The Internationalization of Educational and Vocational Guidance

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The authors identify and discuss the main themes from the discourse on the internationalization of educational and vocational guidance at the 2004 Symposium on International Perspectives on Career Development, cosponsored by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance and the National Career Development Association. Participants from 46 countries discussed international perspectives on and comparative features of educational and vocational guidance. They concentrated on issues of designing and adapting models, methods, and materials for career education and counseling. Three additional themes revolved around the importance of public policy initiatives, training enough practitioners to meet the growing international need for career services, and the promise of information technology for expanding the delivery of educational and vocational guidance and for supporting career counselors.

Globalization of the world's economies is causing diverse cultures to become more alike through trade, immigration, and the exchange of information and ideas. It is also changing the way the world works. Today, individuals around the world are experiencing a transformation in forms of work, the social organization of occupations, and the personal experience of careers (Herr, Cramer, & Niles, 2004). This break with past practices in the work world has been accelerated by rapid advances in information technology and the emergence of knowledge societies. In response, educational and vocational guidance practices in many countries are changing to better assist the world's workers adapt to their new situations. As occupational roles have become more alike in different countries, guidance practices in these countries have also become more similar. This growing similarity among guidance practices in many countries has made it possible to envision the internationalization of educational and vocational guidance. This international perspective may be evolving, in part, because more counselors are receiving their training abroad and more counselor educators are attending international conferences and studying abroad. Through the exchange of information and ideas in international journals, Web sites, and national conferences with

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international participants, the internationalization of guidance even touches counselors who choose to stay at home. Internationalization of guidance denotes the process of designing career interventions and services so that they can be adapted for local use in various languages, regions, and cultures. Internationalized applications of guidance interventions should be easily adapted to the customs and languages of users around the world. The localization of these practices, of course, requires the addition of local components, data, and sensitivities.

The internationalization of guidance differs from cross-cultural and multicultural approaches to guidance. A cross-cultural approach examines how cultural differences in developmental, social, and educational experiences affect both individual vocational behavior and career guidance practices. A multicultural approach seeks to transform guidance so that it critiques and addresses holistically current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in career services while advancing social justice and equity. We view cross-cultural guidance as comparing features between countries and multicultural guidance as comparing features within countries among diverse groups. In comparison, internationalization of guidance deals with the process of "globalocalization," which means importing general knowledge about work, workers, and careers and then adapting it to the local language, customs, and caring practices of each country (Savickas, 2003).

To promote the internationalization of guidance, the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance and the National Career Development Association cosponsored the 2004 symposium on International Perspectives on Career Development. The articles in this special issue report the contributions made by the participants at that symposium. The goal of the symposium was to initiate dialogue among specialists from 46 countries about international perspectives on public policy, resource commitments, theoretical models, delivery methods, deployment of practitioners, and intervention outcomes. The structure of the symposium relied on seven working groups who intermittently convened to hear an invited address or plenary session. Participants had to limit themselves to remaining in one discussion group for the duration of the 2-day meeting. This limitation meant that no single individual had a good overview of the contributions from all the groups. The lack of overview is redressed to some degree in this special issue, which makes available a summary of the contributions and concerns of each group. In addition, this special issue concludes with a summary of the summaries that identifies and discusses the main themes that emerged from the participants' perspectives on, thoughts about, and worries over the internationalization of educational and vocational guidance.

Certainly, as reported by Feller, Russell, and Whichard (2005), the symposium reflected the growing international interest in career development and planning programs. This is due, in part, to the globalization of economies that affects where work can be found and who has access to it. With the expansion of the global economy, an increasing number of world workers are seeking educational and vocational guidance for themselves and for their families. The symposium provided a forum for colleagues from 46 countries to discuss the current status and future possibilities for educational and vocational guidance around the globe. By design of the orga-

nizers of the symposium—Raoul Van Esbroeck and Edwin L. Herr (the second and third authors of this article)—the discussions were focused on general issues of international interest rather than on particular concerns within specific countries. Attention was focused on having guidance professionals from different countries engage in dialogue about mutual problems and how they might be addressed. Part of this sharing involved the exchange of models, methods, and materials for direct service delivery. In addition to issues of service delivery and professional practice, much discussion concentrated on the importance of public policy work. A third concern that drew much attention dealt with the training of practitioners to meet the growing international need for guidance services.

Counselor Shortages and Training Issues

One of the most significant issues raised by the participants in the symposium concerned the shortage of counselor training programs and professionally trained counseling staff to deliver career services to individuals who need them. Many countries that are developing their guidance services report that there is a serious shortage of trained counseling staff to meet the needs of their citizens (Watts, 2005). There appears to be a need for countries with highly developed training programs to share the expertise of their counselor educators and maybe even adopt a train-the-trainers approach to enlarge and improve the counselor training programs in countries where counselor training programs are just beginning. This training could be best provided by counselor educators taking up temporary residence in the countries they are serving. As discussed during the symposium, a model in which universities with advanced programs in counselor education and those with beginning counselor education programs form linkages might prove quite effective.

The shortage of career counselors, or maybe lack of counselors interested in careers work, is problematic even in countries with numerous well-developed counselor education programs, because these programs often include in their curriculum just a single course on career development and counseling (Hartung, 2005). In the United States, for example, counselor education programs, which once centered on vocational guidance, have marginalized career development training (Watts, 2005). A surprising number of counselor education programs do not have a faculty member with a specialty in career counseling; this results in the career course being taught by adjunct faculty or by 1st-year assistant professors. Even in the United States, a surprising number of counselor education programs have a single course at the master's-degree level and no course at the doctoral level. Part of the reason for the omission of career counseling from the mission of many counselor education programs seems to be that their students want to be "therapists," not career counselors. This accounts for the strong interest these program have in producing marriage and family counselors, psychotherapists, and mental health counselors. Practitioners in these specialties often do not value training in careers work.

To address this estrangement between counselor educators and career counselors, the National Career Development Association and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision have formed a joint commission.

Despite the efforts of this commission, led by Sunny Hansen and Dennis W. Engels, at this point in time, training in the techniques and tools of career counseling appears to be in incipient decline in the academy. Because the need for career counseling in the United States is not declining, a new discipline has grown to provide career services, namely career coaching. Another response to the need for career services is cybercounseling. Career coaching and cybercounseling have emerged as new occupations in the opening created by the gap between the societal need for career services and the disinterest of the counseling profession at large. Hansen (2003), among others, has lamented the "deprofessionalization" of the career counseling field caused by the anyone can do it mentality of "substitute practitioners" such as career coaches and cybercounselors.

The Promise of Information Technology

Given the shortage of trained counselors, some individuals and countries look to technology to fill the gap (Watts, 2005). They perceive a need to maximize technology's potential to serve an ever-expanding set of career development needs (Feller et al., 2005). Although technology certainly has the potential to be a great aid, the greatest disparity in career service delivery among the countries participating in the symposium concerns access to information technology, such as the Internet, CD-ROM, and computer-based career guidance programs. Many of the participants reported that the citizens in their countries had limited access to information technology (Hartung, 2005).

In countries where access is widely available, Harris-Bowlsbey and Sampson (2005) pointed out that hardware is advancing more quickly than the conceptual applications of it in educational and vocational guidance. Wireless delivery, broadband, and handheld devices make it possible to deliver career information or guidance at a place and time that meets the needs of diverse clients. Advances in the conceptual foundations laid by past and present systems suggest that in the future career decision makers will have ongoing access to records in which they have stored personal information, assessment results, educational portfolios, work histories, occupational databases, decision-making algorithms, and motivating audio/video programs. As one example, Richard (2004) and his colleagues at the Association of American Medical Colleges have already implemented just such a system. Starting with the 1st year of medical school and running throughout their career as physicians, doctors will have available on the Careers in Medicine Web site a personal cumulative record of their career assessment results, educational portfolio, work history, and occupational information.

Another exciting application of information technology to careers work is being developed by Bimrose, Hughes, and Brown (2004) in England. They are constructing Web sites that support career counselors. In due course, career counselors will have available Web sites that provide access to labor market information, educational and training information, research-driven guidelines about best practices, guidance materials, continuing education programs, and moderated forums for discussing current issues.

Although there is growing excitement about the application of information technology to career service delivery, some participants urged cau-

tion because several ethical issues arise when using the Internet to deliver computer-based career guidance and counseling (Harris-Bowlsbey & Sampson, 2005). In particular, there is concern about the quality of the assessment and information resources provided on some Web sites as well as about the quality of services provided at a distance by practitioners with limited awareness of local conditions, events, and cultural issues. Although there was extensive discussion of the issues of both counselor training and the use of information technology, by far the most widely discussed issues dealt with the models, methods, and materials for providing educational and vocational guidance.

Internationalization of Guidance Theories, Techniques, and Tools

A major topic was the export and import of career counseling models, materials, and methods. At issue was the appropriateness of adapting theories, techniques, and tools constructed for use in one cultural context for use in a different cultural context. When a country begins its investment in providing vocational guidance, the early practitioners often import and then adapt the models, methods, and materials that they have seen used successfully in other countries. While these adaptations are useful, they have limitations. So, in due course, the practitioners begin to design and develop indigenous tools and techniques that better suit their culture and express their preferred ways of providing help to others.

Many of the participants in the symposium agreed that the major international challenge in this regard is to bring forward what has meaning beyond their immediate settings and is common across cultures (Guichard & Lenz, 2005). This often means that counselors in different countries use the same constructs but that they develop local linguistic explications and operational definitions of those constructs. For example, some counselors have imported the Career Maturity Inventory (Crites & Savickas, 1996) and found it to be useful in their country yet not as useful as they had hoped it would be. Rather than rejecting the construct of career choice readiness because the Career Maturity Inventory did not work as well for them, they refine the construct of career choice readiness in ways suited to their context and then devise inventories and tests to measure their new definition of the construct. Savickas (2003) referred to this process as "globalocalization." Constructs such as readiness, interests, and abilities usually are relevant, but counselors must apply them with culturally sensitive measures and materials. After adapting general knowledge from other countries, it seems that counselors in many countries that are just now originating career services then develop new and innovative models based on their own experience.

Theories

The need for new models, methods, and materials probably originates in the diversity of societal questions that have progressively emerged in the field of career development and self-construction. Consideration of epistemic issues has prompted the adoption of new ways of viewing old problems. Sometimes the problems look quite different through the lenses of constructivism, action theory, and systems theory than they do through

the lens of logical positivism. This new look has prompted emphasis on context and cultural diversity, including both cross-cultural and multicultural concerns. It has also prompted a move away from grand theories and metanarratives to more specific models and local knowledge. In response, new models for educational and vocational guidance have emerged. Newer models discussed at the symposium included action theory, self-construction model, transition model, dynamics of entering the workforce, narrative in career guidance, dilemma approach, interactive identity construction, and paradoxical theory. All these theories recognize culture and context and emphasize self-construction and life planning more than matching and making a choice.

Techniques

These new models have each advanced intervention that is more holistic and comprehensive. An emphasis on viewing career development in the context of other important life roles and from a perspective of the life span was an obvious theme repeated throughout many papers and discussions at the symposium. There is burgeoning awareness worldwide that career development is no longer just about "getting a job." In fact, it is more about learning how to live a full life in which a career is only one aspect (Feller et al., 2005). Of course, this holistic emphasis calls for more counseling and less guidance (Guichard & Lenz, 2005), yet there are not enough counselors to provide this service.

The group led by Feller et al. (2005) identified six considerations when designing or adapting career interventions to a new cultural context: (a) sensitivity to the values and belief systems of the individuals who will be served; (b) appreciation for their social expectations about work roles; (c) attention to key decision-making points and transitions in that society; (d) understanding the economic climate in terms of globalization, unemployment, and political stability; (e) regard for the available resources and support from governments and institutions; and (f) design of implementation methods that fit public policy, local practices, and availability of information technology.

Tools

The group on assessment, led by Watson, Duarte, and Glavin (2005), emphasized the difference between using psychological inventories, such as those that measure personality traits (e.g., the Self-Directed Search; Holland, 1994) and psychosocial inventories (e.g., the Career Maturity Inventory; Crites & Savickas, 1996) that measure adaptation of the person to the community (Glavin, 2004). The group focused on the issues of *cultural validity* and *cultural specificity* in career assessment. Watson (2004) examined Leong's (1996) description of these terms. He concluded that most attempts to address the issue of culture in career assessment had focused on cultural validity, that is, validating the use of career tests with different cultural groups based on Westernized theories of construct, concurrent, and predictive validity. Watson argued for more use of Leong's model of cultural specificity, that is, the exploration of concepts, constructs, and models that are specific to a cultural group.

In that same discussion group, Duarte (2004) asserted that defining career tests as culture fair, culture free, or culture reduced was outdated.

She proposed that ecological validity was a more useful concept than culture itself. This implies that to assess behavior in a particular culture, test development should be based on situation sampling (defining the relevant and observable aspects of a particular career construct), function sampling (refining test items in terms of how they could be operationalized within a specific cultural context), and the identification of differential variables and context information (for example, patterns of cultural or subcultural rewards).

The Role of Guidance Practitioners in Public Policy Initiatives

A final thematic thread that ran through the presentations and discussion at the symposium was the importance of viewing educational and vocational guidance as a sociopolitical instrument for advancing national goals. Goodman and Hansen (2005) identified a conclusion that emerged strongly from virtually every presentation in their group's discussion. There is a gap, often profound, between policy and reality. Although every nation about which they heard had laudable policies and had made genuine attempts to assist its citizens with career development, many individuals do not have access to quality services or, in many cases, any services at all.

Both Plant (2004) and Watts (2005) pointed out that guidance plays a role for both the individual and society—a classic pair of perspectives. These two views should complement each other, but often they do not. In the history of guidance, the two views were called "guidance" and "selection." Today, the proponents of each view may be pitted against each other in debating issues of human resources development versus social inclusion. Guidance must straddle the fence between fostering individual development and economic development. Nevertheless, guidance has its historical roots and contemporary commitments in the social welfare work of supporting and helping the socially excluded who are at risk because they are poor or disabled or are immigrants or the "wrong" race or sex. At the same time, educational and vocational guidance workers are employed by societal institutions that serve the greater good in terms of economic development. Thus, guidance professionals must actively advance public policy initiatives and institutional reforms that serve both individuals and society.

Related to this concern, Plant's (2004) group examined the enduring question of how can we ensure access to career services for all individuals and groups. Participants in the symposium worried that economic competition in the global marketplace might be increasing social exclusion and exacerbating the problems caused by such exclusion. Plant asserted, rightly, that a way out of this is the strategy of "upskilling" the labor force through the use of a lifelong learning perspective. What is needed is "education, education, and education." Guidance has a pivotal role to play in this strategy by helping people to access training and education, to unfold their potential, to have their real competencies recognized and accredited, and to offer them support services as they traverse their lifelong learning path. This may be done by offering outreach guidance services to workers who may be at risk, low paid, or low skilled. To create better access to guidance for those in risk of social exclusion, these

services should be provided in the actual workplace at guidance corners staffed by educational ambassadors and learning advisers. Offering educational and vocational guidance services in community-based sites and at workplaces would enable guidance to play a more significant role in terms of formulating and implementing social inclusion policies. Locating guidance services outside schools and universities would also address the problem of the services not being widely available to adults (Watts, 2005).

Conclusions

The main conclusion of the symposiasts was that their engagement in dialogue about international perspectives on and comparative features of educational and vocational guidance around the globe provided a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced by scholars and specialists concerned with the internationalization of educational and vocational guidance. This symposium helped to establish a new network of practitioners and professors who are interested in the internationalization of guidance to meet the needs of world workers in a global economy. As they returned to their home countries to continue their work, they brought fresh ideas and enlarged perspectives to their colleagues and clients. Furthermore, their thoughts about the problems and prospects for international educational and vocational guidance have sharpened the field's focus on what could be done to expand and improve career services for the world's citizens and to further the debate about the internationalization and localization of the career counseling profession itself.

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