Career Development and Its Practice: A Historical Perspective

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The use of the term career development as descriptive of both the factors and the processes influencing individual career behavior and as synonymous with intervention in career behavior (e.g., the practice of career development) is relatively recent. As professional vocabulary evolves across time, so do the form and substance of career interventions and those to whom they are directed. At the beginning of the new millennium, this article reviews the legacy of the 20th century and considers selected theoretical and practical issues likely to be prominent in the practice of career development in the decades immediately ahead.

The term career development, as used in the title of the National Career Development Association, had increasingly come, at the end of the twentieth century, to describe both the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to shape individual career behavior over the life span (Sears, 1982) and the interventions or practices that are used “to enhance a person’s career development or to enable that person to make more effective career decisions” (Spokane, 1991, p. 22). Thus, inherent in the current usage of the term career development are two sets of theories, or conceptual categories, one that explains the development of career behavior across the life span and the other that describes how career behavior is changed by particular interventions.

This perspective about the contemporary use of the term career development is important simply to establish that terms, like professions, evolve. They are historical creations, the shape, substance, and labeling of which reflect social, political, and economic change. Indeed, the term career was rarely used before the 1960s and the term development was rarely used before the 1950s. When the two terms were combined, they tended until the late 1960s to be described as vocational development or vocational psychology, not career development.

Against this context it is useful to consider the antecedent events that have led to the focus of this special issue: the practice of career development. Historical references to career development practice are more likely to use terms like vocational guidance or counseling, or career guidance or
counseling, rather than career development practice, but all of these terms flow from the same roots.

**Historical Perspectives**

In this millennium issue of *The Career Development Quarterly*, it is useful to acknowledge that if one believes in evolution, rather than revolution, as the origin of career development practice, then the seeds of the future exist in the past and in the present. In such a view, the practice of career development in the twenty-first century will build on, be distributed more evenly across the world, and refine much of what has been learned and implemented in the twentieth century. If one discounts the interesting accounts (Dumont & Carson, 1995; Williamson, 1965) of the origins of career development practice that can be traced far into antiquity to demonstrate how various societies have helped persons choose their work, or, more likely, allocated work to people based on their class or caste, one can conclude that the theories and techniques that constitute current approaches to the practice of career development are primarily creatures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

**Factors Influencing the Emergence of Vocational Guidance**

The rise of what was first identified as vocational guidance in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was directly associated with major shifts from a national economy that was primarily based in agriculture to an economy that was, as part of the industrial revolution that was spilling over from Europe to the United States, increasingly based in manufacturing and industrial processes. As the latter occurred, urbanization and occupational diversity increased, as did national concerns about strengthening vocational education and responding to the needs for information about how persons could identify and access emerging jobs. By the late 1800s, particularly in urban areas, such information was so differentiated and comprehensive that families or neighborhoods could no longer be the prime sources of occupational information or of the allocation of jobs; other more formal mechanisms, including rudimentary forms of vocational guidance, began to emerge in schools, in settlement houses, and in community centers.

A major factor in the rise of vocational guidance was the accelerating movement of large numbers of immigrants from nations with poor economic opportunities coming to the United States seeking new lives and options; a parallel phenomenon was occurring as people in the United States were migrating from rural to urban areas, spurred by the urbanization of jobs, particularly in the concentrations of plants in major cities making steel, furniture, automobiles, and other large capital goods.

Cast against the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration were many other issues that affected the development of vocational guidance. These issues included concerns about appropriate education for children and effective placement of adults into a rapidly changing occupational structure, about effective methods of distribution of immigrants across the spectrum of available occupations, and about the way to bridge the gap between schooling and the realities of the adult world. At the beginning of the twentieth century as at its end,
many voices were raised in behalf of educational reform, arguing that schools were too "bookish," too college oriented, and with insufficient vocational education.

Other issues were also pervasive at the turn of the twentieth century. Among them were concerns about how to address changing family structures, the increasing proportion of girls and women entering the workplace rather than confining themselves to homemaking, diminished extended-kinship systems, child labor, and the shifts in child rearing practices that were emerging in relation to migration and the consuming force of the industrial revolution. Moreover, as the social reformers and human rights activists were advocating, there was an emerging moral imperative that opposed child labor and argued that workers in the burgeoning economy of the early twentieth century needed to be seen not as the chattels of employers, not as property to be consumed and cast aside, but rather as persons of dignity with a right to determine their own destiny.

By any analysis, it is clear that the heritage of career development practice in the United States is rich, complex, and responsive to the social, political, and economic forces shaping the national context. Observers in and out of the professional ranks of career counselors and specialists in career guidance have reinforced the notion that the theories and practices that undergird and stimulate career development practice do not exist in a vacuum. Although, in any period of social change, the force of certain personalities as articulators and visionaries, who advocate what needs to be done to convert ideas about career guidance or other processes into action, is critical, the historical moment—the political and social conditions—must be right for the seeds of change to take root and flourish. The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century were such times.

One of the important chronicles of the rise of vocational guidance in the United States (Brewer, 1942) identified four conditions that were seen as major influences: the division of labor, the growth of technology, the extension of vocational education, and the spread of modern forms of democracy. Other observers elaborated on the connections between the rise and redirection of vocational guidance and counseling during the past 100 years and the effects of particular political or social phenomena—legislation, national crises, shifts in social values, the civil rights and women's liberation movements, and economic conditions.

Cremin (1964), a historian of education, contended that one of the associated outcomes of the Progressive Education movement in the late 1800s and the first 50 years of the twentieth century was the beginning of the guidance movement, particularly its emphasis on vocational guidance. He, like others, contended that the social reformism of the urban settlement workers was directly involved in the beginning of vocational guidance during the first years of the twentieth century and its subsequent implementation in the schools of Boston and other cities. Cremin argued that social reformers of the time believed

[n]ot only that vocational counseling would lead to greater individual fulfillment, but that people suited to their job would tend to be active in the creation of more efficient and humane industrial systems... [therefore] the craft of vocational guidance would serve not only the youngsters who sought counsel, but the cause of social reform as well. (p. 12)
Cremin further contended that the effort to develop a science of education, also at the heart of the progressive movement, was reflected in the major interest in tests and measurements that grew up in the United States immediately after the turn of the twentieth century. According to Cremin, it was in this context that “the idea developed of the guidance worker as a trained professional, wise in administering and interpreting scientific instruments for the prediction of vocational and educational success” (pp. 18–19).

Cremin’s (1964) analysis of the impact of the Progressive Education era on vocational guidance and counseling is but one of the interesting interactions between educational reform and the rise of vocational guidance. Stephens (1970), also a historian, has argued that “the vocational education movement was an educational response to the general reform movement spawned by the industrialization of American” (p. xiii). More to the point of the origins of vocational guidance are Stephens’s observations that

[t]o many leaders of the vocational reform movement... it was apparent that vocational education was but the first part of a package of needed educational reforms. They argued that a school curriculum and educational goals that mirrored the occupational structure created merely a platform and impetus for launching youth into the world of work. What was clearly needed to consummate the launch were guidance mechanisms that would insure their safe and efficient arrival on the job. Without guidance experts it was argued, other efforts at reform would be aborted... Therefore, in the name of social and economic efficiency, the argument continued, the youth who has been carefully trained would also have to be carefully counseled into a suitable occupational niche. (p. xiv)

These analyses of the array of forces that shaped and defined the original antecedents to contemporary approaches to career guidance, career counseling, and to the practice of career development could be repeated from other vantage points. They would include extended discussions of persons and events that made significant conceptual and empirical contributions to the evolution of career development and its related career interventions. To do so would affirm the general applicability of Borow’s (1964) observations that the history of vocational guidance teaches two lessons:

(1) The growth of the movement must be evaluated against the Zeitgeist. Without an appreciation of the prevailing social and intellectual temper of the times, the interpretation of episodes in the sweep of professional history remains incomplete and often distorted; (2) Progress flows from seemingly small beginnings. (p. 47)

The Emergence of Vocational Guidance
The period to which the citations of Borow (1964), Brewer (1942), Cremin (1964), and Stephens (1970) spoke is considered the founding period of vocational guidance in the United States. It is the period when Parsons, generally conceded to be the father of the vocational guidance movement and, indeed, the architect of the vocational counseling process, wrote his classic book Choosing a Vocation, posthumously published in 1909. Trained
as a civil engineer and a lawyer, Parsons spent most of his life dealing with social reform among the excesses of the free enterprise system as he saw them and the debasement of human nature, which he considered a result of the management of industrial organizations. He was at various times involved with activities of the settlement houses that had grown up in central Boston and in other cities along the northeastern seaboard.

Parsons in the later years of his life turned the focus of his attention to industrial education and vocational guidance in response to his feeling that too many people, especially the immigrants from Europe, were being wasted, both economically and socially, because of the haphazard way they got into the specialized world of the factory. Like so many others of his time, Parsons attacked the public schools for their specialization in book learning and advocated that "book work should be balanced with industrial education; and working children should spend part time in culture classes and industrial science" (Stephens, 1970, p. 39).

It was in response to the questions and issues inventoried here—those dealing with human dignity, the effective matching of persons and jobs, educational and social reform—that the early models of vocational guidance and vocational counseling were created. The early vocational guidance procedures were seen as methods, both practical and humane, to help persons to be matched with the needs of the occupational structure in ways that both preserved the order and the rationality of such choices and the power of persons to make decisions about job options available to them rather than to be coerced or forced into whatever was immediately available. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, although there was important research taking place about the measurement of individual differences and other counseling-relevant processes in university laboratories in Europe and the United States, there was essentially no scientific basis or theory on which to build models of vocational guidance or counseling. The practice of career development was emerging, but not yet career development theory.

To compensate for the lack of theory and applicable science—and the tools that counselors have come to depend on in career development practice (e.g., tests, dictionaries of occupational titles, The Occupational Outlook Handbook)—persons of conceptual genius in Europe and in the United States developed techniques and insights that began to create a knowledge base on which vocational counseling could be built.

Exemplary of such persons was Alfred Binet's work in France on intelligence testing; Spranger's work in Germany on types of personalities in relation to different types of jobs; Munsterberg's research in Germany on occupational choice and worker performance; the work of Jesse B. Davis and Eli Weaver in the United States on the educational and career problems of students; and, perhaps the preeminent contribution: the three-step paradigm of Parsons that guided the development of vocational guidance for at least the first 50 years of the twentieth century. Parsons, as part of his vision of the process, coined the term vocational guidance. In general, Parsons saw vocational guidance as a one-on-one process, which he also called "vocational counseling" (Cremin, 1964; Parsons, 1909). In his concern about developing techniques by which school children, adolescent school leavers, and adults could come to true reasoning about jobs available to them, he proposed a tripartite set of concepts as a frame of reference.
for the use of techniques by a counselor. His classic three-step design included the following:

First, a clear understanding of yourself, aptitudes, abilities, interests, resources, limitations, and other qualities. Second, a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work. Third, true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts. (Parsons, 1909, p. 5)

The techniques readily available for Parsons (1909) to use to implement his three-step process were limited. As a result, Parsons had his counselees read biographies and interview workers to learn about working environments and the occupational structure. In the absence of standardized tests of aptitudes or interest inventories, or directories of information about jobs or occupations, Parsons emphasized counselor observation of client characteristics and the coaching of the client in comprehensive self-study and in study of industrial opportunities available. He used extensive lists of questions for client self-study and sharing with the counselor. He offered techniques to assist clients to be introspective about their own likes and dislikes, successes and limitations, and to talk with the counselor about how to engage in true reasoning (decision making) related to the information they had. Although it is rarely noted, Parsons was expressly inclusive of, and tailored approaches to, both young men and young women. He assumed that many, but not all, of the vocational techniques he used were of equal value to boys and girls and men and women, and he provided special attention to information about industries open to women and how these positions could be accessed. He also provided statistics about occupations in which both men and women were employed as well as those that employed primarily men. Some of the techniques Parsons pioneered are still used today, and some are incorporated into more sophisticated interventions for counselor use.

Although the history of the twentieth century has included fleshing out Parsons’s model, adding steps to it (Salamone, 1988), providing scientific bases to each of the steps—identifying and measuring individual differences, documenting differences in occupational content and activity, and clarifying the elements of the decision-making process—the century’s achievements go beyond the important contributions of Parsons’s paradigm. Other theorists and practitioners have created an array of career development theories and practices that effectively intervene in the facilitation of career development, job choice and entry, work adjustment problems, unemployment, and underemployment. Still other theorists have advocated the differential perspectives and needs of women and men as well as of persons in racial and ethnic minority groups for career guidance (Gilligan, 1982; Leong, 1995; Pierce, 1933). As a result, the possible recipients of vocational guidance have become increasingly comprehensive in the range of problems that they present and in their ages and settings rather than being primarily adolescents in schools or settlement houses, as was true at the beginning of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Parsons’s paradigm continues to be a remarkable milestone in the evolution of career development practices.

Although there is much more that can be said about the important forces that shaped vocational guidance in the decades spanning the nine-
teenth and twentieth centuries, given the spatial limitations here, it is necessary to fast forward to the middle of the twentieth century to capture the growing conceptual changes that have shaped the final 50 years of the twentieth century. For a decade-by-decade compilation of major events shaping contemporary forms of career development practice, the reader is invited to examine the article later in this special issue titled “Selected Milestones in the Evolution of Career Development Practices in the Twentieth Century” (Herr & Shahnasarian, 2001).

National Goals and Vocational Guidance

As the practice of career development unfolded in the twentieth century, a constant theme shaping its purposes was the impact of social, political, and economic influences, including national policy and legislation, on the growth and comprehensiveness of such practice. As national goals have changed since the beginning of the twentieth century in response to the needs of defense, economic depression, demographic changes in the population, and growth in new forms of industrial or information-based production, vocational or career guidance and counseling and other career development practices have been seen as making contributions to multiple national agendas: the facilitation of equality of access to education and training opportunities; educational reform; economic efficiency; creating human capital; matching persons and occupational opportunities; rehabilitating those on the margins of society by providing support and direction to their career development; and helping persons find dignity, purpose in, and adjustment to work.

Each of these goals has taken on more or less urgency, depending on events in the larger society that have arisen in different historical periods and that have varied markedly in their substance (Herr, 1997): for example, social reform interacting with the rise of the industrial revolution in the late 1800s; the cognizance of individual differences in the early 1900s; classification of military personnel and issues of national defense in the second decade of the 1900s; rising concern about persons with disabilities and the mentally ill in the 1920s; the economic exigencies and needs to match persons with available employment opportunities during the Great Depression of the 1930s; national defense in the 1940s and the 1950s; the democratization of education, civil rights, women’s rights, and occupational opportunities in the Great Society programs of the 1960s; concerns for equity and special needs populations in a climate of economic austerity in the 1970s; and the transformation from an industrial to an information-based global economy and from military to economic competition among nations in the 1980s and 1990s. Each of these historical periods spawned national social metaphors and rhetoric that ultimately pervaded policies and legislation, directly or indirectly affecting the practice of career development. In some instances, such legislation has identified particularly vulnerable populations (e.g., specific members of minority populations, persons in poverty and on welfare, single parents, the frail elderly) requiring specific forms of help to cope with changing social and economic conditions; in other legislation, the focus has been on groups of youth or adults who needed to be classified regarding their ability to perform specific jobs or to be provided with career direction relevant to national goals of finding personpower who could effectively serve the nation’s military needs or its scientific needs.
A long inventory of national legislation, beginning in the first decades of the twentieth century and continuing to the present, has specifically advocated the importance of vocational and career guidance, shaped the practices and recipients of such interventions, and provided for the preparation and professionalization of counselors. As identified in the article on selected milestones later in this issue (Herr & Shahnasarian, 2001), there have been many important landmark pieces of legislation that made significant contributions to the evolution of career guidance and counseling. A few examples of more recent legislation that have provided resources for, advocated career guidance as a policy imperative, and shaped the professional preparation of counselors would include the George Barden Act of 1946, the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Career Education Incentive Act of 1976, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 and subsequent amendments, and the School to Work Opportunities Act of 1994.

To cite only brief examples of the impact of these pieces of federal legislation, the George Barden Act in 1946 paid the salaries and expenses of vocational counselors and made it possible to reimburse counselor-training institutions. This legislation had many important effects. In addition to its statement about the importance of vocational counseling, it provided Harry Jager, then Head of the Occupational Information and Guidance Service of the U.S. Office of Education, resources to encourage the growth of state supervisors of guidance in state departments of education and to encourage these state supervisors to implement state certification processes for school counselors. At the time, one could be certified as a school counselor in many states with three credits of occupational information and three credits of principles of guidance. Jager and his colleagues in the U.S. Office of Education were concerned about the quality of vocational and school counselor preparation. At the time of the George Barden Act, there were approximately 80 institutions preparing counselors in the United States, 40 at the undergraduate level and 40 at the graduate level, compared with more than 400 graduate programs today. Jager, concerned about the need for more counselors and for improved quality and status for counselors, proclaimed that counselor preparation should be graduate preparation, not an undergraduate program. Between 1949 and 1952, Jager's unit in the U.S. Office of Education issued eight reports on counselor preparation, course content, in-service education, supervised practice by which to define "reimbursable counselor training courses," and course requirements for counselor certification (Hoyt, 1974). The result was a phaseout of most undergraduate programs of counselor preparation by the early 1950s and a growing concern with the professionalization of vocational and school counselors.

Shortly afterward, in 1958, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) triggered the largest growth of secondary school counselors in the history of the nation. NDEA provided both the funds for schools to employ secondary school counselors and funds for higher education institutions to provide counselor education programs, primarily in academic, year-long institutes, typically leading to the master's degree. Although the major thrust of the NDEA legislation was on preparing secondary school counselors to identify, encourage, and counsel students who were academically talented in sciences and mathematics so that the United States could build its scientific capacity to compete with the Soviet Union in the
"space race," a subtext of the legislation was the need for counselors to provide career development to students. Subsequently, the Carl D. Perkins Act of 1984 advanced the growing professionalization of counselors by asserting that the vocational guidance activities in the legislation should be implemented by "certified counselors." Although each of these pieces of legislation and the others cited deserve fuller treatment, the point is that national goals, policies, and legislation have been significant factors in advocating the importance of and the need for quality and comprehensive provisions of vocational and career guidance.

**Changing Definitions of Vocational Guidance**

In addition to the important role of federal legislation, a subset of major importance in affecting the practice of career development during the latter half of the twentieth century was the rise of theories of career development and the related redefinition of vocational guidance. A major milestone occurred in 1950, when Hoppock, then president of the National Vocational Guidance Association, observed that the traditional view of vocational guidance was "crumbling" (Hoppock, 1950). In 1951, following on Hoppock's observation, Super recommended that the traditional definition of vocational guidance that had stood since 1937 be revised. The 1937 definition stated that vocational guidance was "the process of assisting the individual to choose an occupation, prepare for it, enter upon it, and progress in it" (Super, 1951 p. 92). The definition proposed by Super (1951) and adopted by the National Vocational Guidance Association defined vocational guidance as

> [t]he process of helping a person to develop and accept an integrated and adequate picture of himself [sic] and of his role in the world of work, to test this concept against reality, and to convert it into a reality, with satisfaction to himself and to society. (p. 89)

The latter definition changed the focus of vocational guidance from a concentration on what is to be chosen to increasing attention on the characteristics of the chooser. In the process, it diminished the emphasis on matching individual to job and on the provision of occupational information at a particular point in time. Instead, it emphasized the psychological nature of vocational choice, accenting the developmental influences on career behavior across the life span, blended the personal and vocational dimensions of guidance into a whole, and elevated the importance of self-understanding and self-acceptance as the evaluative bases to which occupational and educational alternatives should be related.

Super's (1990) theoretical conceptions in the 1950s through the 1990s emphasized a life-span approach to career development, which describes changing career tasks and concerns in each of a series of life stages: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. He addressed both similar and different career patterns exhibited by men and women related to such physical and social phenomena as sex stereotyping, socialization, biological differences, and the opportunity structure. He made explicit the interaction of career development and personal development, the differential salience or meaning of work, how life roles and work roles affected individual career patterns, and the processes and elements related to career maturity and career adaptability.
During the 1950s and the 1960s, and subsequently, other major theories of career development were created and tested. The career theories of Roe (1956), Holland (1966), Krumboltz (1979), and others spawned additional paradigms of career behavior, based on interdisciplinary perspectives such as the psychodynamic effects of child-rearing practices on the development of occupational interests, the role of behavioral style or personality type as the major influence in career choice, and the role of unique learning experiences reinforced by unfolding life events that affect individual preferences. The work of Roe, of Holland, of Krumboltz, and of Super (1957, 1990) led to the development of a large array of new assessment instruments (e.g., the Self-Directed Search, the Vocational Preference Inventory, the Adult Career Concerns Inventory, the Career Maturity Inventory, the Values Inventory, the Career Beliefs Inventory) and counseling interventions that operationalized the constructs embedded in the career theories. Theory building continued throughout the ensuing years of the twentieth century as had the creation of new tests and career interventions.

Of particular importance to theory building during the last quarter century of the twentieth century was the growing attention to the career development of women and of minority populations. Among such contributions are those of Astin’s (1984) four constructs that address the possibility of gender differences in degree of career behavior rather than kind: motivation, sex role socialization, the structure of opportunity, and work expectations; the work of Betz and Hackett (1986) in examining the effects of level and strength of self-efficacy related to women’s entrance into and performance in career-related processes; Farmer’s (1985) analyses of influences on aspiration, mastery, and career commitment for men and women and her studies of diversity and women’s career development from adolescence to adulthood (Farmer & Associates, 1997); Gilligan’s (1982) efforts to describe women’s sex role development leading to differences in the sexes in their expressions of intimacy and identity in relation to career behavior; and Hansen’s work with her colleagues on creating career development curriculum designed to reflect the changing roles of young men and women in the workplace and in other life roles (Hansen & Minor, 1989) and her model of Integrative Life Planning (Hansen, 1997); and the work of Leong (1995) in describing the influences on career behavior of culturally different populations.

As the work of theory building and the legacy of ongoing work on individual differences, learning and development, trait-and-factor approaches, personality typologies, and interest measurement were assimilated into more comprehensive sets of constructs during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the language of vocational guidance and vocational counseling was subtly replaced by terms like career guidance and career counseling (Critics, 1981; Gysbers & Moore, 1971; Herr & Cramer, 1996; Wrenn, 1964) and by the emerging notions of the practice of career development. Assessment instruments were sometimes refined and renamed (e.g., the Vocational Maturity Inventory became the Career Maturity Inventory) and older theoretical models were reconceived and wedded to new constructs (e.g., trait-and-factor approaches seen as person-environment fit; (Chartrand, 1991). The name of the National Vocational Guidance Association was changed to the National Career Development Association in 1985, suggesting that earlier views of the process of career development as the
object of career interventions became instead synonymous with the practice of career development.

The latter decades of the twentieth century demonstrated the importance and the effectiveness of the practice of career development across a wide range of career issues, settings, and populations (e.g., Campbell, Connel, Boyle, & Bhaerman, 1983; Herr, 1997; Holland, Magoon, & Spokane, 1981; Hoyt, 1980; Oliver & Spokane, 1988; Spokane & Oliver, 1983). These decades also witnessed a consolidation of what is known about career behavior and how it can be used to guide planned programs of career interventions. In this sense, the practice of career development rests upon a legacy of concepts and practices that were developed and refined throughout the twentieth century (Herr, 1999; Savickas, 1999).

Insights Into the Future

Although it is not possible to be exhaustive in a brief retrospective view of the history of the practice of career development, it is clear, nevertheless, that there were major social, political, and economic changes throughout the twentieth century to which career theories and practices have been addressed. The history of the practice of career development is a record of conceptual growth and practical effects that is very positive in its contributions to individual purpose and productivity and to the economic health of the nation. However, this legacy of achievement is not yet complete.

Many of the questions and issues that precipitated the rise of vocational guidance and counseling in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the world began its transformation from a primarily agrarian economy to an industrial economy, are present in new guises as the nations of the world engage in the transformation from an industrial to a global, information-based economy. In the emerging world of the present and the future, career guidance and counseling, the practices of career development, are being constantly challenged to find new paradigms and new scientific bases as the important questions of individual choice and dignity are cast against a new and emerging set of questions that reflect the characteristics of a world occupational structure that is in considerable flux; that is increasingly affected by the pervasive influence of advanced technology on workplace procedures that reduce the need for worker's physical strength and increase their needs for knowledge and intellectual strength; and in which the opportunities to work, the language of work, the educational requirements to do work, and the organization of work are changing throughout the world. These conditions at the beginning of the twenty-first century are giving rise to such trends as the following.

Growth in the Practice of Career Development as a Worldwide Phenomenon

The practice of career development, career guidance and career counseling, and the other forms of career intervention were neither the same nor at the same level of development across the world at the end of the twentieth century. However, in the twenty-first century, the practice of career development is likely to be more comprehensive in scope, more evenly distributed and accessible, and more indigenous as nations increasingly identify how the practice of career development will best meet their needs.
Such national and cultural tailoring of the practice of career development to political, economic, and demographic characteristics will increase dramatically in the next several decades. So will the career theories and interventions that are invented and implemented in nations that differ substantially in their levels of educational and economic development. As such, career guidance, career counseling, and the practice of career development will become worldwide phenomena.

The Practice of Career Development as an Instrument of Individual Human Dignity

In a world that continues to struggle with conflicting desires to either degrade or enhance human dignity, assaults on human dignity continue to occur as a function of economic and workplace issues. They include the rise of, and the persistence of, high rates of unemployment in many nations; the permanent dislocation of persons from jobs because their skills are inadequate or because there are insufficient jobs; the procedures that bar people from work or occupational mobility because of ageism, racism, or sexism; the diminished feelings of personal identity and self-worth, affiliation, mastery, and economic independence that accompany organizational downsizing, unemployment and underemployment; the substitution of technology for people or the placing of persons in toxic work environments to produce economic gain. In these conditions, the practice of career development, among its other outcomes, serves as a mechanism to provide hope to people, the affirmation of their individual dignity and worth, and the support to establish new career directions. Without feelings of dignity and hope, it is unlikely that any individual can attain his or her full potential as a human being. Without personal dignity and hope, it is difficult to grant these things to others, to take personal responsibility for one’s actions, to gain a sense of agency or self-efficacy, or to find alternatives to violence as an appropriate strategy to gain what one seeks.

The Practice of Career Development as an Instrument of Personal Flexibility

In the twenty-first century, career counselors and other career guidance specialists will be increasingly expected to assist persons to identify and learn the skills by which they can be more effective in planning for and choosing jobs, in making effective transitions and adjustments to work, in working cross-culturally and cross-nationally, and in managing their own careers and career transitions effectively. Scholars in the United States and in other regions of the world have argued that changes in the way that work is organized are resulting in new concepts about careers that are qualitatively different from the concepts that had prevailed through much of the twentieth century. New notions of career in many nations include such implications as

the changes taking place in the structure of employment opportunities mean a widening diversity of career patterns and experiences . . . more and different sorts of career transition will be taking place. One consequence may be that in the future more men will experience the kind of fragmented careers that many women have experienced. (Arnold & Jackson, 1997, p. 428)
more people will be working for small and medium-sized employers, and there will be more people who are self-employed... they highlight the need for lifelong learning and an appropriate strategy for career guidance to support people especially during career transitions... (Arnold & Jackson, 1997, p. 429)

In a similar fashion, Hall and Associates (1996) speak to the rise of "protean careers." Accordingly,

people's careers increasingly will become a succession of "ministages" (or short cycle learning stages) of exploration-trial-mastery-exit, as they move in and out of various product areas, technologies, functions, organizations, and other work environments. (p. 33)

this protean form of career involves horizontal growth, expanding one's range of competencies and ways of connecting to work and other people, as opposed to the more traditional vertical growth of success (upward mobility). In the protean form of growth, the goal is learning, psychological success, and expansion of the identity. In the more traditional form, the goal was advancement, success and esteem in the eyes of others, and power. (p. 35)

Although it is not clear what proportion of the workforce will be affected by "new careers," personal flexibility in such contexts means that people in the twenty-first century need to know how to change with change, accept ambiguity and uncertainty, negotiate job or career changes multiple times in their working lifetimes, be able to plan and act on shifting career opportunities, develop technical and social skills as well as an ability to understand how and why such skills are used, modified, and supplemented, and to have the motivation to be career resilient—to persist in the face of change and unplanned-for problems and difficulties.

Career Counselors Will Take on Expanded Roles

Career counselors will increasingly take on roles as planners, applied behavioral scientists, and technologists as they tailor their career practices to the settings and populations that they serve. In addition to the role of the counselor or specialist in the practice of career development as one who seeks to keep hope alive in his or her clients, such professionals will increasingly assume other technical roles. As the twentieth century laid the base for the scientific knowledge of career behavior and documented the effectiveness of career interventions that facilitate or modify career behavior, the twenty-first century will undoubtedly witness major growth in knowledge related to the processes and techniques that work most effectively to resolve certain career problems with particular populations (e.g., women and men, the affluent and the poor, majority and minority members) under specific conditions. Much of the new information in the field will come from cross-national studies and indigenous research in nations across the world. The expanded knowledge base in the theories of and the practice of career development will require career counselors, in their role as applied behavioral scientists, to become experts in how to facilitate positive career development across the life span and in its applications to particular settings and populations.

Flowing from a role as applied behavioral scientist, the career counselor of the twenty-first century will have an expanded role as a planner of structured programs. As is increasingly true in the present, among the major
practices of career development will be the provision of workshops, modules, structured group programs, psychoeducational approaches, and career guidance curricula specifically planned to facilitate the types of career knowledge, skills, and behaviors that lead to personal flexibility and personal competence.

Furthermore, the career counselor of the twenty-first century will routinely be a technologist, able to plan and apply the use of computer-assisted career guidance systems, the Internet, CD-ROMs, and virtual reality approaches to experiencing possible work environments, games, self-assessment, international databases about educational and occupational opportunities, and other forms of technology to complement individual or group approaches to the practice of career development. Although the base for such roles had been initiated in the twentieth century, in the decades immediately ahead technology will be a core element of the practice of career development.

Conclusion

This article discusses in skeletal form the heritage that undergirds the practice of career development in the twenty-first century. The view here is that the early decades of the twenty-first century will witness a refinement of the conceptual perspectives and scientific knowledge that shaped career counseling and career guidance in the twentieth century. However, it is expected that the acceleration of the worldwide availability of career guidance and counseling in an international economy will be accompanied by a theoretical and research base that will develop from nations around the globe that are committed to developing their own indigenous models and practices of career development, rather than adopting those models and practices that originated in North America or Europe.

In such contexts, new theoretical and practical issues will continue to arise. They will include ensuring that the practice of career development is delivered in ways that are cost-effective and efficient; research that is devoted to understanding more fully the career behavior of the poor and the less educated; understanding more fully the pluralistic value and belief systems about the centrality of work among other life roles that dominate in different societies; career practice—career problem interactions; gender and racial factors in career behavior; methods of coaching and mentoring to stimulate career motivation and resilience that will bridge the chasms of despair, stress, and confusion that frequently accompany career transitions, poor person–job fit, underemployment or the loss of work; and new theories of work and practices of career development that address the growing number of temporary employees and persons unable to find permanent institutional employment around the world. As affirmed by the history of the twentieth century, the importance of the practice of career development in the twenty-first will grow as a worldwide, sociopolitical force designed to facilitate the economic health of nations and the purpose and productivity of individuals.

References


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