# PREPARING COUNSELORS FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM
# ACES/NCDA POSITION PAPER
# December, 2000

## Introduction

It has been more than 90 years since Frank Parsons created the matching model of vocational guidance to meet the employment needs of youthful immigrants entering an industrial society. Since Parsons' time, nearly a century of social change has brought forth exciting new models of career development theory and intervention, including new directions for career counseling and equally exciting innovations in career development instruction.

The transition to the 21st century offers a challenge to address the growing centrality of career in people's lives. The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) and the National Career Development Association (NCDA) are committed to finding ways to assist counseling professionals to better meet client needs through a renewed vision of career development in counselor education. ACES also has an opportunity not only to reclaim its roots in vocational counseling, but to demonstrate leadership in the advancement of the counseling profession across cultures.

## Trends

Changes in society and the counseling profession affirm the need for attention to this topic at this time. While unemployment has been reported as over 800 million worldwide (International Labor Organization, 1994), the United States currently reports the lowest unemployment rate in years. International movements toward democracy and free markets ebb and flow, yet globalization is a reality, with increasing poverty and gaps between haves and have-nots. Computer technology is providing mind-boggling ways of communicating across cultures, and computer-assisted career guidance and information systems are being developed worldwide. New work patterns are emerging, with greater recognition being given to the significant connection between families and work. People increasingly are seeing an interactive connection of work with other important aspects of their lives, including spirituality.

Progress is being made in acceptance of individual and cultural differences and meeting the needs of diverse populations. Youth and adults are developing new attitudes about work, leisure, family, relationships, and retirement. Career development and counseling (and careers guidance as it is called in many European countries) has emerged as an international

phenomenon with the opportunity for the counseling profession to grow through cross-cultural communication, collaboration, teaching, and research. New opportunities for people to develop their talents, make choices, act globally, and contribute to the improvement of society are here. But, before the new challenges can be met, change is necessary in preparing counselors for career development. The challenge is not that every counselor needs to be prepared to become a specialist in career counseling but rather that all counselors need to be prepared to help clients with career issues, understanding that those issues often are inextricably linked with other parts of their lives.

A number of individual, societal, and professional trends have influenced the development of this paper. In these pages, we 1) look at these trends, 2) set a rationale and need for change in the preparation of counselors for career development, 3) present "state of the art" questions, 4) identify triggers for change and career-related definitions which inform this work, and 5) suggest principles and recommendations for enhancing the career development emphasis of counselor education.

**Rationale and Need for Change**

It has been a number of years since the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision has directly addressed the importance and effectiveness of its teaching of career competencies to counselors in training. Not since 1976, when career development and career guidance were influenced by the then new movement in career education, has ACES made a formal statement about the needs in this area (ACES, 1976). With new developments of the last three decades, such as recognition of the needs of diverse populations, concerns for low-income families increasing knowledge of the importance of contextual influences on clients' career development, it is a propitious time to revisit the question of what counselor education programs are doing to keep up with the changes.

While we know that many individual counselor educators are major contributors to career development and vocational guidance at state, national, and international levels, the concern of Commission members is that ACES as an organization has not been an active leader in this discipline in recent years. This is evident in part from the dearth of career development articles in the major journal and the few ACES programs on career development at ACES and American Counseling Association conventions. In the last decade, considerable initiative in developing training materials and resources was taken by the Career Development Training Institute (CDTI) of the National Occupational Information

Coordinating Committee (NOICC), a federal agency which included many counselor educators.

**State of the Art**

Commission discussions with leaders about the "state of the art" of career development instruction and supervision in counselor education programs generated concerns as to whether counselor educators are offering the quality of instruction required to meet the learning needs of today's students. Have professors charged with instructional responsibility for building students' career counseling competencies incorporated the latest body of rich literature in career development, and have the used innovative instructional pedagogy? What is the "state of he art" in career development instruction? A number of questions were raised in a series of meetings, focus groups, and conference workshops sponsored by the Commission in an attempt to assess the state of the art: Who teaches career development courses? How much has the counselor education curriculum changed to reflect the most recent theory, research, and practice in the field?

To what extent do courses address the unique career needs of specific populations (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities (Herring, 1999; Leong, 1995; Leung, 1995; Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000; Sue & Sue, 1999; Wehrly, Kenney & Kenney, 1999); women (Arredondo, 1992; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987); older adults (Brewington & Nassar-McMillan, 2000; Waters & Goodman, 1990); persons with disabilities (Enright, Conyers, & Szymanski, 1996); sexual minorities (Gelberg & Chojnacki, 1996)? How are the dramatic changes in work and families being incorporated into training programs (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999; Richardson, 1993)?

What are counseling faculty doing to teach the now widely accepted premise that, for many types of career issues, concerns, and problems, effective career counseling must incorporate personal counseling? Career literature is replete with the message that career and personal counseling are inseparably linked (e.g., Herr, 1989, 1997; Betz & Corning, Davidson & Gilbert, Haverkamp & Moore, Krumboltz, Lucas, Super, & Tolsma in Subich, 1993).

How is information technology, especially computer-assisted career guidance and the internet, being taught to counselors in preparation (Harris-Bowlsbey & Lisansky, 1998; Reardon, Lenz, Sampson, & Peterson, 2000)? What are we doing to meet the needs of children and youth who are not being reached with career services, especially those growing up in poverty who may be destined for low skill-low wage jobs (Herr, 1997; Hoyt, 1994)? How effectively are educators helping aspiring counselors realize

that contemporary workers need high-level workplace knowledge, skills and applications, especially skills for continued learning throughout their lives (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991, 1992)?

To what extent are career development instructors utilizing the many "learning by doing" experiential strategies (such as service learning) to make career development courses more relevant and exciting? To what extent are programs addressing career development in a holistic way, i.e., including issues of meaning and purpose, spirituality, and "work within a life" (Bloch & Richmond, 1997, 1998; Cook, 1991; Hansen, 1997)? What strategies are counselor educators using to excite counseling students about helping people make core decisions, choices, and transitions in their lives (Pope & Minor, 2000), or to help them understand that career is not just occupational information and testing and something to be put at the bottom of course hierarchy? How do we teach counseling students integrative thinking and skills to help clients do holistic life planning (Hansen, 1997)?

**Triggers for Change**

Preliminary answers to questions about the current status of career development instruction and supervision led the Commission to conclude that several critical findings point to a need for change in graduate preparation programs. Commission members (most of whom are members of both NCDA and ACES), identified several reasons that such changes in counselor preparation are necessary.

1) Dramatic changes across cultures in the nature of work, workplaces, employer-employee relationships, and career patterns (Rifkin, 1995; Kummerow, 2000) have resulted in more complicated career interventions.

2) Significant changes in career theory, research, and practice designed to enhance relevance and utility for a population increasingly diverse in race, culture, need, experience, and opportunity call for more effective multicultural instruction.

3) Career decisions have become more complex and central in people's lives and have become increasingly linked with other significant life issues.

4) Career development unfortunately has become identified by some counselor educators and students as the least important part of the counseling curriculum and often has been assigned to least experienced faculty members regardless of special interest or competency.

5) New and emerging theoretical convergences and innovations have not been sufficiently integrated into preparation curricula.

6) Technological advances in career intervention--especially computer-assisted guidance and the ubiquitous involvement of the internet in career information dissemination--call for enhanced sophistication in instruction and supervised practice.

7) New conceptions of assessment that focus on both quantitative appraisal instruments and qualitative methods and the process and content of choice require additional supervised practice beyond an introductory experience.

8) Lack of recognition of clients' needs for holistic counseling on such issues as meaning, purpose, and spirituality in relation to life roles and career decisions.

9) A typical overemphasis in counselor education on therapy rather than developmental issues and failure to recognize that career issues often are very personal.

10) Career counseling is often still being taught largely as trait and factor matching and assessment with little attention to holistic approaches.

It is difficult for master's and doctoral students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed through just one course in career development. There is need to modify programs to provide all counseling students with updated knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will increase their understanding of career development as a major human development task and a fundamental aspect of their work as counselors. Enhanced professional competencies in career interventions will inspire new levels of enthusiasm about career development issues and concerns.

**The Need for New Definitions**

Part of the problem in defining career development is that, although there is some overlap, there are two distinct philosophies. One is the workforce development and job search philosophy which, reinforced by computer technology and labor market information, speaks to the economic and placement functions of preparing people for work to help nations build or keep the competitive economic edge in the global marketplace. The other is the career and human development focus which emphasizes growth and development of the whole person for work and other life roles over the life span. Both philosophies are needed, but in most countries, the former receives more emphasis (Hiebert & Bezanson, 2000).

Many formal documents (NCDA & NBCC, 1992; NCDA/NOICC, 2000; Engels, 1994) and several NCDA/NOICC Gallup Poll Surveys, including the most recent in 2000, still emphasize the matching of people and jobs. They mention

connecting work and education, or work and leisure, but give only token attention to work and family.

The traditional NCDA definitions of career, career development, and work are well known, and the broader definitions of life span career development are abundant in the counseling and career development literature. In spite of myths and misinterpretations about career development, there are areas of agreement: that it is a developmental process, that it occurs over the life span (childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, mid-adulthood, older adulthood), that it involves changes and transitions. It is the content with which people may disagree. Most would include self-learning, options learning, and decisions and transitions learning (Watts, 1994). Others have an expanded view. For some professionals, the focus of career development is almost entirely on fitting into work and jobs; others define career more broadly to include work and other life roles.

Super (1951) defined **career development** as “a lifelong, continuous process of developing and implementing a self concept, testing it against reality, with satisfaction to self and benefit to society.” He later defined **career** as the roles and theaters of a person’s life, including work, family, leisure, learning, and citizenship (Super, 1980). His broad model has been applied internationally through the Work Importance Study (Super & Sverko, 1995) and through the assessment C-DAC model (Osborne, Brown, Niles, & Miner, 1997). Hansen (1997) proposes the term “integrative life planning” as a more inclusive framework for career development in the 21st century, especially focusing on gender relationships in family and in work, pluralism and spirituality, and the connectedness of life roles and tasks. Herr (2000) goes further in conceptualizing career guidance and counseling as instruments of personal flexibility and human dignity.

In the face of undeniable changes in the world of work today and the increasing occurrence of numerous job changes over one’s work life, NCDA’s conceptual view is that counselors and clients may be ready for a concept of--not one job for life--but a person having one lifelong career carried out in a variety of settings and activities (Engels, 1994). The multiple work changes and transitions in people’s lives as well as the global societal changes reinforce the need for some new definitions.

A major point is that, while traditional congruence models of matching individuals and jobs probably always will be part of career development and planning, the complexity of career decision-making in the new millennium calls for the broadest possible definition of the term

(McDaniel, 2000), and, more important, translating the broader concept into practice and into counselor preparation.

**New Frameworks for Program Revision**

What are the implications of these changes and definitions for counselor education programs? Suggestions for curriculum revision do not mean that everything needs to be changed. Yet the context of the 21st century requires us to engage in self-examination and determine what part of our career development offerings need to be kept, modified, or transformed.

Counselor educators often consider changes when they are about to be reviewed by accrediting agencies. Thanks partly to Commission efforts, the revised standards of the Council for Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for doctoral programs give more attention to career development than in the past.

Before revising their programs, counselor educators will need to conduct needs assessments--obtaining inputs from recent graduates, current students, career instructors, and counseling supervisors, as well from career counseling clients. A starting point is for counselor educators to review the competencies developed by the National Career Development Association and the National Board of Certified Counselors (1992) as well as the CACREP (2001) standards and those created by related professional associations, such as the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD, Arredondo et al., 1996) and the American School Counselors Association (ASCA, 1997).

**Principles for Curriculum Change**

Counselor educators may ask, What are some principles I can use to integrate a broader concept of career into the counseling curriculum? How can I motivate students and help them understand the vitality of career and career issues in people's lives? Following are some principles to undergird curriculum change in career development.

- Career development is a process learned throughout a person's lifetime. It needs to be taught from a developmental perspective, helping counseling students see that career development is lifelong, starting with life/work duties at home and progressing through the multiple life/work roles one encounters and experiences over the life span.
- The preparation program should be designed to facilitate the trainees' own career development by focusing on personal values, goals, and abilities.
- Career issues are to be presented as central in people's lives. Traditional and contemporary theories of career development and models of

career decision-making can help develop a level of understanding that can in turn help students enhance clients' career development. The curriculum should teach and demonstrate that good career counseling is very personal and has profound implications for improved mental health for many individuals—-that many mental health issues are career-related, and career issues often affect mental health (Herr, 1989).

• The global nature of career development and career guidance must be incorporated into the curriculum. Student awareness of international and cross-cultural career issues needs to be increased, including the impact of globalization on individual lives and on the workplace (Herr, 1997; Bemak & Hanna, 1998).

• Multicultural career counseling competencies are considered integral parts of the curriculum, including sociopolitical and historical influences and diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic class, disability, sexual orientation, age, beliefs, and geographic origin (AMCD, 1996; ASCA, 1997).

• Career development is contextual in nature. Contextual (not just intrapersonal) influences in career counseling and the meaning of these for clients must be a natural construct of career interventions (Fassinger, 1998).

• Professional supervision should provide ongoing feedback to students on their career development and career counseling awareness, knowledge, and skills so they may grow and change.

• Technology must be employed in a variety of ways for the purpose of teaching students how to evaluate and use information systems in career counseling; instructional focus should also attend to the potential promise and possible ethical issues of the internet in career counseling and career development (Harris-Bowlsbey & Lisansky, 1998).

• Career development instruction and supervision should be on the highest pedagogical caliber, including innovative and exciting strategies such as "Career as Story," "Mapping," "Integrative Thinking," "Sophie's Choice: A Values Sorting Activity," and "Career Checkup" (Pope & Minor, 2000).

• The career development curriculum should integrate/infuse career counseling and development into all areas of the counseling program, including individual counseling, group counseling, practica, seminars, assessment, and multicultural counseling.

• Career development professors should teach new models for career counseling, such as active engagement (Amundson, 1998); narrative-based career counseling (Cochran, 1997; Jepsen, 1997; Savickas, 1997); career

development of women (Fassinger, 1998; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Worell et al., 1994); spirituality and career development, (Bloch & Richmond, 1997, 1998); transition counseling (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995; Feller & Walz, 1996); holistic life planning (Hansen, 1997); SocioDynamic/Constructivist counseling (Peavy, 1994); multicultural career counseling (Sue & Sue, 1999; Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000); Positive Uncertainty (Gelatt, 1989); Planned Happenstance (Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz (1999).

• The career development curriculum should identify personal, professional, and policy issues in career counseling and development and train students to become professional social change advocates for clients.

• The curriculum should a) distinguish between labor market information and career information, putting less emphasis on occupational information and more on the process of career planning and decision-making; b) teach models of transition, decision-making, and coping over the life span, especially related to career.

• The counselor preparation program should a) collaborate with state departments, other colleges, business, government, and community agencies to identify service learning sites, practicum sites, and multicultural sites for career counseling; b) provide in-service training for teachers and practitioners to assist them in implementing preventive, developmental career guidance and career development programs and recommend resources to help them keep up to date (Gysbers & Henderson, 2000; National Career Development Guidelines, NOICC, 1997); and c) encourage both master's and doctoral students to conduct qualitative and quantitative research, co-author articles, and make conference presentations on career issues and topics.

**Career As Story**

The ACES/NCDA Commission has developed a videotape on "Career as Story" which can be used with colleagues or in training students. The video emerged out of discussions at our first Commission meeting when each member shared portions of his or her career story. The stories were so moving that we decided this was one (and *only* one) technique we would like to highlight to assist counselor educators and provide a tool for them to use in career counseling. Narrative approaches have been used in counseling for several years (White & Epston, 1990), but it is only recently that they have come to center stage in career counseling, through feminist psychology, multicultural traditions, and leaders in career counseling who are exploring and developing narrative approaches.

The video consists of a Native American counselor educator telling his story to a counseling psychologist. It was taped live at the 1999 ACES Conference in New Orleans and followed by an interactive exercise in which counselor educators and counseling students present shared a “chapter” of their story, and Commission members served as group facilitators. The video is a first in the ACES/NCDA commitment to including new career counseling methods in counselor education, and the amount of interest and excitement generated was encouraging.

The ACES/NCDA Commission presents this strategy to illustrate one of the many theory-based models and strategies available to counselor educators willing to cross the threshold of the new millennium with an open mind to the potentials of teaching career development in some new ways.

**Commission Recommendations for Counselor Educators**

Following are recommendations for counselor educators to implement in enhancing the career development skills, knowledge, and attitudes of counselors in training.

1) Recognize that changing contexts and clients, society, and the profession require career development to be more central in counselor preparation.

2) Teach the best of both congruence models of vocational matching and the broad theory of life span career development and life roles.

3) Pursue professional development for self and students to be updated on emerging career development theory, research, and practice, as well as add to new knowledge in the field through both qualitative and quantitative research on all aspects of career development and career counseling. Create opportunities for students to present on career issues at professional conferences, author or co-author publications, and select career topics for dissertations.

4) Teach the connection between career development and multicultural counseling and emphasize the need to understand one’s own ethnicity and biases as well as concepts (e.g., culture-centered counseling, racial and ethnic identity, multicultural sensitivity, unintentional racism, white privilege, and the like}. Teach the importance of unique career issues of specific populations, for example, career needs of re-entry women, victims of abuse, males and females, gays and lesbians, persons with disabilities, the homeless, unemployed youth, and older adults.

5) Help trainees understand links among and between career and personal counseling, career and mental health issues, and integrating work and other life roles. (Issues such as downsizing, work/family balance, racial and

sexual discrimination, and workplace stress and adjustment often are very personal).

6) Recognize clients' needs for holistic counseling and counselor assistance in exploring such issues as meaning, purpose, and spirituality in relation to life roles and career decisions. Consider the multiple ways in which career as story can be used to promote career development.

7) Seek professional development in the use of computers and the internet in career guidance and counseling in order to prepare counseling students in effective use of technology.

8) Determine that career development courses, including practicum, are taught by counselor educators experienced in career development and familiar with the latest theory, research, and practice.

9) Be thoroughly familiar with and teach competencies identified by CACREP, NCDA, AMCD, ASCA, and other relevant professional organizations.

10) Examine both the career content and process of the training program and assure that the best methods and strategies are being used. Use principles of systems theory and organizational change to infuse and integrate career development into all aspects of the counselor education program (Patton & McMahon, 1999).

## Conclusion

Vocational guidance/career development has grown and changed. It has moved from emphasis only on fitting persons into the labor market to career development over the life span; from focus only on individualism to emphasis on collectivism, context, and diversity; from remedial to preventive approaches and from medical models to positive human development and psychology; from focus only on objective approaches to knowledge to subjective, qualitative ways of knowing; from compartmentalizing human beings to helping them become whole persons by integrating the totality of their many life roles and experiences.

While undoubtedly some counselor education programs have changed with the times, there is still much to be done, especially in the areas of social justice, interpersonal relationships, diversity, ecology, and global perspectives. These issues are at the heart of counseling and also at the heart of career development and career decision-making, for many of the issues relate to one another. Through strengthening the career development component, counselor education may indeed provide leadership for advancing counseling across cultures in a dynamic society. We hope that this paper will serve as a stimulus for counselor educators to examine where they are in this process and take appropriate steps to better meet the needs of

students and clients for broader, more integrated, more effective career counseling in the new century.

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