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ABSTRACT

This paper chronicles the stages in the history of career counseling and development in the United States, noting that each stage has been presaged by major societal changes and has had profound effects on the lives of individuals. In the first stage (1890-1919), placement effects on services were offered for an increasingly urban and industrial society. In the second stage (1920-1939), educational guidance through the elementary and secondary schools became the focal point. The third stage (1940-1959) saw a shift to colleges and universities and the training of counselors. The fourth stage (1960-1979) was a boom for counseling and the idea of work having meaning in a person's life came to the forefront. The fifth stage (1980-1989) saw the beginning of the transition from an industrial age to an information age and the growth of outplacement counseling. The sixth stage (1990-present), with its emphasis on technology and changing demographics, has seen the growth of private career counseling, internationalization of career counseling, and the beginning of multicultural career counseling. In the paper's analysis, historic epochs were found to have affected the development of career counseling in other cultures. (Contains 22 references.) (JDM)

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History and Development of Career Counseling in the USA

by

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Overview of Historic Stages

Career counseling was born of chaos and career counseling's growth has historically come during times of major societal change in the USA and world. Those transitions from what-has-been to what-will-be have provided the major impetus for career counseling's growth and subsequent consolidation of that growth. The new traditions and new institutions which emerge from societal change require people trained in the new skills needed to make the newly-changed society continue to function. Pope (1995) has put forward a model of how career counseling develops and identified certain stages in that model.

First stage: The beginnings of placement and vocational guidance (1890-1919)

Career counseling was born as vocational guidance in the USA in the early 1900s out of societal upheaval, transition, and change. This new profession was described by historians of that time as a "progressive social reform movement aimed at eradicating poverty and substandard living conditions spawned by the rapid industrialization and consequent migration of people to major urban centers at the turn of the 20th century" (Whiteley, 1984, p. 2). This transition was characterized by the loss of jobs in the agricultural sector, increasing demands for workers in heavy industry, loss of "permanent" jobs on the family farm to new emerging technologies such as tractors, increasing urbanization of the USA, and the concomitant calls for services to meet this internal migration pattern, all in order to retool for this new industrial economy. Returning veterans from World War I and those displaced by their return, only heightened the need for career counseling.

The focus during this stage was on job placement. Parsons (1909) is often called the parent of career counseling and began as a social worker heavily influenced by Jane Addams work in Chicago. In Boston Parsons established a settlement house for young people either already employed and currently unemployed. Vocational guidance at that time was largely without theoretical foundations. It was based on the work of Parsons (1909) who's model of vocational guidance was grounded in "simple logic and common sense and relied predominately on observational and data gathering skills" (Aubrey, 1977, p. 290). This largely intuitive and experiential foundation of vocational guidance formed the basis for Parsons' establishing the Vocation Bureau at Civic Service House in Boston in 1908. This was the first institutionalization of career counseling in the USA (Ginzburg, 1971).

During the First Period, another factor was the increasing involvement of psychometrics in vocational guidance. Psychological tests became an important and necessary part of the first functional stage in vocational guidance, that is, self-assessment. Testing gave vocational guidance respectability. Without a scientific procedure to justify vocational guidance's first step of self assessment, it is unlikely that vocational guidance would have been so popularly accepted.

The earliest support for vocational guidance came from the progressive social reform movement. "The linkage between this movement and vocational guidance was largely built on the issue of the growing exploitation and misuse of human beings" (Aubrey, 1977, p. 290). The landmark Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 established secondary school vocational education training and was strengthened in succeeding years by the George-Reed Act (1929), George-Ellzey Act (1934), and the George-Deen Act (1936). Each of these laws supported vocational education as an important part of the public schools.

The National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) (now the National Career Development Association (NCDA)) was founded in 1913 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The

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first journal of NVGA was the Vocational Guidance Bulletin, which later became Occupations: The Vocational Guidance Journal. The founders of NVGA included Frank Leavitt (first President), Jesse B. Davis (see below), Meyer Bloomfield (Parsons' successor at the Boston Vocation Bureau and who taught the first course in vocational guidance (Harvard in 1911)), and John M. Brewer (fifth NVGA President and author of the definitive history of career guidance in the USA, 1942). This was a time for the founders of NVGA of growth of and high hopes for vocational guidance.

Second stage: Vocational guidance in education (1920-1939)

The economic depression of the 1930s put the focus squarely on educational counseling, which solidified the role of vocational guidance in the schools and in industry. "The union of education, of social work, and of psychometrics in the vocational guidance of youth and adults was now somewhat more complete (Super, 1955, p. 4). Educational counseling came out of the work of humanitarian, progressive social work reformers like the pioneers, Jesse B. Davis in 1898 who served as a "counselor on educational and career problems" at Central High School in Detroit and Eli Weaver in 1906 who was a principal in the New York City school system. Promoting career development in the schools was slow work, however. Even as late as the 1930s, there were no vocational guidance programs in at least half of the cities in the USA of 10,000 or more population (Brewer, 1942).

Organized labor's strength was growing fast in the wake of the economic depression and President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal was a response both to the growing power of the unions as well as the loss of jobs. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was established in 1933 to provide training and employment opportunity for unemployed youth. It is important to note that the educational services of the CCC were supervised by the US Department of Education. Then, in 1935, the Works Progress Administration was established through federal legislation as an employment source for the millions of people out of work at this time. Finally, the B'nai B'rith Vocational Service Bureau was opened in 1938 in Washington, DC and local Jewish Vocational Services were established in 25 major American cities.

Third stage: Career counseling in colleges and universities (1940-1959)

Schwebel (1984) identified two social conditions which characterized the post-World War II period that led to the rise of the professional practice of counseling, especially career counseling. "(1) the personal and career problems of adjustment faced by vast numbers of veterans, including those handicapped during the war, (2) the influx of new types of students to higher education as a result of the G. I. Bill of Rights, an influx comparable to the compositional changes in the secondary school earlier in the century" (p. 285). Further, the rise of counseling as an alternative to psychoanalysis was just beginning at the end of this period. Counseling had always been part of vocational guidance since Parsons, but the developmental and educational aspects of counseling were to take the lead and complete the transition to career counseling as the major technique used by vocational guidance professionals (Aubrey, 1977).

Two major events occurred during this stage which set the tone for all subsequent world-wide actions. First, the second World War happened which focused the energy and attention of all nations of the world on this contest between nationalistic fascism (Germany, Japan, and Italy) and capitalism/communism allied at this time (USA, USSR, Great Britain, France). Truman's Fair Deal program was a response to the problems encountered by returning armed services veterans. The lack of jobs and the subsequent displacement of current workers by these returning veterans - both were important cultural problems with which Truman attempted to deal.

Second, the USSR successfully launched the first space probe, Sputnick I, in 1957 and then followed that by landing on the moon, Lunick II, in 1959. These two events more than any other bowed American capitalism for a time. The USA had considered itself far superior technologically than any other country on Earth; however, when the USSR

was so successful in their space program, this impelled federal legislators to begin to address the problems in science and math education all across the USA. The passage of the National Defense Education Act in 1957 was a direct response to this successful launching of Sputnik and the desperation of American government officials at the "loss" of this supposed American superiority in technology. The emphasis was on strengthening science education and identifying gifted students who would be encouraged to major in science; it provided funding for establishing and maintaining achievement and career interest testing programs and for training and hiring school counselors. Also, the Counseling and Guidance Training Institutes were established under the NDEA to provide improved training for counselors. This was a boom period for the training of counselors.

As a direct result of the growth of vocational guidance and realizing that there was strength in joining together with other guidance and personnel professional organizations, in 1951 NVGA helped to found the American Personnel and Guidance Association (later to become the American Association for Counseling and Development in 1983, and then the American Counseling Association in 1994). Donald Super became the first president of this new Association in 1953. NVGA's journal, Occupations: The Vocational Guidance Journal, became the Personnel and Guidance Journal. NVGA then established the Vocational Guidance Quarterly as its journal, later to become the Career Development Quarterly.

Fourth stage: The beginnings of organizational career development (1960-1979)

The Vietnam War era in the USA was a time of idealism and hope. John F. Kennedy's election as President of the USA (1960), Lyndon Johnson's Great Society (1965), the beginning of the great modern day civil rights movements, and the economic highs of that period all came together to focus a generation on the changes that were required to make American democracy live up to its words. Young people wanted jobs that meant something in their lives, not just a "9 to 5" job, but to do something that would change the world for the better. "(T)he mass of young Americans do not disdain the idea of work as a necessary and at least potentially meaningful and rewarding life activity. Their attack is upon the character of available jobs and the overly conforming and depersonalizing conditions under which most individuals must labor" (Borow, 1974, p. 25). Borow (1974) captured the tone of the times when he termed the USA as "a rich, sophisticated, yet humane nation dedicated to providing all of its citizens with a broad spectrum of services and opportunities for achieving the good life" (p. 7).

Federal legislation is also illustrative of the expectations of Americans during this time. At the beginning of the 1960s, the unemployment rate was 8.1%, the highest since the 1930s. President John F. Kennedy entered office in 1961 and, as one of his first acts, appointed a panel of consultants on vocational education who issued their report in 1962 which stated that school counselors need to "have exceptional understanding of the world of work and its complexities. What is obviously needed is a counselor who meets all of the requirements of a professional background in pupil personnel services and who at the same time is a specialist in occupational information, vocational guidance, and counseling" (U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1963, p. 213). Their recommendations were written into legislation through the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963.

This report was soon followed by federal legislation to attract new sources of jobs to economically depressed areas (Area Redevelopment Act, 1961), to provide assistance to workers who were victims of automation (Manpower Development and Training Act, 1962), to create Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, VISTA, and Head Start Program (Economic Opportunity Act, 1964), to broaden the scope of vocational rehabilitation agencies to deal with impairments to effective vocational life caused by educational, cultural, social or environmental factors (Vocational Rehabilitation Administration Budget, 1965), create New Careers Program to create subprofessional jobs, careers ladders, and differentiated staffing (Economic Opportunity Act, 1966 amendments), to create Work Incentive Program for welfare clients who wished and were able to become economically

self-sufficient including funds for training, education, day care for children of participants and a variety of support services, including counseling (Social Security Act, 1967), and to provide aid for disadvantaged children in schools in poverty areas, for library resources and for guidance and counseling services (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, amended in 1969) (Herr, 1974).

The rise of career development in organizational settings was an outgrowth of this era. Growth in career counseling in governmental agencies, in nonprofit community agencies and in business and industry were the hallmarks of this stage. Such governmental agencies as Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories and the Office of Management and Budget had large career development centers and substantial staffs. Such companies as Glaxo Pharmaceuticals, Pacific Bell, and IBM also built career services centers during this time. The late 1970s however were characterized by a declining economic system rather than by growth and prosperity; this began the transition to the fifth stage.

Fifth stage: Private practices and outplacement counseling (1980-1989)

The USA began another economic transition in the 1980s -- from an industrial age to an information and technology age. This new transition spawned another host of problems, such as loss of jobs in the industrial sectors of our economy, increasing demands from employers for technological skills, loss of "permanent" jobs to contract labor, loss of job security, marginalization of organized labor, all in order to retool for the information and technology economy.

In the USA there has been renewed interest and support for career development through the policies of the federal government. Beginning with President George Bush (1988-91) and carrying over to President Bill Clinton (1992 to present), there has been a resurgence in interest in the lifelong career development of the American populace. Such policies as the School to Work Transition Program and One-Stop Career Centers are important initiatives in this national campaign (Hamilton, 1990; Marshall & Tucker, 1992; National Education Goals Panel, 1991; W. T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship, 1988). The role of organized career development professionals and federal agencies through the National Career Development Association, American Vocational Association, National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, and American School Counselor Association working together was pivotal to the quality of the final legislation. With the input of these professional associations, the USA will have students from elementary school to middle school who are exploring the world of work in preparation for choosing to take a certificate during high school in an area of career study -- all of this based on applying the research we know about the development of career interest patterns in human beings.

In 1987 the Hudson Institute commissioned and published a report titled, Workforce 2000, which laid the foundation for the career development policies of both the Bush and Clinton administrations in the USA. Particularly important because of its workplace demographic assumptions about the composition of the new American workforce, that new entrants into that workforce will be predominantly ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities (Johnson & Packer, 1987). Economic arguments were also made during this transition by the National Center on Education and the Economy (1990). In their position paper they argued that a transition from a low skills to a high skills occupational society in the USA was crucial so as to allow the USA to compete better internationally.

With the national acceptance of career counseling as an important service to provide to a citizenry in occupational transition and the proliferation of mental health private practices, the nexus of the two was the private practice career counselor. This practitioner whose livelihood depended on continuous marketing of short-term career counseling provided the vitality for the expansion and growth of the professional practice of career counseling during this period.

Outplacement counseling had its beginnings at this time. Outplacement is a term used when a company is having economic difficulties and begins to layoff workers.

Outplacement counselors are then brought in to help those workers find new employment -- placement outside of their company. Outplacement led to the founding of such firms as Drake, Beam, and Morin; Lee Hecht Harrison; and Right Associates, who competed for these lucrative outplacement contracts side by side with career counselors in private practice.

Stage six: Internationalization of career counseling and multicultural career counseling (1990 to present)

Quite important during this period was the first ever survey of the attitudes and beliefs of the American workforce regarding career development. With a grant from NOICC, NCDA commissioned the Gallup Organization to conduct three national surveys - 1989, 1992, and 1994. These surveys were published as books and received much national attention even being cited by federal legislators in their speeches during debate on these issues on the floor of US Congress (Brown & Minor, 1989; Brown & Minor, 1992; Hoyt & Lester, 1994).

The changing demographics of the American workforce came to the forefront during this period. Hoyt (1989) addressed the National Career Development Association at their luncheon at their annual meeting in Chicago in 1988 and reviewed the progress that women and ethnic and racial minorities in the USA have made during the past 20 years. Hoyt who worked for the US Department of Labor and wrote the definition of "work" for the USA was also President of the American Counseling Association and the NCDA. He drafted the first policy statement of NCDA on career development. This new policy statement of the NCDA Board of Directors emphasized career development as a longitudinal process taking place throughout the life span and was used effectively as testimony in legislative hearings on federal and state jobs and careers legislation in the USA (NCDA, 1993). These changing demographics have led to a greater emphasis in both counseling in general and career counseling on multicultural counseling skills.

This period of increased communication and technological sophistication has led to shrinking our planet. We can communicate by telephone, facsimile transmission, and internet to anywhere in the world in a blink of an eye. Personal communication devices such as pagers and cellular telephones have made it possible to contact a person anywhere they are. The logical extension of these changes for the career counselor is career counseling over the internet and by telephone as well as the opening up of career counseling markets in other countries. This expansion has included substantial energy and economic investment in taking career counseling to other countries; however, USA career counselors now work in Singapore, Russia, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Australia, Estonia, to name but a few.

Summary

We have seen several stages in the history of career counseling and development in the USA -- each presaged by major societal change. Each of these stages has had profound effects on the lives of individuals in our society. In the first stage (1890-1919) placement services were offered for an increasingly urban and industrial society. In the second stage (1920-39) educational guidance through the elementary and secondary schools became the focal point. The third stage (1940-59) saw the focus shift to colleges and universities and the training of counselors. The fourth stage (1960-79) was the boom for counseling and the idea of work having meaning in a person's life came to the forefront; organizational career development began during this period. The fifth stage (1980-89) saw the beginning of the transition from industrial age to information age and the growth of outplacement counseling. The sixth stage (1990-present) with its emphasis on technology and changing demographics has seen the growth of private practice career counseling, internationalization of career counseling, and the beginnings of multicultural career counseling.

Pope (1997) and Zhang (1997) have both described the stages in the historical development of career counseling although for quite different countries. Similar historic

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epochs, however, appear from the descriptions to have effected that development similarly. In analyzing the Hong Kong dynamics, it appears that Hong Kong may be experiencing similar developmental stages, but career counseling has a much shorter history there.

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