession, explored with each the possibilities of reshaping career outcomes for herself, and explored her potential influence on the professional organisation of accountancy and the discipline of accounting.

Based on the transformative possibilities of feminist and critical theories, participative career development research may articulate not only the career aspirations, successes and challenges of women, it may also provide a process that inspires participants to transformative actions—in their own lives and in the institutions in which they work and play (Gatenby & Humphries, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b). However, little of such work has been published by or for indigenous women. With an eye to the instructive insights of feminist and Kaupapa Maori research methodologies (McNicholas & Barrett, in press; McNicholas, Humphries, & Gallhofer, 2004; McNicholas, 2003b), we undertook to work with a small group of women on this project.

We begin this paper with an appreciation of the legacy of colonisation on the lives of contemporary Maori women. We note the potential of contemporary career theory and practice as carrying both the possibilities for ongoing colonisation or the opportunity to express emancipatory impulses. Our adaptation of feminist and Kaupapa Maori research methods are illustrated through excerpts from the research conversations that illustrate both the experiences of the participants of the legacy of colonisation, its contemporar y manifestations, and their commitment to its redress. As an outcome of this research, participants formed networks of Maori accountants and contribute to the development of special interest groups (Anonymous, 2002; McNicholas, 2004). They are taking an active part in transforming their own career possibilities and in influencing the discipline of accounting and the way in which the profession responds to their insistence on valuing of Maori knowledge and practice.

**A Legacy of Colonisation**

Some 1000 years separate the settlement of Aotearoa by Maori and the early European settlers. These early settlers were predominantly British and came to be known as ‘Pakeha’. The signing of a Declaration of Independence in 1835 between the British Crown and Maori acknowledged continued Maori sovereignty. This formal declaration of sovereignty allowed for the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. Three objectives were attributed to this treaty: (i) the protection of Maori interests; (ii) the promotion of settler interests; and (iii) the securing of strategic advantage for the Crown (Adams, 1977; Durie, 1998). However, Durie argues that within a decade of the signing of the treaty, and contrary to its stated objectives, Maori interests were systemically subjugated to those of the settlers with dire consequences for Maori.

By 1854, the European population was about 32,500. In 1863, the Otago gold brought a further 35,000 immigrants to Aotearoa (Sinclair, 1980), all with the immediate needs of settlement. Most settlers had little understanding of the culture and politics of the land or their cumulative effect on it through their mere presence. A ‘civilising’ mission was manifest in the strengthening institutional forms of subsequent governance processes. Assimilation of Maori to Western ways of being was encouraged through the education system, religious conversion to Christianity and inter-marriage. Maori tribal systems were given no place in the colonial economy (Simon, 1994; Spoonley, 1993).

By the beginning of the 20th century, established government and legal systems were entirely British and were administered mainly in the interests of the white colonists (Adams, 1977). By 1951, only about 6.8 per cent of land remained in Maori control. Most Maori became dependent on seasonal work as labourers for European farmers and for public works (Simon, 1994; Spoonley, 1993). Maori were required to adapt to a settler society in which they had no real place except at a menial level. For Maori women, this form of colonisation carried some unique and disempowering features (Smith 1992, 1995). Pakeha men negotiated, traded and treated with Maori men. The social relationships between Maori men and women were significantly altered. The pressure was on Maori women to reconfigure according to the domesticated frame of idealised Western femininity. Many followed their
husbands’ itinerant employment. They often worked in low paid menial work, their families redeployed across jobs and geographic location as required by the labour market. The legacy of this reorganisation of Maori reverberates through contemporary society.

The 1961 Hunn Report drew attention to injustices and inequities in socio-economic policy that had disadvantaged Maori (Durie, 1997; Spoonley, 1993). Government programs targeting Maori socio-economic disadvantage were devised. However, such policies lacked a commitment to the political aspirations of Maori and their continuous historical pursuit of tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) and Maori understandings of the guarantees contained in the treaty. From the 1970s, Maori became increasingly politicised through what Spoonley (1993) called ‘Maori ethnic activism’: separate or parallel development and/or the aspiration for a bicultural society. Bicultural approaches sought to emphasise that two major, but internally diverse, ethnic groups (Maori and Pakeha) constitute the contemporary population of this land. The treaty and its inherited moral, political and social obligations required that Maori and Pakeha negotiate a relationship that was equitable to both (Spooner, 1993).

By the end of the 1980s, a strong renaissance in all aspects of Maori society was occurring. Maori embarked on the pursuit of three intertwined political objectives: (i) to repossess resources on which to base some measure of economic self-determination; (ii) to penetrate the bastions of power and become politically audible and visible; and (iii) to secure the means of continuing cultural distinctiveness or identity (Ritchie, 1992). Political activism and cultural revival included tribal revival and economic reconstruction. Treaty settlements in the form of billions of dollars in property and cash have led to calls from within Maoridom for wise stewardship of the resources. This stewardship requires a body of expertise with special interest in and commitment to the wellbeing of Maori in ways that are consistent with Maori ideals. These settlements have also been of increasing interest to professional accounting, consulting and law firms. Still marginally represented in the professional classes, Maori are urging their youth to take up the professions of law and accounting, with the hope that such experience within their population will enhance the sovereignty aspirations that still fuel the reclamation and restoration efforts. Our focus in this work is on the position(ing) of Maori women in the profession, organisation and disciplines of accounting as their chosen career.

**RE-THINKING CAREER THEORY AND PRACTICE FOR EMANCIPATION**

The study of contemporary processes of colonisation now includes a focus on the out-workings of professional knowledge, including the contemporary prominence of career theory and practice in academic and policy forums (Dyer & Humphries, 2002; Humphries & Dyer, 2001). Contemporary social movements such as environmentalism, feminism and post-colonialism and their associated academic disciplines, however, provide avenues for the development of new values and identities, and for opportunities to link scholarship and practice to a decolonising future. Despite these innovations, feminist accounting research has been largely restricted to addressing the issues of recruitment, retention and progression of female accountants (Ciancanelli, Gallhofer, Humphrey, & Kirkham, 1990) and their high turnover rate (Collins, 1993) in the profession. The focus of such research has mainly been white middle-class women and their concerns and experiences (Gallhofer, 1998). There is a particular paucity of research concerned to explain the career experiences of women from indigenous groups, despite the recent emergence of interest in accounting and indigenous culture (Gallhofer & Chew, 2000). In keeping with the transformational aspirations that underpin the critical theories informing our work, we sought a method of working with Maori women that would not merely provide an insight into their career experiences, but would allow us to work with them to generate decolonising changes in their careers, to the profession, and to the articulation of accounting as a discipline.

**Kapapa Maori Research**

Kapapa Maori research has its links to the critical theories emanating from the Frankfurt School of thought. This connection is made most explicit in the work of Smith (1999) and Bishop (1996a, 1996b). Smith (1999) argues that dominant Western research methodologies are inextricably linked to European
imperialism and colonialism. She contends that Western researchers and intellectuals have perpetuated this view through the ways in which they have collected, classified and then represented to the West, knowledge about indigenous peoples as ‘Other’ (Bishop 1996b; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Teariki, Spoonley, & Tonoana, 1992). In this project, we set out with the intention of engaging female Maori accountants in the telling of their career experiences, with the express intent of articulating opportunities for change.

During 1999, 13 female Maori accountants and one female Maori consultant from accountancy firms throughout the North Island were interviewed as part of a larger project (see McNicholas, 2003a, 2004). Through our conversations with them we learned about their educational experiences, their families’ reactions to their choice of accountancy as a career, their experiences of the working environment in accountancy firms, their perceptions of possibilities for career advancement, and their perceptions of accounting and the accountancy profession as a whole.

Educational Experiences

In preparation for a career in the accountancy profession, impacts of the support of individual teachers are reported as significant to the participants:

‘I had a love of maths … and in particular my maths teacher and accounting teacher were really influential, and from there it just seemed a natural progression.’

‘The teachers were really quite inspirational, very encouraging … they just encouraged us as students to do well.’

‘My accounting teacher actually applied for me. She filled out the forms and that is actually how I went into it. Because most of the jobs I wanted to do … they all said that the marks that I had … they thought it would be better for me to go varsity. So in the end, I just left it up to my accounting teacher.’

But not all educational experiences were so positive:

‘By fifth form, most of my friends had left school and in sixth form the classes got smaller and the Maori numbers got smaller. I was the only Maori in the seventh form of 30. I sort of got used to being on my own.’

‘At university … if you went into a room, even in one of the lectures, you could count the Maori people in there. And there’s hundreds in a lecture theatre, and you could count on one hand how many Maori people were in that class … I think Maori people were definitely, especially women, were minimal. I think it’s hard for anyone going to university to study … I think Maori people have a tendency to want to work in groups, and we all naturally gravitate to one another, and when you get to a place like university it’s such a huge place and very unfriendly. Most of our people tend to be quite shy and so they don’t mix well. So I think there are cultural aspects that sort of hold us back as well.’

‘There was one other Maori woman studying accounting at that time and her and I became best of mates. So there were two Maori women and there were about three Maori men doing the accounting degree at that stage, and we were very much seen as non-Maori by the Maori who were doing the language courses. So it was very, very hard at that particular time at university, because doing anything other than language or arts you were seen as outside. So we collectively came together, the five of us, and joined forces to help each other and support each other.’

Family Reactions

Family reactions to the women choosing to go to a tertiary institution to study accounting were generally supportive, but there was little experience of tertiary education in their families:

‘I am the first one out of my family, out of all my first cousins to go through varsity. So it is out of the norm in my family to actually carry on to tertiary education. So I think my perception is that my family look up to me because of that.’

‘I just know my mother and father didn’t want me to pull out of school … Before, a lot of Maori didn’t go to varsity, just because they never had. Now they [Maori] have been educated to think just because
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your parents never went, doesn’t mean you can’t go. You don’t have to be extremely bright to go to varsity and they are actually realising that they are capable of getting a higher education and helping, not just themselves, but other people.’

‘My parents, they work really, really hard and wanted me to aspire to be something a bit more than a secretary.’

Entry into Accountancy Firms

Gaining entry into one of the accountancy firms was of paramount importance for many of the women. However, often they looked for situations that they could feel comfortable in:

‘The human resource manager was Maori … and she was quite inspiring, very easy to get along with and very much encouraged me to come here. The second interview I went through with a partner … it didn’t feel like an interview. He was asking me questions about things Maori, which I didn’t find in any other of the CA firms … I thought, well if he is talking to me about where I am from in terms of iwi (tribes) and what is my involvement with Maoridom, it just made it a lot better for me and I felt more comfortable.’

‘I wanted to get into one of the big five and I chose [one of the big firms] because I knew another Maori accountant [there] … I knew he’d be able to give me a helping hand and that is exactly what he did.’

Once the women entered the accountancy profession, some of the same themes of isolation and cultural mismatch were experienced:

‘It is a corporate environment and it is very different from the Maori environment. Your whanau (extended family) concept is more alive in the Maori environment than it is in the corporate environment … It was a bit of a transition, it was like I was a bit alone … because no one knew anything Maori here … But I finally got through it and so in the end it just took a while to get my head around the corporate world.’

‘I don’t think they are open to the idea that these people [Maori] think differently and they need different support systems … I said to him [one of the partners], “Have you ever thought of a unique support system for Maori graduates?”’, and he goes, “That’s very interesting, what do you mean by that?”‘ He was actually open to the idea, but never pursued it any further.’

‘Anything Maori that would come up, I was the person to be asked about it … and I got sick of it.’

‘They expect me to know everything Maori, which sometimes I don’t. I know a lot of things Maori, but not everything.’

‘[There appears to be a fear in the firm that] I might be a Maori activist and that I’m going to put everyone offside, and I won’t be the right sort of person to be sending out to clients. I do feel that I had to prove myself, perhaps more than those I came through with.’

Allocation of Work

Once employed in firms, task allocation provides the women with cause to reflect:

‘The [Maori] client also felt comfortable seeing another Maori face. And you know yourself that Maori people act differently, they talk differently.’

‘I have a lot of Maori clients. Corporations and trusts and sole traders—the Maori ones—I’ve got the lot.’

‘Basically, because [we] have got a better understanding of what the clients’ needs are … It’s not giving a job to someone who can’t pronounce their names. It will just annoy the client more than anything. There are other aspects of Maoritanga (Maori cultural and philosophical frameworks) [also], which would be better done by someone who is familiar with these issues.’

And the growth of interest in the potential of treaty settlements to generate revenue for the firms is met with some mixed views:

‘There is definitely a lot of potential growth in Maori business and that is something that they are aware of at the moment and that is something they are trying to focus on. So obviously, to get a better
understanding, they hire more Maori people to fulfil those roles and to work with Maori. I think Maori work easier with Maori, that is my perception anyway.'

'I think it just comes down to money, just the opportunity to get fees out of that sector.'

'Only if it is money for themselves … because of all this land coming back to Maori, people try and get on the bandwagon … My argument always is that a Pakeha employs what he knows best and that is always another Pakeha person.'

Increased success in treaty settlements is also seen as an opportunity:

'I think a lot of the firms now realise that there has been a big push towards Maoridom for business. People are more aware that Maori aren’t just protesting, that there are a lot of educated Maori around. I think some firms might employ Maori just to say that they have employed Maori, but I think a lot of firms actually do want to have Maori working for them. Not just for status, but I think Maori have got a lot to offer.'

Despite the potential of an organisational focus on the changing fortunes of Maori having a personal benefit to their careers, most of the women perceived their future in the profession to be limited:

'I wouldn’t get to be a partner because I don’t play the game. I can’t drink with the bosses, I don’t know how to play the game. I’d rather work in a partnership with a Maori firm or with a Maori organisation.'

'There’s not really room for progression for me here, unless one of my partners is retiring in about eight years. I want to have my own business by then.'

Gender and class were experienced as a complex combination:

'One of the graduate’s fathers was a partner [in another accounting firm], so she got preferential treatment because her father meant business for them … I had nothing to offer. Never mind that I was brighter and that I had got better marks all through university. I had a really good work history and this was a 21 year old that had nothing but a father. In our first year she got a pay rise of $7,000, where I got $500 … What have I got to offer, I’ve got nothing and I’ve got no history— their kind of history. I’ve got history, but not their kind of history.'

And the patriarchal overlay was often at play:

'Being a Maori male, he is still male. He was still one ladder up on me.'

'The guys [partners] were really happy to see him, because he is a Maori male.'

'You do tend to have to prove yourself more so than your male counterpart.'

'I think [for] Maori women in general, [it] is always going to be different to a Maori man … because we have to fight that much harder. It’s not expected of Maori women to have a profession and to be working. People are more partial to thinking that you’re a mother at home with six kids … than believing you’re a professional woman … that you are earning good money. That sort of perception comes from your own, more so than those who you’d expect it to come from.'

**Cultural Conflict**

A major concern for the women was that they often had to adjust to their working environment, which was often quite different from what they had previously experienced:

'I used to get frustrated, because I was there and they didn’t know where I was coming from. So it was like I was living two lives.'

'I found that within the corporate world, it is very different to the Maori world. So it is having to adjust your own values, your own beliefs to fit into the world that you are in … it is like a conflict within yourself as to having to adjust your own values and
belief systems to accommodate the environment that you are in. It is hard. I found it quite hard, because it is something that is quite …’

Maori Concept of Accountability
According to Mataira (1994), accountability in Maori society pre-dates modern neo-classical theories of accountability. The Maori notion of accountability is based on the norms, obligations, laws and traditions that Maori people continue to organise their community under—primarily as hapu (subtribes) and iwi (tribes)—in pursuit of sovereignty. He argues that Western accountants, who often ignore that accountability is culturally determined, need to change their way of thinking. The observations of our participants would endorse his views:

‘Maori have a different way of looking at accounting.’

‘Maori are a bit different. They don’t have the same accountability structures in place as Pakeha, from my observation anyway.’

Inherent in Western capitalist accounting are concepts and values which are different from—and often diametrically opposite to—Maori concepts. Examples include short-termism, profit orientation and privileging of the financial (Gallhofer, Gibson, Haslam, McNicholas, & Takiari, 2000), as well as emphasis on individualism, future orientation and secular materialism (Ritchie, 1992).

Resistance and Emancipation
Through Career Reflections
The participants made a range of suggestions as to how the problems arising from the cultural differences might be overcome. These suggestions indicate a depth of involvement in the research, demonstrated by their movement from reflection to the formulation of solutions:

‘It’s a lonely process. I think the main concerns for them [Maori women] is that they need to find a good support network [either] outside of their job or within their job, depending on how many Maori there are within the firm.’

‘Another main concern is the ability to retain their integrity within the firm, but also within themselves value-wise. Retaining their own beliefs and not relinquishing them in any way, just so they please everyone around them. So it takes a special type of person and a very strong type of person, which every Maori woman is capable of being—as long as they have got good guidance and good support to help them when they are out there [in the profession].’

For the organisation of accounting:

‘One partner … he openly admitted to me that they had a problem retaining Maori graduates.’

We were interested to gain insights into how Maori women assessed the activities of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of New Zealand (ICANZ), the major professional body. For most of the Maori women, the fact that ICANZ does not keep statistics on ethnicity was of great concern.

‘It really does matter for Maori in terms of the sorts of developments we are going through at the moment with treaty settlements and whether or not we have the skill base to manage it … If we had a proven shortage [of Maori accountants] from the institute’s statistics, then at least we could encourage students more publicly and openly: “We need accountants! Go out and get your qualifications, there will be a job for you at the end of it.”’

‘It’s not good enough to say that … I believe we do need to take account, because within Aotearoa we need to know [how many Maori accountants there are], so that they [the Maori clients] know where they can go and seek Maori accountants. Because I know that they [the Maori clients] are wanting to know now. Maori are wanting to deal with Maori.’

Women again pointed out that the treaty settlements would probably mean that the ICANZ has to change its policies:

‘They’ve only just come into recognising women, so it will probably be a few years before they start...’
recognising Maori. But now that all of the iwi settlements are occurring, they probably will start doing that, because they will realise that there is a lot of Maori business out there that requires accountants who are able to see issues from a Maori point of view:

‘I think it reflects what makes up the profession and that’s just a typical reflection to me of what I experienced, they don’t want to know anything about your background.’

During January 2004, we had further discussions with some participants about the initiatives they undertook as a result of our past conversations. They have now grouped together with male Maori accountants to help bring about their joint aspirations. To date they have formed Maori accountants’ networks and special interest groups within ICANZ in both Auckland and Wellington (see www.icanz.co.nz). Founding members have defined their short-term objectives as:
1. Establishing and maintaining a support network for members.
2. Assisting the professional development of members.
3. Encouraging Maori who wish to start or develop a career in accounting or related Commercial areas.
4. Initiating and maintaining liaison with the ICANZ at branch level. (ICANZ, 2004)

Medium to long-term objectives encompass broader cultural and social objectives, including the nurturing of tikanga Maori (Maori culture) (Anonymous, 2002). The Auckland Maori Accountants Special Interest Group has defined these objectives as:
1. To promote te reo Maori me nga tikanga Maori among its members (the Maori language and Maori culture).
2. To raise awareness of topical issues facing Maori accountants and Maori organisations. (ICANZ, 2004)

REFLEXIVITY AND PRAXIS: NETWORKING AS CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Contemporary colonisation of many communities, perhaps all of society, no longer comes through the teaching of Christian missionaries as during previous centuries, but through the unquestioned imposition of and compliance with the limited material rationalism embedded in the disciplines of the Western professions. The re-ordering of human experience through the professions and their disciplines is under criticism for its complicity in the colonisation of what Habermas describes as ‘the lifeworld’ by the instrumental rationality of ‘the system’ imposed on people the world over (Deetz, 1992). The academic disciplines associated with career development—no longer the sole domain of vocational guidance counsellors or human resource experts—have steadily become more central to the understanding of management.

There have been many suggestions for changes designed to encourage women into the professions and allow them to excel. Most of these draw on liberal feminist principles of equality. Among these, three concepts have been widely taken up: role models, mentors and networks. Each is a form of relationship that has great potential for women to learn and receive rewards from. Extensive research suggests that women and members of some minority groups have had limited access to the type of networks which provide specific benefits such as resource allocation, career advancement, social support and friendship within organisations. In turn, this exclusion is associated with limited mobility, often expressed as ‘the glass ceiling’ effect. In response to exclusion, women and other groups may choose their own forms of networking in the face of structurally limited alternatives (Ibarra, 1993). One outcome of the conversations during this research was the establishment of a network of Maori accountants working with their knowledge of historical colonisation and resistance to its contemporary manifestations (Anonymous, 2002).

Through their research conversations the women also articulated some suggestions for the professional accounting body in Aotearoa. They suggested ICANZ develop appropriate policies and strategies that facilitate the development of Maori women within the accountancy profession. They saw a need for accountancy firms to re-think the way they relate to their female Maori employees, and to create awareness and understanding of Maori culture within the corporate environment.

Our research conversations raised some interesting questions regarding potential implications of
the experiences of female Maori accountants for themselves in particular, and for the profession and accountancy firms in general. Among the suggestions for changes was a reference to the importance of networks. Networking with critical researchers, activists, professional bodies, and their employers will provide growing scope for these women. It enables an enactment of their knowledge in a form of a career development, which will serve to enhance their own lives and the lives of the people they serve. Moreover, such networks contribute to a form of accountability—as an ethical system to sustain our collective life world in all its diversity. As more Maori are achieving their professional qualifications and experience within firms, new insights into contemporary vehicles for colonisation (and for resistance and for transformation) are becoming evident.

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Articles


AUTHORS

DR PATTY McNICHOLAS lectures in the School of Accounting, Economics and Law at Deakin University. Her research interests focus on a critical and social analysis of gender, ethnicity, culture and class issues in the accountancy profession and methodological issues. She is also interested in environmental accounting, sustainability reporting, stakeholder engagement, and social and environmental accountability.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MARIA HUMPHRIES has taught career courses at the University of Waikato for over a decade. She is also on the board of directors for Career Services rapuara, where there is increasing desire and requirement to be more responsive to the aspirations of Maori people.
How may action research methods, used in the career disciplines, contribute to the transformational aspirations of marginalised groups in society?

Answer: Based on the transformative possibilities of feminist and critical theories, participative career development research may articulate not only the career aspirations, successes and challenges of marginalised people, it may also provide a process that inspires participants to transformative actions—in their own lives and in the institutions in which they work and play. The instructive insights of feminist and Kaupapa Maori research methodologies informed our research. The women involved not only voiced their impressions of the challenges they faced as Maori in Western organisations, but their participation has led to an active engagement in transformative actions in their own career context and in the organisations in which they are employed. It is hoped that as their professional voice as Maori women amplifies, they will also affect the discipline of accountancy—influencing the concepts and categories that now entrench Western notions of value and accountability.

**THEORY AND PRACTICE**

This section is designed as a brief professional review of the article. It provides relevant study questions and answers for readers to test their knowledge of the article.

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**Australian Association of Career Counsellors Inc.**

**Research Grant Scheme**

As a professional association, the AACC recognises the need to facilitate and encourage research that is relevant to career practice and reflects the Australian context. To this end, in 2002 the AACC initiated a Research Grant Scheme.

The purpose of the Research Grant Scheme is to actively encourage members to contribute to our understanding of career development by supporting research initiatives.

All members of the AACC are eligible to apply. AACC members are uniquely placed to recognise and report on emerging career issues and trends. This is reflected in the innovative programs and projects that can be seen in every state and territory. Yet, too often members downplay their own achievements and contributions or do not have time or resources to write up their findings or research interesting career issues in sufficient depth. Thus the Research Grant Scheme is designed to provide a level of support for members engaged in such work.

In 2005 the AACC has allocated $2000 to the Research Grant Scheme. Either 4 grants of $500 or 2 grants of $1000 will be awarded to assist with the conduct of research projects of relevance to AACC members. Awards will be decided by the AACC Research Committee.

**AACC Research Grant Application Guidelines**

- Applicants must be a member of the AACC
- The research must be relevant to career practice and reflect the Australian context.
- Group or joint submissions are acceptable.
- A committee will assess all applications and applicants will be notified of the result.
- Successful applicants will be expected to publish their results in the Australian Career Counsellor.
- A research project report is to be provided to the AACC Research Committee at the conclusion of the project.
- A maximum of $1000 per grant will apply.

Applications should include

- Name and contact details
- AACC Member Number
- A brief research proposal of no more than two pages
- A proposed timeline
- A statement indicating how the grant will be spent

Applications should be forwarded to:

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Closing date is 31 May 2005
INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM: A FRAMEWORK FOR EXAMINING CAREER PROGRAMS THROUGH A CULTURAL LENS

CATHY HUGHES and TRANG THOMAS, RMIT University

Cultural diversity and the cultural context of adolescent career development are explored through the lens of the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism. The individualist cultural value orientation of some of the main theoretical perspectives that underpin career education and counselling practice in schools is highlighted. In particular, the self-concept and career maturity segments of Super’s (1990) lifespan, lifespace theory, career interests, career decision making and the career counselling process are examined with reference to the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism. Also discussed is the potential inappropriateness of theoretical perspectives that reflect an individualist cultural value orientation for the career development of all students. Finally, Leong and Serafica’s (2001) cultural accommodation approach to enhancing the cultural relevance of existing career theories and models is outlined. Some examples of strategies are presented that might fill cultural gaps, which may exist in career education and counselling practices in schools.

Career development theory has been criticised for its relative inattention to cultural context as a variable that influences career development (Hartung, 2002; Leong, 1997; Patton & McMahon, 1999; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). At the same time, calls have been made for career specialists to be competent in multi-cultural contexts (Leong, 1993; Leong & Kim, 1991; Leong & Serafica, 2001). With particular reference to career education and counselling practices in schools, this paper discusses the
potential of the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1994) to address these concerns.

One barrier to the provision of culturally sensitive career programs and services in schools is that the theories that underpin career education and counselling practice have been developed from a Western cultural perspective. Consequently, well-intentioned career practitioners are at risk of cultural encapsulation (Pope, 2003; Wrenn, 1962) and ethnocentrism (Triandis, 1994). A framework for analysing cultural variation may assist in the development of culturally sensitive career education and counselling practices. Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, and Lucca (1988) maintained that the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism (Triandis, 1994) have considerable promise for understanding cultural variation.

**INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM**

According to Triandis (1994), the cultural syndrome of individualism is concerned with structuring social experience around autonomous individuals, whereas the cultural syndrome of collectivism is concerned with structuring social experience around collectives such as the family, the peer group or religion. Individualism and collectivism and the attributes that define these cultural syndromes can be regarded as 'broad cultural pressures that result in a number of predictable tendencies in behavior' (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995, p. 243).

**Attributes of Individualism and Collectivism**

Triandis (1994) synthesised the extensive literature that has defined the attributes of individualism and collectivism. According to Triandis, in collectivist cultures groups are the basic units of social perception, but in individualist cultures individuals are the basic units of perception. In collectivist cultures self tends to be defined in terms of group membership, whereas in individualist societies self tends to be regarded as a separate identity, defined with reference to personal characteristics. Interdependence of self and ingroups is a feature of collectivist cultures, while an independent and autonomous self is a feature of individualist cultures. Collectivist cultures tend to feature a small number of ingroups, with strong, enduring emotional attachment to them. On the other hand, members of individualist cultures tend to have a large number of ingroups, and comparatively little emotional involvement. In individualist cultures, behaviour is more likely to be guided by attitudes and personality traits; while in collectivist cultures behaviour tends to be regulated by ingroup norms.

Consistency between attitudes and behaviours is usually expected in individualist cultures, but in collectivist cultures attitudes and behaviour may be inconsistent due to the expectation that ingroup norms guide behaviour. Thus, in the event of a discrepancy between personal goals and ingroup goals, some collectivists may sacrifice personal goals to group goals, whereas individualists may be more likely to pursue personal goals over group goals. Group achievements tend to be emphasised more in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures. Thus, personal achievements may be recognised as ingroup achievements in collectivist cultures to a greater extent than in individualist cultures. Collectivist cultures tend to favour attitudes and values that emphasise security, duty, obligation, authority and hierarchy. Individualist cultures tend to favour values and attitudes that emphasise personal achievement, freedom, competition and autonomy. Confrontation is often regarded as acceptable in individualist cultures, whereas harmony tends to be prized in collectivist cultures (Triandis, 1994).

**Horizontal and Vertical Individualism and Collectivism**

This summary of major defining attributes of individualism and collectivism can lure one into thinking that it is possible to regard a whole culture as either purely individualist or purely collectivist (Voronov & Singer, 2002). However, as Triandis (1994) pointed out, most cultures are a composite of individualistic and collectivistic elements. In addition, individualist cultures and collectivist cultures can be distinguished on the basis of tendencies towards horizontal or vertical individualism, or...
Horizontal or vertical collectivism (Singelis et al., 1995; Triandis, 1994). Horizontal individualism (H-I) is a cultural tendency for the self to be regarded as independent, but the same, or equal to, others. Whereas, on the other hand, vertical individualism (V-I) refers to a cultural pattern where the self tends to be regarded as independent, but unequal status is expected. Horizontal collectivism (H-C) is a cultural pattern where the self is regarded as part of an ingroup, with all members of the ingroup considered similar to each other. Conversely, vertical collectivism (V-C) refers to a tendency for each individual to see herself as part of an ingroup, but ingroup members are regarded as different to each other—with some having more status than others (Singelis et al., 1995).

**Idiocentrism and Allocentrism**

In addition to between-group differences on the individualism–collectivism continuum, there are within-group differences. Idiocentrism and allocentrism refer to individual psychological characteristics of individuals within cultures. Idiocentrism refers to personality attributes that correspond to individualist traits in both individualist and collectivist cultures. Allocentrism refers to personality characteristics that correspond to collectivist traits in both individualist and collectivist cultures. In addition to the various ‘species’ of individualism and collectivism (Singelis et al., 1995) highlighting considerable variation within individualist and collectivist cultures, Triandis et al. (1988) found collectivism to be extremely complex at the micro level of specific behaviours—with collectivist responses depending on which specific ingroup, what specific social behaviour and what context was being studied. Despite the complexity of individualism and collectivism, Singelis et al. suggested that the attributes which define individualism and collectivism are useful to describe and predict social behaviour among cultures. Thus, the cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism may have potential as a basis for exploring cultural diversity in the context of career education and counselling. They may also have potential as a starting point for developing culturally sensitive and culturally relevant career education and counselling practices in cross-cultural and multicultural contexts.

**Using Individualism and Collectivism to Examine Career Theory and Practice**

In order for counsellors to become competent in working in culturally diverse contexts, it is important for practitioners to acknowledge themselves as part of cultural diversity, and to develop an understanding of their own cultural heritage, its assumptions and its influence on theory, research and practice. As well, it is important to develop an understanding of other worldviews, and their assumptions and implications for counselling goals and processes (Leong, 2002; Pope, 2003). For Australian school career education practitioners, self-examination of the dominant culture and its influence on their practice, programs and services would often translate into a critique of the way that an individualist cultural value orientation is manifested in career development theories, and, in turn, career education and counselling programs and services. This process of self-examination would evaluate the appropriateness of the career theories and associated techniques for all students—including those with allocentric tendencies and collectivist cultural value orientations, although, the level of acculturation would need to be recognised as a potentially mediating factor.

By examining the inherent individualist cultural value orientation of some of the main career development theories that underpin career education and counselling practices in schools, it becomes clear that wholesale application of Western career development theories and, therefore, career counselling and career education practices to all students may be inappropriate.

Arguably, Super’s (1990) lifespan, lifespace theory of career development is one of the most widely applied theories of career development, and a large body of the research that the theory has generated is centred on the career development of adolescents. Lifespan, lifespace theory has influenced career education policies for Australian schools (e.g. the Australian Education Council’s (1992) national goals for career education in Australian schools), and lifespan, lifespace constructs and theoretical propositions are reflected in the content, process and structure of many school career education and counselling programs. Arguably the self-concept and lifespan segments of Super’s theory, and especially the
construct of career maturity, have had the most significant influence on school-based careers programs. Holland’s (1997) theory of vocational personalities and work environments—and the various instruments available to assess interests, values and dimensions of personality etc.—are examples of widely used trait and factor approaches to making vocational and educational decisions. Lifespan, lifespace theory and trait and factor approaches are prominent even in recent Australian career development work, such as the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (Haines, Scott, & Lincoln, 2003) and myfuture—Australia’s national online career information system. However, it should be pointed out that these developments are very comprehensive and incorporate new trends in career theory and practice, such as narrative approaches to career counselling (e.g., Cochran, 1998) and multi-level contexts of career development (e.g., Patton & McMahon, 1999).

Both lifespan, lifespace theory and trait and factor approaches to career development were developed in the USA—a country of high individualism (Hofstede, 1980)—and the assumptions of the career development theories overwhelmingly reflect an individualist cultural value orientation. An overview follows of the individualist perspective in some aspects of lifespace, lifespan theory and trait and factor approaches to career choice and development, with specific reference to the career development concepts of self-concept, decision-making style, career interests, career maturity and the career counselling process itself.

**Self-concept**

Self is central to career development theories originating from individualist countries, including lifespan, lifespace theory and trait and factor theories. When describing his archway model of career development, Super (1990, p. 204) stated that the ‘keystone of the Archway is the person, the decision maker …’. Reiterating earlier statements of Super’s theoretical propositions, Super, Savickas, and Super (1996) remind us that lifespan, lifespace theory views the career development process as one of implementing self-concept. Trait and factor theories assume that career success, satisfaction and stability are related to an individual choosing an occupational field that allows expression of her interests, skills, abilities, individual values (Hartung, 2002) and personality characteristics.

The notion of an independent and autonomous self who is free to make career choices consistent with her personal traits, characteristics and desires is an underlying assumption of Super’s (1990) developmental theory and trait and factor theories. This assumption reflects the individualist tendency to regard the self as an independent and autonomous identity defined by personal characteristics, and distinct from the various groups she is a member of. For many students, particularly those with allocentric traits or a collectivist cultural value orientation, self may be defined primarily in terms of group membership. Behaviour, including career behaviour, may be guided by ingroup norms, duty and obligation. Individual goals for many may well be subservient to group goals. Thus, the individualist notion of the independent decision maker who is free to pursue a career of her own choosing, which represents the implementation of her self-concepts, interests, abilities, individual values and personality characteristics, may not apply to all students. Indeed, for some students—particularly those with allocentric traits or a collectivist cultural value orientation—the meaning of self-concept may encompass the concept of interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Consequently, for some students in Australian schools the implementation of self-concept may be manifested by career choices that reflect ingroup preferences.

**Decision-making style**

The individualist characteristics of freedom to pursue personal goals, primacy of personal goals over ingroup goals and freedom to do one’s own thing suggests that a decision-making style reflecting self-reliance and personal responsibility for career-related choices is desirable. Indeed, Super (1983) associated these personality characteristics with higher levels of career maturity. The collectivist tendency towards interdependence of self and ingroup, subordination of personal goals to ingroup goals, and values of
hierarchy (particularly V-C), duty and obligation are more aligned with a dependent decision-making style. Indeed, Leong (1991) found that Asian-Americans of Chinese and Korean descent were significantly more likely than Caucasian Americans to use dependent decision-making styles—a tendency he attributed to collectivism. Accordingly, for many students in Australian schools, it may be important to encourage collaborative career decision making, perhaps involving family members.

CAREER INTERESTS
Assessment of career interests is a major aspect of many career theories developed in individualist cultures. Not only is assessment of vocational interests one of the most frequently applied career development interventions, but sometimes it may be the only intervention (Fouad, 1993). Career interests are assumed to predict occupational satisfaction in individualist cultures; however, as Fouad points out, the extent to which they predict occupational satisfaction in collectivist cultures is not clear. Fouad emphasised the need to use culturally appropriate assessment tools. She asserted that failure to do so runs the risk of misdiagnosis of problems, inappropriate vocational plans and career counselling failure. Thus, interest inventories developed in countries with an individualist cultural value orientation ideally should only be used with the populations they have been culturally validated for (Leong, 1997; Leong, 2002).

Cross-cultural validation of career assessment instruments is relatively rare, no doubt in part because of the complex processes required to adapt an instrument for another culture. While Fouad reported some limited support for validated translations of vocational interest inventories in cross-cultural contexts, it is important to be cautious when implementing and interpreting interest inventories used with students and clients from a cultural background that differs from the one in which the instrument was developed. The adaptation of the Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI: Holland, 1985) for India is a case in point. Culture-specific factors influenced the meaning attributed to VPI items. Some of the original VPI items were considered to be offensive, because they were too low in the caste system to be considered (Leong, Austin, Sekaran, & Kamarraju, 1998, cited in Leong, 2002).

CAREER MATURITY
Career maturity (readiness for making age-appropriate career and related educational decisions) is a key component of the lifespan segment of Super’s lifespan, lifespace theory (Super, 1990). Indeed, it could be argued that facilitating the development of career maturity is the implicit or explicit rationale for school-based career education and counselling programs.

The processes involved in adapting measures of career maturity for use in countries with a collectivist cultural value orientation underscore the need for caution when applying constructs and instruments cross-culturally. The Career Maturity Inventory–Attitude Scale (CMI–AS: Crites, 1973) was found to be unsuitable for use across Korean and US cultural contexts (Jan, Lim, & Song, 1991, cited in Lee, 2001), so Lee developed the Career Attitude Maturity Inventory (CAMI) and was able to establish instrument equivalence across Korean and US contexts. Administration of CAMI to US and Korean high school students revealed cultural differences in career maturity, which Lee explained with reference to Korean collectivist values of duty to family, the importance of seeking group opinions and the importance of family in making career decisions.

Recognising that the construct of career maturity (and instruments that were developed to measure it) was derived from observations and investigations of the career patterns and behaviour of individuals from countries high in individualism, the first author sought to adapt and assess the validity of the ‘career planning’ (CP) and ‘career exploration’ (CE) scales of the Career Development Inventory–Australia (CDI–A: Lokan, 1984) for secondary school students in Thailand. The first author intended to establish equivalence between the Thai adaptation and the CP and CE scales of the CDI–A. The process of adapting the CP and CE scales of the CDI–A for Thailand involved consulting with Thai career development...
academics on the suitability of the CP and CE scales for adaptation for a Thai population, and on the suit-
ability of the translation of the adapted scales and of the independent back translation (from English to
Thai, back to English) (Brislin, 1980) of the CP and CE scales. It also involved conducting a small quali-
tative field test where Thai secondary school students commented on appropriateness of item content,
language, administration instructions and response format, as well as a pilot study to assess instrument
equivalence.

Despite the extensive process involved in attempt-
ing to establish instrument equivalence, cultural
differences in the meaning of some items remained.
For example, two CP questions in the CDI–A which
reflected a distinction between general and specific
career planning appeared to be asking the same
question in the Thai adaptation. Even after a change
to the Thai translation, the updated back translation
showed that there were still discrepancies in the
meaning of the items across Australian and Thai
contexts. Another CP item concerned with diffi-
culties that may prevent one from pursuing one's
career preferences was difficult to back translate into
English, so the extent that the meaning is the same in
the Thai adaptation and the CDI–A remains unclear.

In addition to differences in meaning, cultural differ-
ences in response sets were observed.

CAREER COUNSELLING PROCESSES
The career counselling process may reflect an
individualist cultural value orientation. Sue and Sue
(1990) asserted that failure to acknowledge alter-
native cultural perspectives creates difficulties in
counselling. They argued that approaches to counsel-
ing developed in countries with an individualist
cultural orientation emphasise self-disclosure of
thoughts, feelings, emotional reactions and some-
times very intimate details of the client's life. How-
ever, in some collectivist societies such self-disclosure,
particularly outside the ingroup, may be considered
to be inappropriate. Indeed, Sue and Sue stated that
emotional restraint is highly valued in some cultures
and Triandis (1994) asserted that this is the case in
many collectivist cultures.

In an individualist cultural context, the student or
client may be expected to have an active role and
initiate much of the conversation, while the counsel-
lor has a much more passive role. However, many
students (particularly those with allocentric traits or
those with a collectivist value orientation) may value
hierarchical interpersonal relations, regard career
counsellors as experts, and expect a more active,
directive and structured approach to career counsel-
ing (Leong, 1991; Leong, 1993).

Triandis (1994) asserted that ethnocentrism (the
tendency to regard one's own culture as the standard
for judging all cultures) is to be expected in the
absence of an appreciation of alternative worldviews
and cultural orientations. Thus, there is the risk that
career counselling professionals may inadvertently
interpret cultural difference as deficiency.

Essentially, the application of career counselling
practices derived from theories developed in countries
high in individualism, without due consideration of
cultural variation, may result in inappropriate career
counselling practices (Leong, 1993) for many students
attending Australian schools.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CAREER
PRACTITIONERS IN SCHOOLS
School career practitioners must develop career edu-
cation and counselling practices that are sensitive to
the cultural value orientations of all students. As
demonstrated above, the cultural syndromes of indi-
vidualism and collectivism may be a useful starting
point for thinking about the cultural context of
adolescent career development, and as a basis for
developing culturally sensitive and culturally
relevant school career development practices. If left
unchecked, cultural differences stemming from the
cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism
may result in inappropriate career counselling and
career education goals and processes (Leong &
Serafica, 2001). Students with an individualist
cultural value orientation, as well as those with a
collectivist cultural value orientation (including those
with idiocentric traits and those with allocentric
traits) may have many of the same goals when they
access careers services. For example, to gain more
knowledge about education and training institutions,
courses, entry requirements, entry scores, application
procedures, occupations, and so on. However, the
goals that the career practitioner has for career
 counselling, the goals of career education and
counselling programs, and the processes associated
with career counselling and program delivery should
also be culturally appropriate (Leong, 1993).
Cultural Accommodation

Leong and Serafica’s (2001) cultural accommodation approach may be a useful model to increase the usefulness and cultural relevance of career development theories, and, consequently, career education and counselling goals and processes for all students. The cultural accommodation approach assumes that cultural context has a major influence on vocational behaviour, and that culturally unique experiences are integral to understanding the vocational behaviour of individuals (Leong, 2002). Leong and Serafica outlined three stages in the cultural accommodation approach. The first stage involves identifying cultural gaps in an existing theory or model. The second stage involves identifying culture-specific factors and adding them to existing career theories, thereby accommodating the theory to the target culture. The final stage involves testing the culturally accommodated theory to determine whether it has increased validity over and above the original theory.

Future research is needed to determine the value of the cultural accommodation approach (Leong & Serafica, 2001). However, meanwhile, school career practitioners can analyse the theories and models that are applicable to adolescent career development (as well as career education and counselling policies, goals, programs, processes, and interventions) to identify cultural gaps and generate some culture-specific factors that can be incorporated as working hypotheses into existing career theories, programs, services and processes (Leong, 1993). An understanding of individualism and collectivism—including idiocentrism, allocentrism, horizontal and vertical individualism, and collectivism—can help to identify potential cultural gaps; however, according to Leong (1993), reliance on individualism and collectivism can lead to over-generalisation and stereotyping. Generation of culture-specific factors to supplement existing theories also requires a commitment from school career practitioners to learn about and continue to acquire culture-specific knowledge related to the cultural groups represented in the student body (Leong, 1993).

Examples of Cultural Accommodation Strategies

The application of the cultural accommodation approach may result in a range of strategies that could be assessed for cross-cultural appropriateness.

Mindfulness of alternative worldviews when facilitating the generation of suitable career and educational options is one potential culturally accommodating strategy (Fouad, 1993). For example, some international students from Asian countries who are planning to work in Asia may give a high priority to career options that are acceptable to parents, and are associated with extrinsic values such as income, security and advancement, and they may give a lower priority to career options that enable self-expression and self-actualisation (Leong, 1993). Leong and Gim-Chung (1995) also suggest that it may be useful for clients and students to reflect on a range of different cultural values and behaviours, and their consequences in the context of career and educational choice and development. Another strategy could be to involve role models from the cultural backgrounds of all students in careers programs (Bowman, 1993). Another way of culturally accommodating career counselling styles could be to use more direct and structured approaches to career counselling for students from cultures high in collectivism (Bowman, 1993), but without abandoning some features of the Western counselling styles—such as caring and concern, warmth, rapport, genuineness and empathy (Pederson, 1996). Leong (1993) suggested that counsellors who work with students from Asian cultures may need to establish an egalitarian relationship over a long period, after counsellor credibility has first been established. Including family in career counselling and career education programs (Bowman, 1993) may be another cultural accommodation strategy. Contacting parents of international students via translated emails, preparation of career service promotional materials in the languages of students from non-English speaking backgrounds, and inviting parents to career counselling sessions are examples of other potential cultural accommodation strategies. Informal career assessment methods may be more appropriate in the absence of validated quantitative methods, provided they too have been scrutinised through a cultural lens (Flores & Heppner, 2002). Analysis of existing theories, programs, services and processes, and the acquisition of culture-specific knowledge will identify a much broader range of possible culturally accommodating strategies that school career specialists might incorporate.
CONCLUSION

Theories that underpin career counselling and career education practice in schools have a monocultural orientation, insofar as they were developed by career development theorists from countries with an individualist cultural value orientation. This raises the question of the applicability of theories of career development for many students in Australian schools, particularly for students with allocentric traits or with a collectivist cultural value orientation. Until the cross-cultural validity of career development theories and models is conclusively established, Leong (1993) urges career specialists to be flexible, open-minded and to adopt an attitude of cultural relativism. The cultural accommodation approach to extending the usefulness of career theories and models that were developed from an individualist cultural value orientation—together with an understanding of the attributes and complexity of individualism and collectivism and culture-specific knowledge—provides career practitioners with a framework for developing culturally sensitive and relevant career counselling and career education practices.

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REFERENCES


AUTHORS

CATHY HUGHES is a Psychology PhD candidate at RMIT University. Her PhD research project is a cross-cultural study of adolescent career development in Australasia and Thailand, and includes an examination of the influence of cultural value orientation, self-concept and parenting style on career maturity. She has worked as a school career counsellor for over 18 years and has recently joined the careers services team at education.au limited.

TRANG THOMAS is a Professor in Psychology at RMIT University. She is a member of the National Health and Medical Research Council and is the Director of Science with the Australian Psychological Society. She has conducted numerous research projects into adolescents, women’s health, migrant older persons and refugee children.
### Theory and Practice

This section is designed as a brief professional review of the article. It provides relevant study questions and answers for readers to test their knowledge of the article.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Why is it important that the constructs of individualism and collectivism be explored in the context of school career education and counselling programs and services?</td>
<td>The theories that underpin career education and counselling practice have been developed from a Western cultural perspective. Consequently, school career education and counselling programs derived from these career theories may not be culturally relevant to all students. Individualism and collectivism, including consideration of horizontal and vertical forms and the individual personality traits of idiocentrism and allocentrism, may be a useful starting point for exploring and for contributing to the development of culturally sensitive career programs in schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the main differences between individualism and collectivism, and what are the implications for developing culturally sensitive career education and counselling practices in schools?</td>
<td>The individualist cultural value orientation tends to structure social experience around independent and autonomous individuals, whereas the collectivist cultural value orientation tends to focus on interdependence of self and collectives. Major career theories that influence school career programs tend to reflect individualist cultural orientation, which is not necessarily appropriate for all students. For example, the individualist notion of an independent and autonomous self, who is free to independently make career choices consistent with her personal traits, may not be relevant for some students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the implications for school career practitioners?</td>
<td>School career practitioners could use the cultural syndromes of individualism combined with Leong and Serafica’s (2001) cultural accommodation approach, to identify cultural gaps and supplement careers programs with culturally inclusive processes and strategies.</td>
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One of the tasks of adolescence is envisioning and planning for future careers. While career decision making is frequently seen as a challenge by many young people, there is one group for whom this task presents additional difficulties and complications—young elite athletes. Apart from restrictive training and competition regimes, there are additional factors that restrict the athletes’ other-life planning. Research has highlighted athletic identity—that is, the extent to which one defines oneself as an athlete (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993)—as one of the major issues impacting on athletes’ personal and psychological development. Another related issue of concern is identity foreclosure, which is a premature commitment to a particular occupation or ideology (Petitpas, 1978). These issues have been long recognised and a number of programs have been developed to alleviate their impact. In recent years, the educational and long-term career development needs of Australia’s elite athletes have been a focus of interest. A comparison is made between the career decision making of secondary school students who are also elite athletes and a sample of non-athlete students. The 226 athletes (111 females, 115 males) in the study were on sporting scholarships with the Australian Institute of Sport or state/territory institutions. Measures used included the Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire and the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale. The non-athlete data were obtained from 272 secondary school students (149 females, 123 males). Only three athletes indicated a singular focus on a career in professional sport. There were significant relationships between athletic identity and career decision difficulties, especially in relation to dysfunctional myths, and there was only one difference between the difficulties reported by athletes and non-athletes. Tentative conclusions are drawn about the factors that impact on career decision making among elite athletes and possible directions for future research.
Articles

athletes have been addressed through the Athlete Career and Education (ACE) program.

Based on a program first developed at the Victorian Institute of Sport in 1990, the national ACE program was implemented in 1995. Services were made available to all athletes on scholarship with the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) or any of the state or territory institutes or academies of sport. The aims of the program are to help broaden the narrow focus of identifying as an athlete, to increase athletes’ personal skills and knowledge, and to help them adopt broader goals and a more balanced life perspective (Anderson, 1998). As an indirect means of assessing the effectiveness of the ACE program, this study examined the career choices of a group of young secondary school students who were ACE participants and elite athlete scholarship holders, and compared their career decision making against benchmark data from a non-athlete secondary school sample.

Identity formation is a life-long process, which occurs as individuals take note of and internalise the appraisals of people whose opinions they value (Harter, 1996), and is seen as integral to healthy and adaptive development. Self-concept or self-identity is seen as multi-dimensional (Marsh, Perry, Horsely, & Roche, 1995), and is represented as a diverse set of images and conceptions about the self (Cantor, Markus, Niedenthal, & Nurius, 1986). The many and varied self-dimensions that an individual possesses all have the potential to motivate and direct behaviour (Cantor et al., 1986). Webb and Nasco (1998) proposed that the formation of a strong athletic identity is problematic because it differs from other role identities in significant ways: it is formed and internalised early in life; it is likely to dominate and subsume all other identities; it often has a public dimension due to the high profile of many sportspeople; it is defined by performance pressure; and it provides a high level of status and esteem which is unlikely to be achieved through other means.

Previous studies have proposed that athletic identity is inversely related to career maturity (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996), and that identity foreclosure has an adverse impact on career decision making through its association with dependent and deferent decision-making styles (Blustein & Phillips, 1990). This can have a significant impact on life choices for young athletes who may continue to defer to influential others, such as coaches or parents, for their decisions. Identity foreclosure also has a negative impact on career decision self-efficacy (Brown, Glastetter-Fender, & Shelton, 2000). Martens and Lee (1998) summarised the probable causes for athletes’ limited engagement in career exploration and decision making as being associated with time constraints, a dependent style related to a highly structured lifestyle, athletic identity, and a focused commitment to sport. There are also problems associated with the special attention athletes receive, which can set them apart from their non-sporting peers and prevent ‘normal’ psychosocial development (Remer, Tongate, & Watson, 1978).

However, Martens and Cox (2000) observed that while the notion of a link between athletic identity and career maturity has intuitive appeal, most studies of the issue have been theoretical and that such an association has rarely been demonstrated empirically. They found only a small difference in career maturity between athletes and non-athletes, and no relationship between career maturity and measures of athlete identity and sport commitment. Brown and Hartley (1998) and Kornspan and Etzel (2001) similarly found no relationship between athlete identity and career maturity. Martens and Cox suggested that a possible reason for these disconfirming results may be that athletes tend not to differentiate between the notion of their sport and their career.

The fact that some suggested a relationship between career maturity and athlete identity, and others did not may also be due to the fact that different instruments were used in the various studies to measure career maturity. Westbrook (1983) was one of the first to note that there appeared to be little agreement among career theorists as to the definition or meaning of the construct of career maturity. His concern was echoed by Betz (1992) who observed that there continued to be a lack of consensus on the issue. Most definitions are based on developmental theory and include notions of age-appropriate attitudes, knowledge and behaviours. A recent study by Creed and Patton (2003) highlighted the importance of investigating both attitude and knowledge components of career maturity, as they found different predictor variables associated with each. The Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ; Gati, Osipow, & Krausz, 1996)—the measure used in this study—measures both these
components, as well as conflicts related to external environmental and interpersonal factors.

Another reason why there have been inconsistent findings on the relationship between athletic identity and career maturity could be that such an association may have existed in the past, but that this is starting to change due to the impact of athlete career and life development programs. The ACE program takes an individualised and integrated approach, and is designed to enhance the personal and life development of athletes in tandem with their sporting career (Flanagan, 2000). ACE services consist of individual counselling and group sessions, and have been available to all athletes on scholarship with the AIS or one of the state or territory institutes or academies of sport since 1995. Evaluations of the program (Albion & Fogarty, 2003; Gorely, Bruce, & Teale, 1998) have shown the program to have very high acceptance by athletes and coaches. It has also been shown that athletes’ involvement with the ACE program is associated with higher levels of motivation to make career-related decisions and a better knowledge of career and educational options (Albion & Fogarty, 2003).

The present study examined the career choices and career decision status of a number of young athletes. All were sporting scholarship holders with one of Australia’s institutes or academies of sport, which indicates that their sporting prowess has been recognised as being at an elite level. All were in their final years of secondary school. The athletes’ career decision status was compared with benchmark data obtained from a group of similarly aged secondary school students who were not elite athletes. It was predicted that:

1. Athletes would display behaviours indicative of identity foreclosure—a psychological construct defined by Marcia (1966) as demonstrating a reliance on others and an early commitment to occupations and beliefs. A behavioural indicator of identity foreclosure as an athlete was obtained in this study by asking athletes to nominate the career options they were currently considering. Athletes who nominated professional sport as their only career option were classified as demonstrating identity foreclosure.

2. Athletic identity would be positively related to levels of career decision-making difficulties.

3. Athletes would report more career decision-making difficulties than non-athletes.

**METHOD**

**Participants**

The 226 athletes (111 females, 115 males) in the study were on AIS or state/territory sporting scholarships. Participants were selected from a larger pool of athletes surveyed in the first phase of a five-year evaluation of the ACE program (Albion & Fogarty, 2003). As part of the evaluation, survey forms were distributed to all AIS scholarship athletes ($n = 2915$) in early 2003. Nine hundred and seventeen athletes returned completed surveys (ages ranging from 11–60 years) from all Australian states and territories, giving a response rate of 31.5 per cent. Those athletes in the larger sample who were aged 16–17 years and were still in secondary school were chosen for inclusion in the current study. They represented 27 different sports, with the largest numbers involved in basketball (46), soccer (32), swimming (21), water polo (19), baseball (19), volleyball (15), netball (12), hockey (10), and softball (10). As it was anticipated that sports with high income potential were more likely to be considered as career choices than those with less income potential, the 27 sports were recoded into a dichotomous variable, according to whether they were high or low income producing sports. Sports classified as high income were football codes, basketball, cricket, golf and tennis. Sixty-nine per cent of the sample reported having some involvement with the ACE program.

The non-athlete data were obtained in late 1999 from 272 secondary school students (149 females, 123 males), also aged 16 or 17 years, from four secondary schools in a regional Queensland city. These students had volunteered to participate in a study of career decision making, which was conducted in school time with the support of their career counsellors/guidance officers. While the sample included students from both co-educational and single-sex schools, as well as state and private schools, they may not be representative of secondary school students in other parts of Australia.
Assessment Tools

The Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS; Brewer et al., 1993) is a ten-item scale, which asks respondents to indicate on a Likert scale the extent to which they agree with various statements about attitudes to sport. A sample item is ‘I need to participate in sport in order to feel good about myself’. High scores indicate a high level of identity as an athlete. Principal component analysis by the test authors revealed that the AIMS measures a single construct (eigenvalue = 6.03). It has good internal consistency (α = 0.93), and a seven-day test-retest reliability of 0.89. The construct validity of the scale was demonstrated by its significant convergence (r = 0.83, p < 0.001) with the Perceived Importance Profile (PIP), which measures the importance of body image, sporting competence, physical condition and strength (Brewer et al., 1993).

The Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ; Gati, Osipow et al., 1996) consists of introductory questions about level of career undecidedness, satisfaction with decision status and confidence with current choice. These are followed by 44 statements of attitudes and beliefs about career decision making. Respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement with these statements on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1 (describes me) to 9 (does not describe me).

The CDDQ differentiates three categories of difficulty—‘lack of readiness to make a career decision’, ‘lack of information’ and ‘inconsistent information’. These three categories are further subdivided into a number of subscales.

Lack of readiness incorporates ‘lack of motivation’ (RM), ‘indecisiveness’ (RI), and ‘dysfunctional myths’ (RD). The second category, ‘lack of information’, is subdivided into ‘lack of knowledge about the process’ (LP), ‘lack of knowledge about the self’ (LS), ‘lack of knowledge about occupations’ (LO) and ‘lack of knowledge about how to access additional sources of information’ (LA). The third category, ‘inconsistent information’, consists of ‘unreliable information’ (IU), ‘internal conflicts’ (II) and ‘external conflicts’ (IE). Gati, Krausz, and Osipow (1996) found good internal consistency for ‘inconsistent information’ (α = 0.89), and ‘lack of information’ (α = 0.95), although ‘lack of readiness’ was less reliable (α = 0.63). Overall reliability of the scale was 0.94. Test-retest reliability (r = 0.80) was assessed over a three-day period. Construct validity was demonstrated by convergence with the Career Decision Scale and the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Osipow & Gati, 1998).

Some minor variations were made to the CDDQ to adapt it to the purposes of the evaluation study for which it was used. Levels of undecidedness were measured on a 9-point scale rather than the 3-point scale in the original version, to make the rating scale of this item consistent with the other items in the CDDQ. The three items in the ‘dysfunctional myths’ scale were replaced by ideas which were more likely to be concerns of athletes, such as ‘I believe that thinking about post-sporting career options will distract me from my current athletic commitment and performance’. The implications of these changes are discussed in the results section.

As part of this questionnaire, respondents were also asked to nominate, in order of preference, up to four careers they were currently considering. These responses were used as an indicator of identity foreclosure.

Procedure

Approval for the study was obtained from the AIS Ethics Committee and the ACE co-ordinators in
each state distributed survey forms. Confidentiality was assured by asking athletes to seal their completed forms in the envelopes provided and then to return them to their ACE co-ordinator, or to mail them (reply paid) to the researchers.

RESULTS

Career Choices of Athletes
As a means of identifying whether the athletes in the study were demonstrating characteristics of identity foreclosure by failing to explore alternative roles and interests, they were asked to list, in order of preference, careers they were currently considering. Athletes’ career choices were classified into three categories: sport, sport-related and non sport-related. Some examples of sport-related careers were coaching, sports management, health and fitness, and sports teaching. A wide variety of non sport-related options were listed including careers in science, business, law and trades. Two hundred and seven athletes (91.6%) were able to nominate at least one career option. Of these, 49 (21.3%) nominated one choice, 62 (27.6%) listed two options, 59 (26.2%) listed three, while 37 (16.4%) were able to nominate four career choices they were currently considering. Of the 49 who were focusing on a single option, only three (1.3% of the entire group) had listed professional sport as their sole career choice. All three were males, and their sports were baseball, swimming and basketball. Twenty-one others listed sporting-related options, while 25 were considering careers in fields not associated with sport. Details of the total frequency of career preferences are presented in Table 1. An important feature of these data is the relatively low number of athletes who nominated sport as a career option. Out of a total 488 nominated careers, only 51 of these were for careers in various sports (which represents the choices of 45 athletes). By contrast, there were 232 non sport-related careers nominated. These results did not support the first hypothesis. In general, there appears to be very little evidence that these athletes are displaying career choice behaviours indicative of identity foreclosure.

Reliability and Correlations
Reliability analysis of the CDDQ scales revealed low internal consistency for the ‘lack of readiness’ subscales, as had been found in previous analyses (Albion, 2000; Gati, Krausz et al., 1996), with alpha coefficients of 0.56 for ‘lack of motivation’, 0.65 for ‘indecisiveness’, and 0.56 for ‘dysfunctional myths’. Using factor analysis to investigate the subscale structure of the CDDQ, Albion found that the ‘lack of readiness’ scale was better defined by re-allocating some items and eliminating others, resulting in two subscales—‘lack of motivation’, consisting of items 1, 3, and 6; and ‘indecisiveness’, consisting of items 4, 5, and 7—rather than the three suggested by the scale authors. Analysis of these revised scales showed them to have better internal consistency, with the modified ‘lack of motivation’ scale reaching 0.63 and the

Table 1: Summary of Athletes’ Career Choices (N = 226)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career</th>
<th>Pref. 1</th>
<th>Pref. 2</th>
<th>Pref. 3</th>
<th>Pref. 4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport-related</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non sport-related</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (%)</td>
<td>(91.6%)</td>
<td>(69.9%)</td>
<td>(42.5%)</td>
<td>(16.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In some cases individuals chose more than one career from the same category, and 158 people listed more than one career option, therefore totals exceed the sample number. Row totals do not necessarily represent the number of people who nominated each career choice, but are rather an indication of the frequency of those selections.
modified ‘indecisiveness’ scale reaching 0.70. While these alpha coefficients were still moderately low, they were acceptable for group assessment in basic research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). However, the internal consistency reliability estimate for ‘dysfunctional myths’ could not be improved. Factor analysis showed that two of the items measuring this construct had high (> 0.60) communality estimates, but that the third item was much lower (< 0.35). Nevertheless, the solution was unidimensional, so for the analyses that follow the three items were summed to yield an aggregate measure of dysfunctional myths.

Correlational analyses were conducted to calculate relationships among measures for the athlete sample. Results are presented in Table 2 along with internal consistency measures of the AIMS and the CDDQ subscales. All categories of career decision difficulties were related positively with undecisiveness, and all excluding ‘dysfunctional myths’ were related inversely with satisfaction with decision status and confidence in the decision. Moderate intrascale correlations were evident among the four ‘lack of readiness’ subscales, ranging from 0.61 to 0.76, and the three ‘inconsistent information’ subscales, ranging from 0.54 to 0.79. The two modified ‘lack of readiness’ scales were related ($r = 0.35, p < 0.05$), but not as strongly as the ‘information’ scales.

The prediction that AIMS scores would be positively related with career decision difficulties was supported. There was a small but significant relationship between the total difficulties score and AIMS ($r = 0.19, p < 0.05$), and there were also significant correlations between AIMS scores and five of the ten difficulty subscales, most notably with Dysfunctional myths. The item from this subscale having the highest correlation with AIMS was ‘I believe that successful athletes always find good jobs when their competition days are over’ ($r = 0.27, p < 0.05$). Those with higher athletic identity were also more likely to have difficulties associated with general indecisiveness ($r = 0.21, p < 0.05$), more likely to lack knowledge about occupations ($r = 0.20, p < 0.05$), more likely to experience internal conflicts about their career choice ($r = 0.20, p < 0.05$), and more likely to lack knowledge about where to get additional information ($r = 0.15, p < 0.05$). However, higher AIMS scores did not relate to motivation, lack of knowledge about the decision process or about the self, unreliable information, external conflicts, or any of the decision status variables—undecisiveness, satisfaction with decision status or confidence in decision.

Gender differences were examined by conducting a one-way ANOVA with AIMS and the CDDQ subscales as dependent variables. The only differences that emerged for these athletes were on the ‘lack of readiness’ subscales. Males were more likely to have difficulties associated with lack of motivation, $F (1, 223) = 12.68, p < 0.05$, and an adherence to dysfunctional myths about sports and careers, $F (1, 223) = 12.68, p < 0.05$; while females were more likely to have difficulties related to general indecisiveness, $F (1, 222) = 8.25, p < 0.05$. There was no difference between males and females on their level of athletic identity as measured by the AIMS, $F (1, 216) = 0.0, p > 0.05$.

A one-way ANOVA was also conducted to determine differences in athletic identity and career decision difficulties associated with types of sport. Athletes in sports that had potential for high incomes had higher AIMS scores, $F (1, 216) = 9.11, p > 0.05$, were more likely to adhere to dysfunctional myths, $F (1, 222) = 8.46, p > 0.05$, and experienced more conflicts with others about their career choice, $F (1, 220) = 4.26, p > 0.05$. Results of the ANOVA are presented in Table 3.

**Comparisons against Benchmark**

In order to test hypothesis 3, ANOVAs were conducted on athletes’ and non-athletes’ CDDQ measures. As noted earlier, variations from the original scale on measures of ‘dysfunctional myths’ precluded comparisons being made on this score. Results presented in Table 4 failed to support hypothesis 3. Athletes differed from non-athletes only in that they reported lower levels of motivation to make a career decision, $F (1, 496) = 8.00, p < 0.05$.

**Discussion**

The idea that athletes would demonstrate identity foreclosure was generally not supported by these data. The indicator of identity foreclosure used in this study represents only one facet of this construct. Nevertheless, failure to explore a range of career options is reported to be one of the significant
### Table 2: Correlational and Reliability Data for Athletes on Subscales of the Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire, the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale, and Demographic Variables (n = 226)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<th>6</th>
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<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Undecided</td>
<td>-0.46*</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.46*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.39*</td>
<td>0.66*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 RM(Mod)</td>
<td>0.37*</td>
<td>-0.37*</td>
<td>-0.39*</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 RI(Mod)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.23*</td>
<td>-0.31*</td>
<td>0.35*</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 RD</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.56</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 LP</td>
<td>0.42*</td>
<td>-0.48*</td>
<td>-0.36*</td>
<td>0.76*</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
<td>0.89</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 LS</td>
<td>0.52*</td>
<td>-0.57*</td>
<td>-0.53*</td>
<td>0.62*</td>
<td>0.40*</td>
<td>0.40*</td>
<td>0.67*</td>
<td>0.92</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 LO</td>
<td>0.43*</td>
<td>-0.46*</td>
<td>-0.32*</td>
<td>0.51*</td>
<td>0.38*</td>
<td>0.38*</td>
<td>0.76*</td>
<td>0.74*</td>
<td>0.89</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 LA</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td>-0.45*</td>
<td>-0.27*</td>
<td>0.42*</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td>0.61*</td>
<td>0.65*</td>
<td>0.76*</td>
<td>0.73</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 IU</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td>-0.38*</td>
<td>-0.42*</td>
<td>0.53*</td>
<td>0.38*</td>
<td>0.38*</td>
<td>0.58*</td>
<td>0.72*</td>
<td>0.67*</td>
<td>0.63*</td>
<td>0.84</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 IE</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
<td>-0.36*</td>
<td>-0.38*</td>
<td>0.52*</td>
<td>0.47*</td>
<td>0.37*</td>
<td>0.62*</td>
<td>0.69*</td>
<td>0.62*</td>
<td>0.79*</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 CDDQ total</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>-0.18*</td>
<td>-0.18*</td>
<td>0.36*</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>0.33*</td>
<td>0.37*</td>
<td>0.37*</td>
<td>0.39*</td>
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<td>0.54*</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 AIMS</td>
<td>0.50*</td>
<td>-0.49*</td>
<td>-0.50*</td>
<td>0.69*</td>
<td>0.52*</td>
<td>0.45*</td>
<td>0.80*</td>
<td>0.89*</td>
<td>0.85*</td>
<td>0.76*</td>
<td>0.88*</td>
<td>0.88*</td>
<td>0.59*</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 Gender</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.21*</td>
<td>0.32*</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.15*</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Income Sport</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.24*</td>
<td>-0.24*</td>
<td>0.16*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.00</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Significant at the 0.05 level.

RM(Mod) = Lack of motivation (Modified); RI(Mod) = Indecisiveness (Modified); LP = Lack of knowledge about the process; LS = Lack of knowledge about the self; LO = Lack of knowledge about occupations; LA = Lack of knowledge about how to access additional sources of information; IU = Unreliable information; II = Internal conflicts; IE = External conflicts; and AIMS = Athletic Identity Measurement Scale. Income Sport is a dichotomous variable indicating whether the sport has potential for high income.

Reliability coefficients for the subscales are presented in italics along the diagonal.
TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF MEAN DIFFERENCES IN CDDQ AND AIMS SCORES BETWEEN GENDERS AND POTENTIAL EARNING CAPACITY OF SPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Female Mean (n = 110)</th>
<th>Male Mean (n = 115)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Male Mean (n = 115)</th>
<th>Female Mean (n = 110)</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RM (Mod)</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>13.56*</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RI (Mod)</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>13.35*</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>5.85*</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>8.46*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LO</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IU</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>4.48*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIMS</td>
<td>37.40</td>
<td>37.41</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>38.87</td>
<td>36.47</td>
<td>9.14*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Significant at the 0.05 level.

RM(Mod) = Lack of motivation (Modified); RI(Mod) = Indecisiveness (Modified); RD = Dysfunctional myths; LP = Lack of knowledge about the process; LS = Lack of knowledge about the self; LO = Lack of knowledge about occupations; LA = Lack of knowledge about how to access additional sources of information; IU = Unreliable information; II = Internal conflicts; IE = External conflicts; AIMS = Athletic Identity Measurement Scale.

TABLE 4: COMPARISONS BETWEEN CAREER DECISION DIFFICULTIES OF ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CDDQ Subscale</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Athlete a</th>
<th>Non-Athlete b</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Motivation (Modified)</td>
<td>3.50 (1.5)</td>
<td>3.08 (1.7)</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indecisiveness (Modified)</td>
<td>4.77 (1.8)</td>
<td>4.80 (2.0)</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information about the process</td>
<td>4.24 (2.0)</td>
<td>4.24 (2.3)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information about the self</td>
<td>4.19 (1.9)</td>
<td>3.99 (1.9)</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information about occupations</td>
<td>4.14 (2.0)</td>
<td>4.32 (2.1)</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information about additional sources</td>
<td>3.70 (1.9)</td>
<td>3.77 (2.1)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreliable information</td>
<td>3.53 (1.6)</td>
<td>3.52 (1.8)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal conflicts</td>
<td>3.68 (1.5)</td>
<td>3.72 (1.6)</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External conflicts</td>
<td>2.63 (1.6)</td>
<td>2.71 (1.9)</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: a n = 226, b n = 272.

Critical value of p = 0.05.
detrimental behaviours associated with foreclosure. More than three-quarters of the athletes in this sample were open to considering two or more career options, many of these in fields that were completely unrelated to sporting interests. The only athletes to be focused exclusively on a professional sporting career were three males from high prestige or potentially high income sports on the international stage—baseball, swimming and basketball.

Athletic identity was shown to have small but significant relationships with five of the ten categories of decision difficulties measured in this study. While it appears that there are some areas of decision making which are unaffected by issues associated with athletic identity, by using a multi-dimensional scale such as the CDDQ, it has been possible to find specific areas where difficulties might occur. The career difficulty most strongly related to athletic identity was the adherence to dysfunctional myths, particularly the notion that athletic success will automatically lead to post-sporting success. This belief may be valid for some, as the determination and dedication required to forge a successful sporting career are beneficial in subsequent non-sporting endeavours. However, if athletes think that work success will come without any effort or planning on their part, then such a belief is dysfunctional. Another myth related to levels of athletic identity was the idea that thinking about non-sporting career options would distract from athletic commitment and performance. This myth reflects concerns about time constraint and a focus on the present, issues that have previously been identified by many others, including McPherson (1980), Brown et al. (2000) and Martens and Lee (1998).

The exploration of dysfunctional myths among athletes is one area that requires further research. In a separate phase of the longitudinal evaluation of the ACE program, interviews were conducted at the AIS in Canberra and the Queensland Academy of Sport in Brisbane with 18 elite athletes (11 males and 7 females, aged from 15–25, representing team and individual sports), five male coaches and four parents. Information obtained from these interviews (not reported) suggests that athletes are not necessarily as comfortable with their career prospects as our survey data indicate. Some of them feel that they have had to put their careers ‘on hold’ while they explore the possibilities of sporting success. In which case, their lack of motivation to tackle career issues could have short-term benefits in the form of greater athletic achievement. This question needs further investigation, perhaps in light of predictions generated from the theory of time discounting in relation to career decision making (Hesketh, Watson-Brown, & Whiteley, 1998; Saunders & Fogarty, 2001). Further work also needs to be directed at the measurement of dysfunctional myths. One possibility is to treat dysfunctional myths as an index rather than a scale (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; MacCallum & Browne, 1993; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), in which case the items remain the same but are handled differently from a psychometric perspective. A further possibility is that the construct is genuinely multidimensional and that further items need to be developed to capture the full range of dimensions. We favour this option, because we believe that the whole question of what constitutes a dysfunctional myth for elite athletes needs to be addressed. It is possible that whether beliefs are dysfunctional depends on the nature of the sport (professional versus amateur), the skill of the athletes and other circumstances surrounding their lives. We are investigating this construct in ongoing work with the AIS.

Other decision difficulties positively associated with athletic identity for this sample of athletes were general indecisiveness, lack of knowledge about occupations, the experience of internal conflicts about their career choice and lack of knowledge about how to get additional information. The measure of indecisiveness in the CDDQ represents concerns with fear of failure and a tendency to rely on others to confirm and support their decision making. This association between indecisiveness and athletic identity accords with findings on athletes’ dependent and deferent decision-making styles (Blustein & Phillips, 1990), and dependency due to a structured lifestyle (Martens & Lee, 1998). Ironically, a potential risk of the ACE program is that it could inadvertently exacerbate this problem by providing over-directive support and advice. However, this has been recognised as an issue and ACE’s philosophy is
to ensure that program services are offered in a way that promotes self-responsibility, rather than encouraging increased dependency (J. Flanagan, personal communication, July 28, 2003).

Those with high athletic identity also lacked knowledge about occupations and were less likely to know where to obtain additional information to help them make decisions about their careers. These findings have implications for the manner in which career advisory services are presented to athletes. There is a need to promote the services to those most likely to have high athletic identity, that is, young males who are involved in potentially high income sports (Albion & Fogarty, 2003). In order to overcome any perceived barriers of such services being a distraction, it is also essential that delivery be timely and efficient. ACE provides integrated individualised plans, encouraging athletes to take a broader and longer life-view, and to understand the transferability of the skills they acquire as a sportsperson (Petitpas, Champagne, Chartrand, Danish, & Murphy, 1997).

Another area of difficulty associated with athletic identity was internal conflicts about occupations. For some, their internal conflict was associated with time constraint, an issue which has been identified by many researchers, including McPherson (1980), Brown et al. (2000), Martens and Cox (2000), and Martens and Lee (1998); while for others, it was an approach-approach conflict brought about by having a number of preferred options from which to select. Many had interests in a variety of areas, including sport, and found it difficult to choose among them.

In general, the results did not support the third hypothesis, that there would be differences between athletes and non-athletes on their levels of career decision-making difficulties. Of the nine CDDQ subscales compared in this study, there was only one on which athletes reported higher levels of difficulties—‘lack of motivation’. Athletes’ level of career knowledge was similar to that of their non-athlete counterparts. This finding was somewhat unexpected, as previous studies indicated that athletes were less likely to engage in career exploration than non-athletes (Martens & Lee, 1998). It may be that specifically targeted career assistance, such as the individual career planning and study program management provided to athletes through ACE, is responsible for this parity of outcomes. This assumption will be explored in future studies. Levels of difficulties associated with barriers and conflicts were also the same for both groups. While it might be argued that the barriers and conflicts athletes face in their career decision making are different from the barriers and conflicts faced by other adolescent career deciders, it appears that the overall level of difficulties they face is the same. Results also serve to reinforce the need to include both attitude and knowledge measures in the assessment of career behaviour (Creed & Patton, 2003).

To date, most research into student athletes has been in the context of the American college system, a structure quite different from Australian educational and sporting environments, and covering a slightly older age group than this secondary school sample. The present study, therefore, provides some interesting insights into the nature and extent of young Australian athletes’ career decision difficulties, a topic on which there has been little or no prior research. The data presented in this paper were collected in phase one of a five-year evaluation of the ACE program. In future research we intend to test hypotheses relating to the effect of the ACE program on variables included in this study. Results from these subsequent studies should help us determine whether or not we are ahead on points in the race to help athletes better achieve their life goals.

Acknowledgements
This study is based on data collected for a longitudinal project funded by the Australian Sports Commission and the University of Southern Queensland. The authors acknowledge the assistance of Judy Flanagan, former National Manager of the Athlete Career and Education (ACE) program, and the ACE co-ordinators around Australia.

References


Why is it important to measure both attitude and knowledge aspects of decision making when assessing career related behaviour?

Answer: The factors that impact on career behaviour are multi-dimensional. It is not enough for career deciders to have information about study and career options, they must also be motivated to use that information. Similarly, those who are motivated to make a choice, but do not have access to the necessary information, will also have a greater level of difficulty in making a career choice. Results of the current study show that a global measure of career decision-making difficulties may result in over-identification of problems, if it is assumed that difficulties in one area imply difficulties in all areas. A single dimension approach may also lead to specific problem areas remaining unidentified should the global measure of difficulties be low.

How is the Athlete Career and Education program addressing the problems of athletic identity and identity foreclosure?

Answer: Athletes are provided with individual counselling and group sessions to help them expand the narrow focus that can be associated with identification as an athlete. Athletes are given personal skills and knowledge, and encouraged to adopt broader goals and have a more balanced view of life. For more information about the ACE program, go to their website at www.ais.org.au/ace/

Which athletes are likely to have difficulties making career choices?

Answer: The study has shown that athletes who identify most strongly with their role as a sportsperson are most likely to experience problems in a range of career decision-making areas, particularly in the adherence to dysfunctional myths about careers. Other research has shown that certain groups of athletes—namely young males in high-profile or high-income sports—are more likely than others to have a high athletic identity, making them more vulnerable than others to decision difficulties.
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BOOK REVIEWS

CAREERS AND MOTHERHOOD CHALLENGES AND CHOICES: HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY MANAGE YOUR CAREER THROUGH PREGNANCY, BIRTH AND MOTHERHOOD

In her foreword, Pru Goward, the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, described this book as ‘the encyclopedia of motherhood’, qualifying that it is especially suited to professional and executive women.

Hopefully it was not her intention to imply that women in everyday jobs might not benefit from the insights and advice contained therein. Regardless of one’s profession or class, being a woman in 21st century Australia is highly problematic. Women from all walks of life face similar issues when they consider parenthood, and after becoming mothers. These include increased financial pressures, isolation from family members and other women of childbearing age, the need for personal satisfaction and fulfilment, and a lack of time to become a mother, often until it is too late.

In this book, Mitchell maps out many possible journeys with various potential outcomes, beginning with consideration of one’s options and making the important decision as to whether or not to have children, and progressing through stages of pre-pregnancy, pregnancy and after a baby is born. All of these stages are accompanied by information and advice to women to ensure that having a paid job is seen as a possible and conceivable component, with the result that the reader comes to view the terms ‘career’ and ‘motherhood’ as complementary, rather than oppositional.

This text is best viewed as a resource for dipping into and out of. It assists women to work through the particular challenges they face, whether it be discrimination in the workplace, problems with breastfeeding, preparing for giving birth, rearranging the family finances or travelling with children.

In dealing with the problems, Mitchell incorporates a mix of facts and opinions, which may be considered dry and weighty, and possibly even pedantic. This is not helped by lack of a sense of ‘story’ in the retelling of information gleaned from her extensive interviews. The fleshing out of some family life anecdotes would have undoubtedly added interest and colour.

More positively, the material is presented in a variety of ways: direct quotes, expert opinions, hot tips, lists, and contact details of relevant organisations for access and follow-up. The book is structured logically and chronologically, which further helps the reader to easily identify those parts she should be reading at a particular time.

Early chapters discuss ideas for organising your working and personal life to maximise your ability to keep working, or to at least stay in touch with the workplace, while preparing for the move to motherhood. This might include finding a company with a family-friendly culture, divesting yourself of burdensome projects, and finding a mentor or sponsor. There is also a discussion about fertility and IVF.
The next chapters concentrate on preparing for the birth and showing how life might change with a baby at home. It includes information on finding an obstetrician, organising parental leave, dealing with discrimination, creating birth plans, packing for the birthing suite, preparing the nursery, deciding whether to have an elective caesarean, and negotiating division of the domestic workload with your partner.

The book then identifies ways of successfully adapting to motherhood, including coping with change and isolation, dealing with unrealistic expectations, working through emotions, overcoming problems with breastfeeding, and accepting changes in one’s sex life.

The section that deals with working options is particularly useful for those mothers who want or need to continue working and who are unaware of what might be available to them, including childcare options and litigation if they experience discrimination. Mitchell discusses some less well-known but nonetheless valid alternatives to full-time work, such as job sharing, flexible working arrangements, tele-working and compressed hours.

In the penultimate chapter, Mitchell presents a range of viewpoints of children of working mothers, indicating that children are not adversely affected when their mothers work. In fact, many girls saw their mothers as presenting a highly positive role model. Finally, Mitchell reinforces her view that it is each woman’s personal decision as to if and when they have children, and emphasises that making excuses for decisions made is an unhelpful and unnecessary practice. The overall message is that, with careful planning and attention, combining a career and a family can be positive and beneficial to all concerned.

I would strongly recommend this book as a resource for any woman who is currently working and considering having a baby, or who has children and is considering a return to the workforce. It would also be useful for career counsellors and coaches working with women who are at this stage of life.

Julie Farthing
Career Consultant
Career Dimensions Vic

**THE GIRL’S GUIDE TO... WORK AND LIFE: HOW TO CREATE THE LIFE YOU WANT**


I have nothing but praise for this guide—not only is it a neat little package, but it is truly a guide in every sense.

The guide is full of magnificent imagery to inspire any woman: making your career ‘sing for you’, ‘turn your hungry dreams into actions’, and a final word describing a ‘traveller’s kit for change in careers’—including your suitcase (your life experiences), your passport (your transferable skills), your hand luggage (your courage) and a change purse (a sense of humour).

The authors have bundled together countless tips ranging from casting your net wide, rejection being a dress rehearsal for the perfect job, the 12 worst career blunders and how to fix them, and using feng shui as an example of ways to try changing small things first when contemplating career change. I also enjoyed the terminology when they recommended that women become their own ‘spin doctors’!

Each chapter ends with ‘gemstones’: 40 different stones (many of which were completely new to me)
related to the information in the preceding chapter and expanding on the issues, advice and strategies outlined for each topic.

Stories of over 30 women sprinkled throughout the text are also related to the topic of each chapter—small cameos giving examples of women who have tackled issues such as career change, risk-taking, and using opportunity and their transferable skills to advantage. Some are well known, for example Helen Keller and Amelia Earhart, others could be fictional, but excellent examples of what can be achieved. The book concludes with an invitation for all readers to send their story to the girl’s guide website.

As a career practitioner, I can see great ideas for exercises and activities, and would recommend this as compulsory reading for women experiencing dissatisfaction with their career choice, their current situation or with no idea of what to do next. One aspect I found very useful is the theme of ‘archetypes’, which presents a new way of looking at careers in relation to a person’s strengths, desires and potential. I can envisage this as most useful for many women who need to know more about themselves and what could lead to job satisfaction. New names such as ‘hero’, ‘witness’, ‘gatekeeper’ and ‘hermit’ investigate the traits and preferences of these archetypes—for which there is no one size fitting all.

Here is encouragement to ‘talk your way into a new life’, ‘make your own luck’ and ‘turn dream into ambition’. But there are also some warnings, with the addendum that obstacles should be turned into opportunities.

Not only is this a good guide, but also a good read. I hope many will do just that.

Ruth Chapman
Swinburne University of Technology

A QUICK GUIDE TO HUMAN RESOURCE TESTING

Marian Power, ACER Press (2004), 44pp., 0864314582, $24.95

This short guide is a ‘must have’ basic reference for any career practitioner with little or no experience in testing, and who deals with clients in the context of people selection, management, and career or professional development. As career practitioners, we work daily with clients who have undergone tests for recruitment and career counselling processes. We know about the anxieties that testing can invoke for the candidate; particularly when the tests are poorly chosen, dubiously administered or when feedback is superficial or non-existent.

A Quick Guide to Human Resource Testing provides us with a basic, foundational understanding of the key concepts and applications of HR testing. The guide is divided into four sections: test selection and administration; test interpretation; reporting and feedback; and ethical and legal issues. The brief and succinct appendices cover common questions about testing, and also include a table of common selection criteria and suitable test types.

Overall, this guide is certainly brief and quick—hence living up to its title—and, to be more precise, perhaps it should have been coined ‘An Excellent Quick Guide …’ because it is just that. The guide cannot begin to take the place of appropriate training and accreditation for individual test administration, but it does better than live up to its promise as an introduction or refresher.

A Quick Guide to Human Resource Testing is also useful as a way to provide a quick, but sound, basic education to clients who are bamboozled by, but curious about, the concept of testing and, for example, who want to be better informed about the differences between ability, aptitude, achievement and personality tests. As always, Marian and ACER Press have put together a great product that has an important place in our career practice toolbox. Highly recommended.

Sue Seawright, Careers By Design
(This review was first published in the AACC Victorian Newsletter, No. 17, October 2004.)
We must define the future of career development and advocate for its early adoption. It is our future and we cannot be passive and wait until policy makers and administrators define it for us.

To define the future we must be clear on the true nature of career development. Is it something that career practitioners do to others? Is it the processes of interviewing, counselling, teaching, helping set goals and providing labour market information? Or is it something that people do to themselves in making their way in the worlds of education, work and life? Every day a great many people think about their careers and give themselves some advice. Every time we see our bosses do something we think, ‘I could do that’, or ‘I had not thought of doing it that way’, or ‘I could do it a lot better’. Similarly, when we see other workers doing their jobs we often wonder what it would be like to do that work. Frequently, we think about quitting and give consideration to what else we can do. Every day we give ourselves career checkups.

Most workers lack an appropriate mental routine for checking their careers and planning their next steps. Therefore, they flounder more than progress. This is particularly worrisome for people who work in small organisations without an internal labour market. They must seek jobs with other employers in the hope of advancing. This is true even of career development practitioners who typically move between organisations to get advancement.

Career guidance is not just to prepare students for the transition from school to work, or to help displaced workers get employment. It also is to enable workers to be the best they can be, to realise their full potential, and, by so doing, add greatly to the economic development of the country.

For all workers the process of career development is practising good job survival and advancement skills. We are enamoured of the idea that everyone will have a bunch of ‘career’ changes during their working lives, but most job changes are essentially lateral and only a few people climb the occupational ladder. What is missing in career development theory is the process of making a career out of a job.

What does the career development process mean to us personally if our career is limited to our job with maybe the hope of getting a small promotion from time to time? Our principal career development tasks are four in number: be good at what you do; know that you are good at it; tell others that you are good; and enlarge your job.

With regard to ‘be good at what you do’, our career development tasks are to learn all about the work to be performed and to look for opportunities to utilise and enhance our skills. Among other things, we make sure we meet the Guidelines and Standards for Career Practitioners and learn transferable skills like public speaking, planning, organising, report writing and marketing, and use them appropriately at work.

Working to the best of our ability is extremely important. Ian Millar, the Canadian horseman who rode Big Ben to win many gold medals, has this motto: ‘A thousand unseen improvements make the difference between mediocre and magnificent’. Like Millar we should believe that if it is worth doing, it is worth doing well.

With regard to ‘know that you are good at it’, our career development task is to understand that we know a lot more about people and their characteristics, and a lot more about the labour market than nearly everybody else. Human resources branches
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in companies and government typically insist on a performance appraisal system and see it as a career development program. Yet we know that staff appraisal systems are the most demoralising activity imaginable. Part of the reason is that supervisors are usually afraid of their workers in this context. And workers are virtually paranoid about the slightest negative note on their files. If there is a third reason why appraisals are demoralising it would be that we come to realise how little the boss understands our work and what we are doing. Thus, instead of being a truly career development project, the personnel appraisal is a demoralising exercise in fiction writing.

I am sure that career development practitioners could devise a far superior system; but first we have to tell the HR departments the truth about the inadequacy of the present system. We are well equipped to do this because we are specialists in career development and we should have full confidence in our knowledge.

With regard to ‘tell others that you are good’, our career development task is to teach our superiors what we know. For example, in the days when unemployment was rapidly rising, the Canadian government held a high level meeting to plan extra security for government buildings because it was thought that unemployed workers would riot. I was at the meeting in place of my boss who was away. I knew that unemployed workers are depressed and blame themselves for their situation and therefore would not riot. And I said so. I was believed and the meeting concluded that more counselling, and not more security, was needed. That decision was implemented and greater resources were allocated to employment counselling.

We should not hesitate to correct others when they are wrong about career related issues. To take another case in point: there is nothing so dismaying as hearing your boss explain to a visitor what it is that you do. At that moment, you realise just how little your work is understood. Depressing as it is, this is not the time to be silent. Rather, we must use these opportunities to give a complete but succinct definition of what we do and why we do it. Because a visitor is present our boss will actually listen, especially if the visitor is interested and asks questions. This is an excellent example of seizing an opportunity of telling others that you are good.

Other ways of telling people we are good are to put our certificates on our walls, volunteer to do the kind of things we know that we can do very well, and give talks about career development to community groups.

Most workers believe that they should do only what they are authorised to do by their job descriptions. If, for example this page of paper represented the scope spelled out in a job description, the worker usually lives well within the borders. This is not the way to build the future. There is usually a significant area of neutral territory between one job and another. I suggest that you do your job to the full extent of the page and even annex the space between your job and those of others. There are many ways that we can enlarge our job and I urge you to do so as a great step to creating the future.

These four career development themes (Be good, know you are good, tell others you are good, and enlarge your job) comprise the actual process of career development for nearly all adults. The exercise of these four skills is a pre-requisite for taking responsibility for the future of career development.

One thing that is missing from this career development process is an occupational goal. These are important if you are in school wondering what to do, or if you are thinking of returning to full-time post-secondary studies, but they are seldom a consideration for workers including ourselves.

Steps to Take

If we are going to take responsibility for the future of career development what else are we going to do? A first step might be to articulate minimum standards for the career development program in our organisations and persuade our bosses to adopt them.

Minimum standards for our employers

A large proportion of policy makers and program managers do not understand career development and its outcomes, and do not understand our explanations. We, on the other hand, do not understand why these officials can’t comprehend, and we are dismayed when the career budgets are cut or when other harmful decisions are handed down.

In order to influence our administrators and policy makers, we must talk to them in ways that they comprehend. This means that we must be able
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to articulate clear and memorable answers to such questions as:

- What is career development? (You might reply that it is the process of acquiring the skills and motivation to succeed and advance.)
- Do all people need the same kind of career development? (People need different kinds of help depending on the current state of their career development and the options available to them.)
- How will the recipients of career development be different because of the program? (They will be more successful.)
- How will career development address the problems of the institution, such as dropouts, recidivism, violence and unemployment? (It will have more success-oriented clients.)
- And finally, how should the career development program be evaluated? (By measuring the return on the investment in career development.)

Certain of our leaders are keen to establish minimum standards for career practitioners, and I support this strongly, but there appears to be no attempt to set minimum standards for our employers. Yet adequate managerial support is important to ensure that we have the resources to do a proper job. Administrators are integral parts of the service delivery team. They can contribute to the delivery of quality services or they can stand in the way, but they certainly are almost never neutral players. It is not proper to have standards for counsellors but not for management.

Minimum standards for our employers should start with an official policy adopted by the organisation. It should explain who the clients are, what they will get, and the types of measurable outcomes that can reasonably be expected. The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs that has been adopted in several countries including Australia stands as a good resource for formulating outcomes.

A school policy might start off:
All students are required to successfully complete a course in career development taught by a teacher especially trained for the course. Furthermore, all students who want and need individual career counselling will receive it from a competent counsellor. As a result, the students will: demonstrate greater knowledge about education, training and labour market options; have a career or employment action plan to which they are committed; have plans to overcome employment barriers; develop better study habits; exhibit fewer self-defeating behaviours; achieve better school grades; demonstrate better problem-solving skills; practise more positive peer helping skills; and evidence fewer dropouts. It is important to link what we do to why we do it.

A university policy might start off:
All those accepted for Arts and Sciences will be offered a pre-registration orientation program comparing and contrasting their interests and abilities with those required by the various programs. As a result, these students will make fewer transfers between courses and programs during the first term, and fewer will drop out.

An employer’s policy might start off:
The organisation will promote a career development culture for all employees which will include individual career counselling, group career development workshops, and training of key workers to coach and mentor other workers—all conducted by qualified career practitioners. As a result, there will be: faster integration of new employees; more management potential coming up in the organisation; less need to hire key people from outside; increased productivity and quality; and fewer losses of good people.

A government policy might start out:
The government will promote a career development culture for all citizens, and the programs, methods and tools used in career development will be state of the art. As a result, citizens will: exhibit fewer self-defeating behaviours; be more supportive to each other’s achievements; be more productive; use more effective job search techniques; experience less unemployment; and learn at least three new work-related skills each year.

A career services policy might include this intent among others:
Career practitioners will intervene with third parties who are blocking or destroying the career development of clients. As a result, the client will demonstrate better work habits, be happier and more successful, and the third parties will exhibit fewer
negative behaviours towards the client, be supportive to the client and others, and the crisis will be resolved.

These policies will also list and describe the types of career development programs that will be used to achieve the objectives. The policies will also state the following:

- appropriate resources will be allocated to implement the policy;
- a program audit system will be instituted to ensure that the mandate is fully implemented;
- staff will meet the Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners;
- career development practitioners will abide by a code of ethics and the law;
- practitioners will have access to a specialist with advanced training in career development for their own continuing development;
- the organisational structure of the career development service will meet the requirements of the program;
- the career development service will articulate with other programs of the agency;
- there will be a guide for other staff which describes career development so they can make appropriate referrals of clients; and
- information will be provided to potential clients describing the services the agency offers, what clients will get from the program, qualifications of the practitioners, the range of career development interventions, what the career practitioner does and the role of the client.

Furthermore, all organisations providing career development programs should be urged to adopt ISO standards for quality management. Many companies are proud to display the ISO designation as a guarantee to their customers of what the organisation does to fulfil the customer’s quality requirements. A number of career services in the USA have already obtained the ISO designation.

A policy on career development will be a great mandate for realising the future of career development in your organisation. I recommend that you develop a policy for your agency and persuade management to adopt it. Make sure that it stipulates the standards that management must meet in supporting and managing the career service. Career associations can do a great service by promoting and advocating minimum quality standards for all career development services.

**Minimum Standards for Career Websites**

For over a decade governments have been placing a great deal of career, education and labour market information on the Internet and thereby making it very accessible to most citizens. There is a need for standards for career information websites.

In examining systems in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA, I have concluded that there is a need for features that are not now obvious in the systems. One of the most serious flaws is the absence of information on informal education opportunities.

Lifelong learning is mainly characterised by citizens engaging in three or four learning projects a year each requiring about 14 hours of study. For example, I may want to learn how to interpret a certain test, how to use the microskill of confrontation in my counselling, how to do public speaking, how to motivate clients, and how to incorporate labour market information in my career development program. These are important job skills, but they are not usually included in the career information websites. Most workers want to learn immediately useable knowledge and skills, rather than to enrol in a long-term training program. Links to information about such short courses are not usually provided from the major career information websites. Yet such short courses are the key to career advancement for most workers.

Adults need different occupational information such as inter-occupational mobility (What jobs can a chemist get, if jobs for chemists are not available? What jobs do hairdressers and nurses get when they can no longer work on their feet all day? What kind of jobs do teachers get when they leave the classroom? What can athletes do when they realise they will not reach stardom? What jobs can construction workers get with their knowledge and skills when they can no longer work outside?). These are important career questions for adults, but the whole area of inter-occupational mobility appears to be ignored.

Considering the enormous amount of information that is available on career sites, there is a need for users to be offered a method of coping with information overload. Exercises could be offered to help users assimilate the information they are given, helping them to personalise the career information, and then to plan the steps that they are prepared to commit themselves to in order to reach the goal.
Some users skip from topic to topic with very little time spent on any. Either they do not know what they are looking at, or cannot find what they want. The system should be able to recognise such a 'skipping' pattern, and interrupt the user with a question or suggestion. Career associations could establish standards for career websites.

**SOCIAL MOBILISATION FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

We should consider the needs of the great masses of people who are doing their own career development activities. There must be a self-managed career development process that is appropriate to most workers and can be taught to them through a public education program, through their employers, through a mass media campaign and through the Internet. Let’s consider some possibilities.

In recent times, we have witnessed some important and effective social movements, including ParticipAction, which have prompted large numbers of people to take specific actions to improve their bodies. A similar movement can be created for career development, and thereby greatly support a learning culture and the determination of people to become more competent in their careers.

Let’s suppose a government department decided to promote a career development culture in which all citizens would be encouraged and assisted to achieve to their fullest for their economic, social and personal betterment. A career development mobilisation program would aim to promote the empowerment of individuals in helping themselves, their friends, neighbours and relatives to achieve education and career goals.

A number of activities would be conducted under this ‘achieving society’ umbrella, including:

- how to do your own career check-up;
- how to identify your talents;
- how to learn;
- how to control your anger;
- how to assess what’s going on at work;
- how to help your spouse’s career;
- how to get ahead in your job; and
- how to help your children study.

As a part of a career development culture, a campaign is needed to raise awareness of the value of thinking and acting positively about self, studies and careers. A campaign could be organised by a department of employment and focus on such a theme as: ‘Take control of your life’, and citizens would be helped to develop a greater sense of ‘self as active agent’ through addressing factors such as self-talk.

We criticise ourselves many more times than we praise ourselves. It is important that people know how to monitor the number of times and the ways that they put themselves down by saying things like, ‘I don’t think I could’, compared to the number of times they encourage themselves by saying, ‘I can do that!’. The campaign could encourage people to count the number of times they support themselves and the number of times they knock themselves. It is a fun thing to do and an eye-opener.

Parents generally don’t know how to help their children plan for the world of work. Typically, they understand the talents of their children, but are unaware of how these talents can be used most profitably in education and in work. A complicating factor is that most parents are, themselves, haunted by feelings of doubt about their own careers and lives. Thus, many parents need assistance more than they are able to give it. The family career development process could be helped greatly by methods that families can use in their own homes ‘around the kitchen table’ to help each other. The publication Canada Prospects serves this aim when it is delivered to homes with the daily newspaper.

We can encourage people to check out jobs that they see and might like, how to find out what skills they require, how closely their talents match them, and what they need to do to qualify. People can be encouraged to enrol in evening classes, or other self-development activities, which teach skills that they can use in their present job, or in their next one. We can promote work values. Such sayings as ‘if it is worth doing, it is worth doing well’ could be popularised.

These projects could be widely promoted as the keys to survival and success. They could be presented in humorous ways and also be included in songs by popular artists. You can imagine some comedians demonstrating how they monitor their own self-talk, including their own self-contradictions. They could make excellent comedy routines that would motivate people to monitor their self-talk. The comedians could also use humour to teach work values, perhaps drawing on their own experience in perfecting their own skills.
Similarly songwriters could play a great role in promoting a career development culture. Musicians work hard to excel in their trade, they make many sacrifices to get ahead, and many have to battle addiction and other problems to stay on track to the top. However, few think about telling their story of achievement against many odds. Nor do they recognise that they have career development or competent living messages to transmit through their lyrics. Few musicians automatically see that their striving to make a career for themselves can inspire others (with or without musical ambitions). Lyricists are always looking for ideas for their songs and musicians are also looking for meaningful songs that will connect them with ever larger audiences.

A story line of personal doubts, difficulties, struggles to achieve, and then triumph has a lot of potential for songs to inspire audiences. The arts development branch of government could collaborate with the department for employment to encourage songwriters to develop competent achievement themes and musicians to sing the songs at every opportunity. A similar effort could be made to enrol comedians in the campaign.

There is a great potential for a career development culture. We need to advocate that a government department undertake a serious program to create a career culture and to make sure that career development specialists plan, organise and implement the program.

A department of employment is in an ideal position to increase the job retention rate through promoting a career development program for new employees. This is a service that career development offices can readily provide to employers and their new hires; especially in the case of small firms that do not have the resources to conduct such a program.

On the other hand, medium and larger firms may need only to be encouraged to offer such a service to their employees.

A part of the career development program for new employees would be to train established workers in the firms how to mentor and coach new employees. Many successful people credit part of their achievement to the assistance of a somewhat older and more successful person who took a special interest in guiding them at a crucial stage of their career. This process of mentorship is the sharing of knowledge about how to learn; how to work with others; how to be results oriented in managing one’s own tasks; and how to estimate what one can accomplish in various circumstances. A mentor can also open doors to new opportunities for a person.

Organisations do not want a career development culture for its own sake, but they would actively promote one if it held promise to resolve some of the HR issues. There are many good business reasons for an organisation to have a positive career development culture that reaches all employees and serves the accomplishment of the mission of the organisation including productivity and profit. I suggest that career associations take leadership in promoting a career development culture.

**CONCLUSION**

I recommend that each one of us do our very best, know that we are good, tell others that we are good, and enlarge our jobs. I suggest that career associations prepare model standards for organisations providing a career development service, and promote the approval and adoption of these standards province-wide. I also suggest that the association establish standards for career information websites. Finally, I suggest that career associations further create the future by persuading government to promote a career development culture, and then organising a social movement to create an achieving society.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Presentation by Stuart Conger to the 2004 conference of the Career Development Association of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada, 28 April. Reproduced with permission.
Does everyone go to college? Should everyone go to college? Some say the bachelor’s degree is the credential for success in the world of work; others maintain sub-baccalaureate credentials can offer equal, if not better, prospects for success. This article reviews participation in postsecondary education and examines views on the desirability of different postsecondary credentials.

**Does Everyone go to College?**

Although not everyone goes to college, there is no question that more and more people do (Snyder, 2002; Wirt et al., 2002), especially if ‘college’ is defined to include both two- and four-year institutions. In March 1970, 55 per cent of the US population aged 25 and older had completed high school or some college, and 11 per cent had completed four or more years of college; by March 1999, those figures had reached 83 and 25 per cent, respectively. Fall-term undergraduate enrolment in degree-granting two- and four-year institutions increased from 7.4 million in 1970 to 12.7 million in 1999, and is projected to increase to 15.3 million by 2011; higher enrolment rates of recent high school graduates (and older women) offset decreases in the 1980s and 1990s of the traditional college-age population. Between the 1969–1970 and 1999–2000 school years, the number of associate degrees granted had increased from 206,023 to 564,933; the number of bachelor’s degrees, from 792,316 to 1,237,875. Although growth in undergraduate enrolments slowed somewhat in the 1980s, faster growth set in again in the 1990s and is projected to continue through 2011. [Data in this section are from Snyder, 2002 and Wirt et al., 2002.]

To put such raw numbers into proportion, we can look at analyses of two national longitudinal datasets: High School and Beyond (HSB), a sample of 1980 high school sophomores scheduled for graduation in 1982, analysed by Rosenbaum (2001); and the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS: 1988), a sample of 1988 eighth-graders scheduled for high school graduation in 1992, analysed by Ingels, Curtin, Kaufman, Alt, and Chen (2002). Both analyses used data from follow-up studies conducted eight years after scheduled high school graduation. Unfortunately, the two studies aggregated and reported data on postsecondary participation and completion somewhat differently, but a comparison is informative nonetheless. Rosenbaum (2001) found that, of all HSB seniors, 71 per cent planned to complete an associate degree or higher, 76 per cent actually entered college, 53 per cent acquired at least some postsecondary credits, and almost 27 per cent completed an associate degree or higher. Ingels et al. (2002) found that among NELS: 1988 seniors, 76 per cent acquired at least...
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some postsecondary credits and 29 per cent had completed a bachelor’s degree or higher. Thus, the percentage of 1992 seniors who actually acquired postsecondary credits equalled the percentage of 1982 seniors who entered college at all, whether they acquired credits or not. Furthermore, the percentage of 1992 seniors who completed a bachelor’s degree (or higher) was greater than the percentage of 1982 seniors who completed an associate degree or bachelor’s degree (or higher). Clearly, post-secondary participation and completion had increased in ten years.

However, those statistics also show that many students enter but do not complete college. Although higher percentages of NELS: 1988 seniors earned credits and completed a degree than HSB seniors (and degree attainment is understated compared to the HSB cohort), significant numbers of post-secondary students presumably had left college with no degree. And although there is universal agreement that non-completion is a problem, there are disagreements on the extent and significance of non-completion.

Gray and Herr (2000), for example, argue passionately that increasing numbers of students enter college without appropriate academic preparation; in their estimation, only half of all high school graduates are prepared for college-level academics. Boesel and Fredland (1999), on the other hand, contend that standardised achievement scores recovered from a decline in the late 1960s and 1970s; students entering college now are as able and prepared as in the past. Furthermore, the significance of ‘non-completion’ at two-year postsecondary institutions is considered open to question (Boesel & Fredland, 1999; Gray & Herr 2000; Grubb 2002a). What about students who enrol at the local community college to see if college suits them? What about students who enrol for a few specific technical courses with no intention of getting a degree? Should those students be considered non-completers—i.e., failures?

However, there is widespread agreement that high school academic preparation has an effect on postsecondary persistence. For example, Wirt et al. (2002) showed a strong correlation between an academically rigorous secondary curriculum and persistence three years into pursuing a bachelor’s degree. Rosenbaum (2001) found that 64 per cent of HSB seniors with college plans and a grade point average (GPA) of A had completed their planned degree, compared to only 14 per cent of seniors with a GPA of C or lower. Similarly, 12 per cent of the seniors who entered college with a high school GPA of A had no credits or no transcript eight years later, compared to 52 per cent of those with high school GPA of C or lower. And in the most telling analysis, Rosenbaum found that controlling for high school grades, achievement test scores and homework time reduced the effect of low socio-economic status on educational attainment by almost 40 per cent and reversed the effect of race/ethnicity—white students had lower educational attainment than either black or Hispanic students with similar high school grades, achievement test scores and homework time.

IS THERE A PAYOFF TO COLLEGE?

There is indeed a payoff to college—and as a general rule, the more college, the bigger the payoff in increased career options, better promotion opportunities, higher earnings and lower unemployment (Dohm & Wyatt, 2002). Recent statistics can flesh out that statement with convincing detail:

In 2000, the unemployment rate for workers aged 25 and over with a high school diploma was 3.5 per cent; some college but no degree, 2.9 per cent; associate degree, 2.3 per cent; bachelor’s degree, 1.8 per cent; master’s degree, 1.6 per cent; professional or doctoral degree, 0.9 per cent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.; Dohm & Wyatt, 2002). In 2000, median earnings of year-round, full-time workers aged 25 and over with a high school diploma were $28,800; some college, but no degree, $32,400; associate degree, $35,400; bachelor’s degree, $46,300; master’s degree, $55,300; doctorate, $70,500; professional degree, $80,200 (Anonymous, 2002).

Another way to state the earnings benefits of college is the ‘college premium’—that is, the increase in earnings over those of a high school graduate. One synthesis of research studies (Boesel & Fredland, 1999) concluded overall that college premiums had changed between 1960 and 1997, rising moderately in the 1960s to a peak around 1970, then falling considerably until around 1980 and rising sharply until the late 1980s and more slowly after that.
Another synthesis (Grubb, 2002a) calculated college premiums using Current Population Survey data and showed somewhat different results for premiums to males and females for bachelor’s degrees, but with 1996 premiums clearly above those for 1967 for both groups. The 1996 premium for bachelor’s degrees was 69 per cent for males and 75 per cent for females; for associate degrees, 28 per cent for males and 39 per cent for females; for some college, but no degree, 14 per cent for males and 17 per cent for females (Grubb, 2002a). Both syntheses agreed that earnings were higher for males, but that premiums were higher for females because of the lower earnings of female high school graduates.

Interestingly, Rosenbaum (2001) also found a correlation between high school GPA and earnings for HSB students. Overall, HSB associate and bachelor’s degree completers received about 10 and 15 per cent higher earnings, respectively, than high school graduates without degrees. However, bachelor’s degree completers with a high school GPA of C or lower enjoyed only a 4.3 per cent increase in earnings—and associate degree completers with a high school GPA of C or lower earned 7 per cent less than those with no degree.

What about the payoff to postsecondary career and technical education (CTE)? Earnings benefits and premiums of postsecondary CTE are lower than those for bachelor’s degrees, but are, on the other hand, offset by lower costs (Boesel & Fredland, 1999). A more detailed analysis of the outcomes of postsecondary technical certificates, academic and technical associate degrees, and baccalaureate degrees shows a different story, with field of study, gender, related employment and program completion all having different effects on outcomes (Grubb, 1999, 2002a, 2002b; Kerckhoff & Bell, 1998).

**Field of study**

Earnings benefits for academic associate degrees tended to be small, whereas those of technical associate degrees could be substantial in certain occupational areas, matching or even bettering the typical earning benefits of a bachelor’s degree. Likewise, the earnings benefits of technical certificates in certain occupational areas could equal the average benefits of associate degrees and exceed those of an academic associate degree.

**Gender**

Men received higher earning benefits from associate degrees in engineering, computer fields, public service, and vocational/technical fields; women, higher benefits in business and health fields. Overall, men with technical certificates received earnings comparable to men with associate degrees. However, women with typist, beautician and medical assistant certificates had earnings comparable to women with associate degrees, whereas women with nurse assistant certificates had lower earnings than women with associate degrees.

**Related employment**

Individuals who found employment related to their field of study received the highest earnings benefits. Next in earnings benefits came individuals with academic degrees, and last came individuals with an occupationally related degree who were employed in an unrelated area.

**SHOULD EVERYONE GO TO COLLEGE?**

All analysts agree that at least some post-secondary education is essential for success in the workplace. There is also agreement on the critical importance of appropriate academic preparation for college and the detrimental affects of non-completion. Certainly, a bachelor’s degree can be a good foundation for workplace success, but pursuing a bachelor’s degree is a risky proposition for students without the appropriate academic foundations. For such students, a technical certificate or associate degree may indeed be a wiser investment—completing a program in a high-skill/high-wage occupational area and finding related employment can be a comparable foundation for workplace success.

**References**


I found the editorial on occupational longevity (AJCD, Winter 2004) confusing and, I think, somewhat misleading.

The editorial seeks to identify those occupations whose workers are most—and least—likely to stay on until retirement. The only rigorous way to do this—by following a group of individuals through their working life—would of course be prohibitive in both cost and time. In its absence, it would perhaps be feasible to produce occupational snapshots—a profile of workforce age by duration of employment in that occupation—that would give some indication of the ‘stability’ of that occupation.

But examining in isolation the age composition of the workforce in a particular occupation at a single point in time doesn’t really tell us much at all in this regard.

For a start, the editorial confuses shares with rates. It is not the case that ‘around 3.8 per cent of all [male] employees are still working at 60–64 years’. In fact, the labour force participation rate for 60–64-year-old males is around 50 per cent. The 3.8 per cent figure is the share of male employment that is accounted for by 60–64 year olds.

As you point out, this 3.8 per cent overall figure varies considerably between occupations—some (such as hospitality and IT occupations) have much lower proportions of older workers; others (such as funeral director) much higher proportions. That an occupation has an atypically high proportion of older members could mean several things:
• that it is having difficulty in attracting young people (some trades, for example);
• that there has been substantial industry down-
sizing (public administration and parts of manufacturing), often coupled with a ‘last on, first off’ retrenchment policy;
• that it is an ‘old’ occupation with a strong inter-generational tradition, rather than a new, ‘young’ occupation (IT);
• that it tends to recruit from the ranks of the older and more experienced (the bench); or
• that it is ‘stable’ in the sense meant in the editorial.

It is important in guiding young people’s career choices to point out that some of the more popular job choices (hospitality and IT) can be ‘revolving doors’, while others—particularly the trades and other more traditional occupations that are often, and wrongly, perceived as ‘dead-end’—offer long term rewards. An older than average workforce in an occupation should be seen as a positive for young jobseekers, in that it indicates the need to replace workers approaching retirement with younger recruits. It is, however, a far from perfect indicator of long-term stability.

Jeremy Gilling
Research Officer
Macarthur Youth Commitment
Campbelltown, NSW

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

ACER Research Conference 2004
The full proceedings from the ACER Research Conference 2004, Supporting student wellbeing, held in Adelaide on 25–26 October, including papers presented by conference speakers, can be downloaded as a pdf from: www.acer.edu.au/workshops/documents/Proceedings.pdf

The ACER Research Conference 2005 will take place at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Melbourne on 7–9 August 2005 on the theme of Using data to support learning.

Tasmania—The National Leader for Vet in Schools
Tasmania has become a national leader in the delivery of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Schools, with more than 25 per cent of Year 11 and 12 students participating in a VET program, and up to 20 separate programs now being offered in senior secondary colleges. VET students are trained in industries where there is high demand, such as aquaculture, building and construction, horticulture and engineering. VET in Years 7–10 is also expanding, providing younger students with a varied educational program and a strong foundation for VET in Years 11 and 12. Source: EdNA Online, Veteneews, www.media.tas.gov.au/release.php?id=12935

Adult Learning Australia
Adult Learning Australia (ALA) is the Australian peak organisation for adult and community education providers and others interested in adult learning, with international links to Asia and the Pacific. Key activities of ALA include Adult Learners’ Week, held every year in September, and the annual ALA Conference. ALA’s website features a calendar of events, publications, forums and newsletters for members. Source: EdNA Online, www.ala.asn.au

Leadership Coaching: A Key to Workplace ROI
Leadership coaching is a growing corporate trend that focuses on specific ways to improve performance and maximise leadership capabilities. Training for employees is offered, along with the help of a personal ‘coach’ to enhance leadership, management and communication skills necessary in leadership positions. The return on investment for leadership coaching can be powerful. Career Performance Strategies provided a recent case study reporting on the results of a leadership coaching initiative conducted by a Fortune 500 company. The study found that coaching produced a return on investment of 788 per cent, including improved performance, financial benefits from employee retention and other
intangibles. ACP International, a global organisation with members in 30 countries who provide lifelong career related services, surveyed over 2000 members to report on the latest approaches to leadership coaching. Source: www.associationvision.com

EDUCATION AND WORK, AUSTRALIA
Education and Work, Australia presents information about the educational experience of persons aged 15–64 years, especially in relation to their labour force status. The statistics were collected in May 2004, as a supplement to the Australian Bureau of Statistics monthly Labour Force Survey. Information collected in the survey includes participation in education in previous year and in survey month; labour force characteristics; type of educational institution; level of education of current and previous study; highest year of school completed; level of highest non-school qualification; level of highest educational attainment; unmet demand for education in current year; and characteristics of apprentices. Source: www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6227.0

CAREER GUIDANCE: A HANDBOOK FOR POLICY MAKERS
Despite many examples of good practice, large weaknesses exist in many countries’ national career guidance services, according to extensive research conducted by the OECD, and by the Centre for the Development of Vocational Training and the European Training Foundation on behalf of the European Commission. Access is limited to career development, particularly for adults. In addition, services often focus on immediate decisions and fail to develop career management skills. Training for those who provide services is frequently inappropriate, failing to reflect the full range of client needs or to take account of modern, more flexible delivery methods such as ICT. Services are poorly co-ordinated between different ministries, and between governments and other stakeholders. The evidence base is too weak to provide policy makers with useful data on outcomes, costs and benefits. These gaps stand in the way of governments’ attempts to implement lifelong learning, active employability and social equity policies. This joint publication by the OECD and the European Commission gives policy makers practical tools to tackle these problems. Source: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/53/53/34060761.pdf

MORE APPRENTICES CONTINUE TO UNDERTAKE TRAINING IN ‘TRADITIONAL TRADES’
The number of people commencing an apprenticeship in the ‘trades and related workers’ occupational group continues to increase, according to the latest national apprentice and trainee statistics. In the 12 months to 30 June 2004, the number of commencements in this occupational group rose from 56,820 a year earlier to 66,880, an increase of 18 per cent. Increases in the uptake of training packages across the trade occupational area occurred in: electricity technology (up 21%); construction (up 15%); automotive industry retail, service and repair (up 12%); metals and engineering (up 11%); and hairdressing (up 23%). Further information about apprentice and trainee activity for the June quarter 2004 is available from: www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1535.html

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

CANBERRA, MARCH 2005
AACC 14TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE – TURNING POINTS: ENGAGE, ENERGISE, EMPOWER CONFERENCE
30 March–1 April
For details see: www.aacc.org.au

CANADA, JUNE 2005
SOCIETY FOR VOCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
7th Biennial Conference of the Society for Vocational Psychology will be held at the University of British Columbia, June 2–4, 2005. The theme of the conference is ‘New Methods for Research and Practice in Vocational Psychology.’ The Society is affiliated
with the American Psychological Association’s Division 17, Counseling Psychology. http://educ.ubc.ca/svconf/

BRISBANE, JUNE 2005
CURRICULUM CORPORATION
12th Annual Curriculum Corporation National Conference. For details see: www.curriculum.edu.au/who_are_we/conference.php

SYDNEY, DECEMBER 2005
OVAL RESEARCH CENTRE
The 4th International Conference on Researching Work and Learning has the conference theme ‘Challenges for Integrating Work and Learning’. www.oval.uts.edu.au/rwl4/

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THE CANADIAN JOURNAL OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT, 2004, Volume 3, Number 1
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BRITISH JOURNAL OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING, 2004, Volume 32, Number 4
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Surveying the extent of, and attitudes towards, the use of prayer as a spiritual intervention among British mainstream counsellors
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JOURNAL OF VOCATIONAL BEHAVIOR, 2005, Volume 66, Issue 1
Stability and change in interests: A longitudinal study of adolescents from grades 8 through 12
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Flow among music teachers and their students: The crossover of peak experiences
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