

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A Framework for Linking Career Theory and Practice

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THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES a framework designed to strengthen the connection between theory and practice as well as to ease the transaction between researchers and counselors. Before describing the framework, the chapter presents the rationale for the framework and a personal story about how it evolved. The initial part of the chapter also considers why counselors and researchers might benefit from schema that coordinate the application of theory to practice. The middle section of the chapter describes a framework that systematically organizes the association among career theories, problems presented by clients, and career services. The chapter then concludes with a discussion of how the framework might stimulate and facilitate research on career intervention and advance a science of practice.

RECIPROCITIES BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

In everyday life, the world presents itself to individuals as problems to be solved. This statement is doubly true in the consulting room where a counselor faces the problem of how to best address a client's problem. In working as problem-solving consultants, counselors encounter daily the professional problem of deciding which theory and intervention to use with which clients. For example, when clients seek help in choosing a college major, counselors may address that concern by using the trait-and-factor model and its associated methods and materials. In this instance, the model may sufficiently address the problem. However, all too often, a client's problem does not align with available career theories as well as it does in this

example. A counselor's favorite theory may not address some problems or only partially address them. Career theories do not comprehensively address all the problems that clients present because career theorists designed their models to be partial, or, to use Super's (1969, pp. 8–9) word, *segmental*. Career theorists specify which problems they seek to address and then construct a theory to comprehend those problems. For example, Super (1990) used developmental theory and longitudinal methods to study intrapersonal differences in career decision-making processes at two or more points in time, whereas Holland (1985) used person-environment fit theory and cross-sectional methods to study interpersonal differences in personality traits between two or more individuals. Neither Super nor Holland ignored the time or trait dimensions in vocational behavior; rather they each emphasized one over the other.

Theorists not only devise their conceptual models to address circumscribed problems, they also select a particular epistemology and a disciplinary stance that shapes what they can know about those problems. Consequently, even when theories address the same problem, theories are not univocal. Because theorists view the problem from different standpoints, they see distinct aspects of the problem and thus prescribe interventions targeted for the aspect that their viewpoint accentuates. Thus, problems in making a career choice can be conceptualized from the perspective of career maturity, career decision making, and vocational identity. Each of these perspectives on the choice problem stems from different epistemologies and disciplines. For example, viewing choice problems as immaturity follows from a developmental psychology perspective and leads to educational interventions that foster more adaptive attitudes and competencies for career choice. In contrast, viewing choice problems as decision-making difficulties follows from an adjustment psychology perspective and leads to interventions that reduce anxiety or conflict prompted by the choices under consideration. Viewing choice problems as identity issues follows from a personality psychology perspective and leads to psychosocial interventions that foster personal development. Of course, taking all three perspectives on the choice problem deepens the counselor's understanding of the client's situation and leads to more comprehensive and effective intervention.

Theorists' preferences for epistemic and disciplinary stances shape how they address the question, What can we know about a problem? Few counselors are concerned with this knowledge question. Instead, counselors concentrate on a different question, namely, What should the client do about the problem? The answer to the theorists' knowledge question rests in abstract principles and objective knowledge. The answer to the counselor's action question rests in subjective understanding of a unique client in a particular situation. Of course, whenever possible, counselors use objective knowledge and theory to conceptualize the client's subjective experience. However, all too often, theory only addresses part of the client's complex problem. Thus, to fully understand each client and what to do to assist that client, counselors must draw from their own experience and practical knowledge. Whereas theory can be partial, practice must be holistic.

Clients who present career problems cannot isolate their career problems from their other life issues. This leads to the question addressed by Gottfredson in this volume. How do counselors apply theories that are partial and simple to clients who are whole and complex?

LINKING CAREER THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE PRIVATE LOGIC OF COUNSELORS

In general, the most salient issue at the center of the theory-practice nexus seems to focus on how counselors decide what to do. Particular questions that stem from this issue include the following: Which theories do counselors use with whom? How do counselors turn objective theory into subjective understanding? Which techniques work best with which clients? How can counselors communicate practice knowledge to theorists?

Such questions are best studied by working with counselors who have an extensive repertoire of theory-based techniques and vary the interventions they use to suit client needs and styles. By this, I mean to exclude counselors who rely on one theory and its associated techniques. These "unitheoretical" counselors commit themselves to a singular perspective rooted in one theoretical model. For example, at the beginning of my career, I adhered to the trait-and-factor model and assigned a standard battery of tests to all new career clients before meeting with them for the first time. Counseling then consisted of a session in which I interpreted the test results, followed by a second session in which the client would make choices and plans. Counselors who adhere to a single perspective make no choices about which techniques to employ with a new client because each client receives the same basic service. This approach is not taken just by adherents to the trait-and-factor model. I have seen some career counselors rigidly use the singular perspective associated with person-centered, social cognitive, and Adlerian counseling models and methods.

Answers to questions concerning theory-practice linkages might be better directed to counselors who take multiple perspectives on clients' presenting problems. These counselors use technical eclecticism as they draw on several career theories to conceptualize a career case and possess a diverse repertoire of intervention techniques associated with different theories. When these counselors encounter a new client, they match their available theories and techniques to the needs of that client. In effect, these counselors answer, for each new client, a critical question first stated by Williamson and Bordin (1941): "What counseling techniques (and conditions) will produce what types of results with what types of students?" (p. 8). I have often wondered what private rules these counselors follow in choosing which procedures to use with whom. Studying how practitioners apply theory seems to be a high priority for those who wish to better coordinate theory and practice, to the enrichment of both.

The next section of this chapter offers one response to the question of how counselors decide what to do with each client. I try to answer the question by presenting a framework that links career theories, client problems, and counseling interventions. The framework emerged from 20 years of counseling experience and conversations with colleagues. It seeks to bridge the current gap between theory and practice in a useful, commonsense manner. Metaphorically, I view the framework as a toolbox that organizes the most common career problems and relevant career interventions in discrete compartments bounded by separate career theories. I hope the framework will be useful to practitioners in guiding and increasing the application of theoretical models, methods, and materials.

HOW THE FRAMEWORK EMERGED

My practice has always informed my understanding of existing theory. My first interest in theory came from desperation. When I was completing my training as a school psychologist, the director of the university's counseling center offered me a position as a counselor. In reporting to work for the first time, I entered the counseling center behind a student who asked the receptionist for an appointment to discuss his career. The director joined us in the foyer, said hello to the student, and then said to me, "Here is your first appointment." As a school psychology trainee, I knew nothing about career intervention. The director quickly taught me how to do trait-and-factor guidance. He was a past master of the model and its methods. I tried to emulate his counseling style and strategies. Half of the time, I seemed to succeed. In those instances, my clients were happy and referred their friends to me. However, half the time I failed. Thus, in striving to improve, I did what Holland (this volume) often suggests—I read a book. The book was *Vocational Psychology: The Study of Vocational Behavior and Development* by John Crites (1969). It taught me about the content and process of vocational development and instructed me in the effort to develop career choice readiness by helping clients to learn and use attitudes and competencies for planning, exploring, and deciding. These methods helped with clients who had previously remained undecided or unrealistic after completing trait-and-factor guidance with me. My work improved. Now I was useful to two-thirds of my clients, or even three-fourths, in a good week. Nevertheless, I was still frustrated. I wondered why my attempts to develop career choice readiness worked so well with some clients yet were ineffective with other clients. How could I help clients who were indecisive, not just undecided, prepare to decide?

In my search for an answer, I looked to psychodynamic theory. Ed Watkins (1984) and David Blustein and his associates (Blustein, Devenis, & Kidney, 1989) taught me about the psychodynamics of career development and the importance of identity and life scripts. The work of Audrey Collin and Richard Young (1986) and

David Jepsen (1992) on action theory, hermeneutics, and the narrative paradigm taught me how individuals construct their identities and write their scripts. Again, my work improved. It got even better when I learned about null environments, contextual affordances, and cultural embeddedness from Nancy Betz (1989), Arnold Spokane (1991), and Fred Vondracek (1990).

So that was my journey: from objective vocational guidance to developmental career education to subjective career counseling to enabling a client to cope with the opportunity structure and cultural barriers. Toward the end, I finally understood what a prominent colleague meant when she told me the shocking news that she no longer did career counseling. Instead, each of her clients receives brief therapy that includes attention to career concerns embedded in the constellation of their life roles.

During my journey, I never realized that I was a fanatic. I had become a fan of each new theory that I learned. As I traveled on my long journey toward becoming a useful career counselor, I had become increasingly theory-rich and action-poor. How could I turn my empirical knowledge and interpretive understanding loose in a consulting room? I eventually figured out that my infatuation with each new theory that I learned had, in succession, trapped me in a singular perspective provided by the standpoint of that theory.

In the end, I returned to what my colleague had said about brief therapy. Brief therapy requires that a counselor adopt multiple perspectives from which to view a client's career concerns and respond with a technical eclecticism that matches client needs with appropriate interventions. In other words, I sought to learn to use theories and their associated techniques as they were meant to be used. Each theory addresses a circumscribed problem; trying to apply it outside of its range of convenience frustrates both the client and the counselor.

To orchestrate the theories and techniques in a manner that eases the theory-practice exchange, I designed a framework for career services. The framework makes me more systematic in applying technical eclecticism as well as allows me to understand how each client whom I counsel teaches me something about theory and teaches my theories something about practice. I have used the framework as a matrix, such as the one suggested by Herr (this volume), to connect my practice-knowledge to the career development needs expressed by particular types of clients. I believe that the framework responds, at least in part, to Gottfredson's (this volume) suggestion that we strengthen the linkages between theory and practice by drawing a schematic map that shows how to better use segments of existing career theories to address specific practical problems. Eventually, the framework may lead to systematic protocols of micropractices for particular populations as suggested by Lucas (this volume). For now, the framework forces me to consider each client from the multiple perspectives of the object, the subject, the context, and their reciprocal interaction. The framework sometimes even helps me to navigate the troubled waters of the scientist-practitioner stream in professional psychology.

A FRAMEWORK FOR CAREER SERVICES

In simple terms, the framework for career services adapts Wagner's (1971) theory of structural analysis of personality to the domain of vocational psychology. Wagner constructed structural analysis as a practical means to relate psychodynamic personality theory to the clinical use of intelligence tests, projective techniques, and personality inventories.

Wagner's theory of structural analysis uses three basic constructs to map personality: *facade self*, *introspective self*, and *drives*. Developmentally, the facade self emerges first, in response to environmental stimuli, as a means of adapting to social demands. The facade self, simply stated, consists of behavioral tendencies and problem-solving skills. It reacts to the environment and maintains reality contact. The introspective self develops later when "the individual takes cognizance of his [or her] own functioning, achieves a sense of identity, and formulates a subjective set of ideals, goals, and self-appraisals" (Wagner, 1971, p. 424). The introspective self, simply stated, consists of self-concept and ideals. It provides for internal living and enlarges the sense of identity in the facade self. In the structural model, drives press on both the facade and introspective selves.

The facade and introspective units of structural analysis correspond to the objective and subjective perspectives. The facade is rational, analytic, and empirical. In contrast to the facade's logical functioning, the introspective self is psychological. It is the domain of complex purposes, consciousness, and agency. Counselors operationally define the facade with *scores* from objective measures such as interest inventories and understand the introspective self with *stories* from projective techniques or biographical narratives. Whereas the facade is logical and the introspective self is psychological, the environment is sociological. Individuals are always situated in some community; they act and feel relative to the situations in which they find themselves. The internal dialogues between the facade and introspective selves is a process dimension that consists of intrapersonal "self-talk." The other process dimension model in structural analysis is the interpersonal reciprocal interaction between the facade self and the community.

The structural analysis model, translated into the language of the vocational realm, organizes the multiple perspectives from which the practitioner might view a career client and helps the counselor to assess where, in the welter of complex stimuli presented by the client, the most useful intervention might be aimed.

Figure 1 shows the simple translation of the schemata into the language of worklife. The environment is portrayed as life roles and can be discussed in the language of Super's (1990) life-career rainbow model and construct of role salience. The facade is a vocational self that can be operationally defined by Holland's (1985) RIASEC adjustive orientations and behavioral repertoires. Viewing traits as unitary adaptive mechanisms also locates them in the facade self. The introspective self can be understood using Hughes' (1958) construct of subjective career and linguistically explained and operationally defined with variables such as "Adler's life-style"

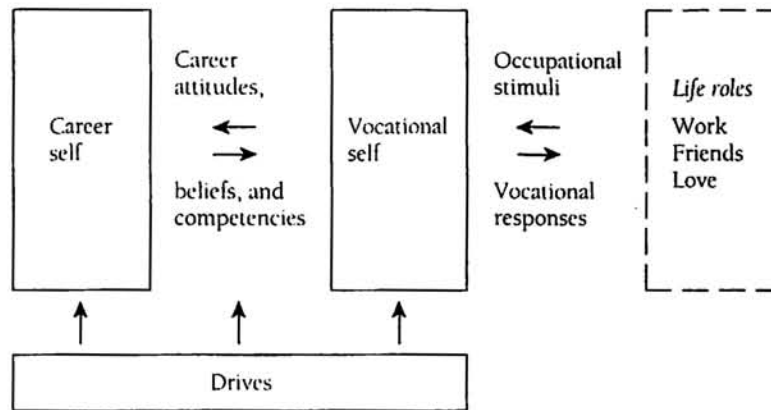


FIGURE 1 A Framework for Converging Career Theories

From "Convergence Prompts Theory Renovation, Research Unification, and Practice Coherence," by M. L. Savickas, 1994, in *Convergence in Career Development Theories*, M. L. Savickas & R. W. Lent, Eds. (p. 251), Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

(Watkins, 1984), Cochran's (1991) "narrative knowledge," Super's (1954) "career patterns," and Super's (1963) "self-concept." Drives have been largely ignored in vocational theory, with the notable exception of Bordin's (1990) important work and measures such as the *Vocational Apperception Test* (Ammons, Butler, & Herzog, 1950) and card sorts (Slaney & MacKinnon-Slaney, 1990).

The process dimensions in the framework can be comprehended using Krumboltz's (1979) social learning theory. For example, the interaction between the vocational self and environment lends itself to stimulus-response language and to Bandura's (1978) ideas about reciprocal determinism. The self-reflective structure called *career* engages in self-observation generalizations and can be operationally defined with the *Career Maturity Inventory* (Crites, 1978), *Career Beliefs Inventory* (Krumboltz, 1988), and *Career Development Inventory* (Super, Thompson, Lindeman, Joordan, & Myers, 1981).

CONTENT OF THE FRAMEWORK: PROBLEMS AND INTERVENTIONS

Each segment of the framework can be delineated by the types of problem and interventions it houses. A review of career decision-making scales and career maturity inventories identifies distinct types of problems that can be located at different places in the framework. The framework portrayed in Figure 2 shows six types of career questions that clients ask. The illustration links a particular career intervention to each question. The six types of career services are occupational

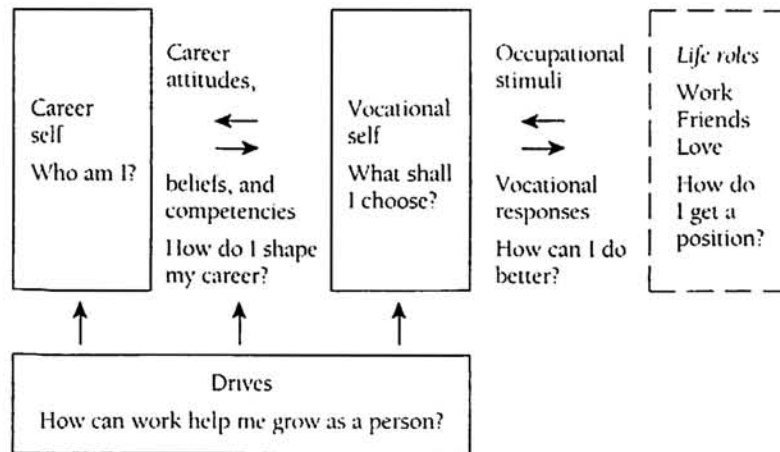


FIGURE 2 A Framework for Career Assessment and Intervention

Adapted from "Convergence Prompts: Theory Renovation, Research Unification, and Practice Coherence," by M. L. Savickas, 1994, in *Convergence in Career Development Theories*, M. L. Savickas & R. W. Lent, Eds. (p. 253), Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

placement, *vocational guidance*, *career counseling*, *career education*, *career therapy*, and *position coaching*. The following six sections explain, for each segment in the framework, the explicit question, implicit problem, relevant theory, and pertinent intervention.

Occupational Placement Addresses Problems in Starting a Career

How do I get a job? Clients ask this question when they know the occupation in which they want to work and seek help in securing a job in that occupation. This question and the problems inherent in it are located in the "Life roles" segment of the framework because they concern the world of work and behavior in it. Individuals who have made a choice and committed themselves to implementing it benefit from assistance in planning and achieving the chosen position. Placement interventions emphasize skill training and concentrate on helping clients gather information, write résumés, network, search for opportunities, and prepare for interviews. Placement interventions may be directed to reduce job search anxiety, increase assertiveness, counter mistaken beliefs, encourage exploratory behavior, increase social skills, and refine self-presentation behavior. Placement need not deal only with occupations; it can also concentrate on helping clients secure an educational position such as a seat in graduate, professional, or technical school. Relevant theoretical models and placement methods are described in Herr, Rayman, and Garis (1993), Shingleton and Fitzpatrick (1985), and Stevens (1973).

Vocational Guidance Addresses Problems in Making Career Choices

What shall I choose? Clients ask this question when they possess a clear vocational identity and want help in translating that identity into occupational alternatives. This question and the problems inherent in it are located in the "Vocational self" segment of the framework because they concern the individual's coping repertoire. Individuals who can clearly articulate their vocational identity benefit from assistance in translating that identity into matching occupations. Starishevsky and Matlin's (1963) article about translating self-talk into occupation talk captures the essence of the guidance as a translation service. Guidance interventions emphasize translation of self-concepts into congruent occupations and concentrate on helping clients identify and explore possible matches between the self-concept and jobs. Guidance helps clients to articulate their vocational identities by discussing interests and abilities. It also increases the number of fitting options that the individual explores. Guidance interventions include administering and interpreting interest inventories and ability tests, providing educational and vocational information, prompting exploratory behavior, and identifying career fields for consideration. Relevant theoretical models and guidance methods are described by Holland (1985), Katz (1993), Lofquist and Dawis (1991), and Swanson (this volume).

Career Counseling Addresses Problems in Self-Conception

Who am I? Clients ask this question when they cannot yet articulate their self-concepts and want help in exploring who they are and what life goals they should pursue. This question and the problems inherent in it are located in the "Career self" segment of the framework because they deal with self-awareness and values. Individuals who cannot yet recognize and label the themes in their lives benefit from assistance in reflecting on patterns in their life stories. Career counseling interventions emphasize self-exploration and concentrate on helping clients to clarify their values and examine existential issues. The interventions include self-exploration and values clarification techniques that concentrate on heightening self-awareness and increasing self-esteem. The interventions prompt clients to elaborate their self-concepts through introspection. Relevant theoretical models and counseling methods are described by Brown and Brooks (1991), Lent (this volume), Savickas (1989), and Super (1954).

Career Education Addresses Problems in Developing a Career

How do I shape my career? Clients ask this question when they are disoriented and confused about their careers and want help in understanding and dealing with vocational developmental tasks. This question and the problems inherent in it are

located in the arrows between the "Career self" and "Vocational self" segments of the framework shown in Figure 2 because they deal with career attitudes, beliefs, and competencies. Individuals who live in the moment without regard to imposing their own will on the future benefit from assistance in learning how to shape their destinies. Educational interventions emphasize self-control and concentrate on helping clients to develop adaptive attitudes toward and competencies for designing and managing their own careers. Career education interventions strengthen agentic attitudes, self-efficacy beliefs, and decision-making competencies. The actual interventions rely on deliberate psychological education and developmental counseling techniques that orient individuals to developmental tasks and foster the attitudes and competencies that lead to task mastery. Relevant theoretical models and career education methods are described by Blocher (1974), Hoyt (1975), Ivey (1986), and Super (1974).

Career Therapy Addresses Personal Problems

How can work help me grow as a person? Clients ask this question when they experience significant problems in formulating an integrated and coherent self-concept and want help to overcome barriers and thwart conditions that frustrate gratification of needs. This question and the problems inherent in it are located in the "Drives" segment of the framework because they deal with the need to feel more secure. Individuals who have been discouraged by their life experiences benefit from assistance in modifying their prototypical reactions to situations. Career therapy works best with clients whose excessive indecisiveness, anxiety, and conflicts thwart their efforts to form a coherent self-concept and adaptive lifestyle. Therapeutic interventions help clients to work through traumatic experiences, increase their sense of self-worth, and cope with problematic situations and significant others. Relevant theoretical models and career therapy methods are described by Blustein (1987), Blustein and Spengler (1995), Meara and Patton (1994), Richardson (this volume), and Subich (1993).

Position Coaching Addresses Problems of Adaptation

How can I do better? Clients ask this question when they encounter problems in meeting the demands of the educational or vocational position that they occupy. This question and its inherent problems are located in the arrows between the "Vocational self" and "Life roles" because they deal with adaptation to life roles. Individuals who want to increase their success in and satisfaction with their work roles benefit from assistance in strategizing how to get ahead and get along. Position coaching interventions emphasize adaptations that improve the fit between the self and position by helping clients deal with the organizational culture, position requirements, and co-workers. Coaching assists these individuals to clarify the problem, identify pertinent attitudes and behaviors that address the problem, and

then rehearse and implement these new attitudes and behaviors. Relevant theoretical models and position coaching methods are described by Carden (1990), Crites (this volume), Dix and Savickas (1995), Hall (1987), Lofquist and Dawis (1969), and Savickas (1991).

APPLICATION OF THE FRAMEWORK

In performing an intake interview with a new client, I use the framework to systematically assess the client's career problem and consider what the client might do about it. Assessment differs from measurement. Career tests and inventories gather data with which to measure client traits that contribute to the presenting problem. The results of measurement locate the client on a normal distribution of people who vary on the trait being measured. In this manner, tests and inventories generally provide objective details about the problem. In contrast, assessment reveals the problem itself because assessment focuses on problem identification and problem solving. The point is that assessment of a problem should generally precede measurement of a problem. Before administering career inventories and tests, counselors should assess the problem about which they want to collect in-depth data, then administer the specific inventories and tests that measure that problem.

My assessment of a client's problem involves a short series of branching decisions. I begin with the main branch of determining whether the client is ready for vocational guidance or not. Functionally, this branching decision forces me to concentrate on the individual's vocational identity. If clients can state their interests, abilities, values, and life goals, then they are ready to translate that vocational identity into occupational possibilities. If they have a diffused or confused sense of vocational identity, then I turn my attention to understanding why they cannot coherently articulate their life themes and central projects.

After the primary branching decision, a secondary branching decision is made. If the primary decision was to concentrate on the causes of a diffuse identity, then the counselor must assess whether identity formation is thwarted by problems in (a) self-conception and meaning making, (b) delayed development of career coping attitudes and competencies, or (c) motivational distortions. In approaching this secondary branching decision, the counselor addresses issues of self-concept and values by asking clients to answer the *Who am I?* question and to tell stories about how their problem started. If their responses are appropriately coherent, consistent, and complex, the counselor concentrates attention on the maturity of attitudes and competencies for career choice and adaptation (i.e., the arrows between the "Career self" and "Vocational self" in Figure 2). If their responses are fragmented, disjointed, and simplistic, then the counselor explores the issue of anxiety and conflict ("Drives" segment of the model) to see if career therapy must deal with motivational distortions before proceeding to career counseling about self-concept issues. If the motivation problem seems to require motivation management, then the counselor

can deal with the indecisiveness, anxiety, and conflict by using career therapy techniques. However, if the motivation problem seems to require motivation modification, then psychotherapy may be indicated. Assessing the problem as career misconceptions, self-concept development, or motivational distortion implicitly prescribes certain categories of intervention as noted herein. The counselor can use career education to change beliefs, career counseling to clarify self-concept, or career therapy to manage motivation.

If the primary branching decision was that the client possesses a clear and stable vocational identity, the issue now is one of person-environment fit. Accordingly, the secondary branching decision focuses on identifying the client's current problem in implementing the vocational identity in the social environment. In approaching this secondary branching decision, the counselor addresses issues of environmental demands and social situation by asking clients to answer the question, How am I doing in my current position? Client responses generally reveal whether they are encountering problems of educational/vocational choice, transition, or establishment. If their responses indicate that they want to stay in their current school or work position, then the counselor examines issues of how clients can do better (e.g., stabilize, consolidate, advance, maintain) in the position that they already occupy. If their responses indicate that they wish to change positions, then the counselor must determine whether they have chosen a new position. If they have not, then the counselor assesses what they can do to explore and choose a new position. If their responses indicate that they have already chosen a new position, then the counselor assesses what they will do to secure that position. Assessing the problem as choosing a new position, securing a new position, or improving performance in the current position implicitly prescribes certain categories of intervention as noted herein. The counselor can use guidance to predict fit, placement techniques to secure fit, or coaching techniques to improve fit.

Having identified the problem, the counselor can begin to conceptualize it by selecting a theory that speaks directly to the client's problem. That theory will almost automatically indicate general intervention strategies that address the problem. To devise a specific treatment plan, at this point, the counselor can assign tests and inventories to gather measurement data about the specific problem to be addressed. Each theory uses particular inventories and tests to operationally define the problems it addresses. Gathering measurements and more information about the client's problem is typically quite useful in formulating a specific treatment plan. For example, if the problem seems to be one of career attitudes, beliefs, and competencies, then the counselor might measure the problem by assigning inventories such as the *Career Development Inventory* (Super, Thompson, Lindeman, Joordan, & Myers, 1981), the *Career Maturity Inventory* (Crites, 1978), and the *Career Beliefs Inventory* (Krumboltz, 1988). If the problem seems to be one of choosing a fitting position, then the counselor might measure dimensions of fit by assigning the *Self-Directed Search* (Holland, 1985) or the *Strong Interest Inventory* (Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, & Hammer, 1994). In short, each theory uses distinct measurement tools

to clarify the problem. Thus, counselors are well advised to use measures constructed to operationally define the theory that they employ to conceptualize a client's problem.

APPLYING PRACTICE TO THEORY

The model for career services presented in this chapter eases the exchange between career theory and practice. The framework was designed to systematize and enhance the interaction between theory and practice in the daily work of practitioners who assess and counsel diverse clients presenting career concerns. It provides a single, unified schema that counselors can use to (a) assess client career concerns, (b) identify the career theory that best comprehends those concerns, (c) select inventories and tests designed to measure and clarify those concerns, and (d) apply intervention strategies devised to resolve those concerns.

Because the framework organizes various theoretical perspectives on assessment and intervention, the framework may be useful in addressing Williamson and Bordin's (1941, p. 8) question: "What counseling techniques (and conditions) will produce what types of results with what types of students?" Counselors could systematically address this question using the framework and then incorporate the resulting practice knowledge back into segments of the framework. The goal would be to use the framework to map career problems (Gottfredson, this volume; Herr, this volume) and then develop protocols for effective intervention with particular populations. This effort might coalesce into validated micropractices that coincide with major segments of the framework. In this manner, the framework for applying career theory to practice may be used to apply practice to theory.

Lucas (this volume) speaks to this process of applying practice to theory when she suggests that counselors systematically collect case studies linked to major career theories and then use the cases to develop counseling models or minitheories that specify "treatment protocols for frequently encountered career problems in specific populations." To develop this practice knowledge, counselors and theorists might begin with practice particulars, not theoretical abstractions. They could follow Lucas' suggestion to use case studies as units of knowledge production. Case studies allow career researchers to isolate change mechanisms specific to a precise technique in a particular dyad (Kirschner, Hoffman, & Hill, 1994). By examining a similar series of clinical cases, counselors and researchers could identify need-to-know concepts and basic science issues. These theoretical issues could be addressed, one hopes, ignoring traditional theoretical and disciplinary boundaries, by formulating micropractice (theory-based strategies) protocols for particular populations. The resulting micropractice could then be placed in the appropriate segments of the framework. Such an approach would continue to use science as the cornerstone of theory and practice, but it would begin with issues generated from

clinical cases, use multiple epistemic perspectives to examine the issues, and validate micropractices that resolve the issues for particular populations. Beginning research with clinical cases would allow counselors to return to their roots in the philosophies of pragmatism and functionalism as well as use social constructionism to broaden their epistemic perspectives beyond the vantage point of logical positivism (Savickas, 1995). For example, case study research from a constructivist perspective might use Cochran's (1990) "dramaturgical phenomenology" to identify and frame basic issues. Cochran has suggested that researchers and practitioners could construct a common narrative from the study of a group of individuals who have experienced a single career phenomenon such as indecision. The resulting narrative would certainly identify important issues and themes and possibly suggest micropractices that address them.

This clinical case approach to building a science of career intervention would also elaborate the meaning of existing career theories. Counselors create the meaning of a theory and its best beliefs when they use a theory with particular sets of clients. The use of a theory shows, or makes visible through application, the strengths and weaknesses of that theory. In particular, application of a theory reveals its oversights and flaws. In addressing these omissions, as they must do when they assist clients with complex problems, counselors elaborate and improve the theory. What counselors do when they practice shapes what researchers can know because activity structures meaning.

One example of work on micropractices and applying practice to theory is the research conducted in the late 1970s by Osipow and his colleagues. They devised a typology of career clients based on actual cases seen by Osipow while working as a counselor at Pennsylvania State University and a professor at Ohio State University. After reflecting on clients' presenting problems, Osipow and his colleagues were able to operationally define a typology of undecided students (particular populations, to use Lucas' term) and then conceptualize highly pertinent interventions (minitheories) for each type (Osipow, Winer, Koschier, & Yanico, 1975). Through this grounded research, they were able to produce a popular assessment instrument, the *Career Decision Scale* (CDS; Osipow, Carney, Winer, Yanico, & Koschier, 1976), that is quite useful in career counseling and has prompted a great deal of research on matching clients to interventions. Interestingly, in the context of this book, researchers and theorists, but not counselors, have repeatedly criticized the CDS for its atheoretical origins, complex items, and puzzling factor structure (cf. Slaney, 1988). Theory is partial, practice is holistic. The use of *inclusive types* in the CDS items was an excellent way to systematically reflect the wholism, complexity, and particularity that comprises practice. Critics of the CDS sometimes miss this point when they assert that the CDS should meet the criteria established for measures of *isolated traits* (Savickas & Jarjoura, 1991). These criteria decontextualize traits from situations to form generalizable, abstract principles of behavior. Clearly, following Lucas' suggestion about how to apply career counseling practice to theory requires more case study research such as that conducted by Osipow and his colleagues.

CONCLUSION

The career field is currently on the brink of a battle between theory and practice. Such battles can escalate into wars, as we have seen in the competition between the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society. To avoid a similar misdirection of energy and resources by vocational psychologists and career counselors, we must stop choosing between theory and practice and begin the search for a higher synthesis. The tension between theory and practice is precisely the starting point for such a synthesis, a synthesis that could result in a science of career intervention that integrates practice knowledge with theoretical models and research findings. Sooner or later, the field must link questions rooted in theory, such as What can we know? and How can we know it? with questions rooted in practice, such as What should we do? How do we know that it works? and Can we do it better? Starting to address these questions as a group by using schemas such as the framework presented in this chapter may lead to a science of practice.

Career counselors, theorists, and researchers must work together to meet the enormous challenge of bridging the gap between objective knowledge and subjective understanding to make possible a science of career intervention. It is a substantial challenge to create a systematic science of intervention, especially one that benefits clients. Nevertheless, this is precisely the challenge that practitioners and researchers must meet if they are to advance the field beyond its present accomplishments and refurbish vocational psychology and career counseling for the 21st century.

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