

## Introduction to the Special Issue: International Perspectives on Educational and Vocational Guidance

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**Abstract.** This thematic issue of the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* includes a selection of papers presented at an IAEVG-NCDA Symposium, entitled “International Perspectives on Career Development”. The articles in this special issue deal with a number of topics related to international developments and perspectives, the impact of globalisation on guidance practice and research, and comparative approaches to educational and vocational guidance that differentiate career development practices in different countries. The outcome of the general discussion that centred around these specific themes at the International Symposium were jointly published in a special issue of the *Career Development Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1.

**Résumé. Introduction au Numéro Spécial: Perspectives mondiales sur l'orientation professionnelle.** Ce numéro thématique de l'*International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* comprend une sélection d'articles présentés à un Symposium de l'AIOSP-NCDA, intitulé Perspectives Internationales sur le Développement de la Vie de Travail. Les articles de ce numéro spécial concernent un ensemble de thèmes liés à des évolutions et des perspectives internationales, à l'impact de la mondialisation sur la pratique et la recherche en orientation ainsi qu'à des approches de l'orientation scolaire et professionnelle qui diffèrent les pratiques en développement de la vie de travail dans différents pays. Les conclusions de la discussion générale qui était centrée sur ces thèmes spécifiques au Symposium International ont été publiés conjointement dans un numéro spécial du *Career Development Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1.

**Zusammenfassung. Einleitung zur Sonderausgabe: Weltweite Perspektiven der Berufsberatung.** Diese thematische Ausgabe des Internationalen Journals für Bildungs- und Berufsberatung enthält eine Auswahl von Vorträgen, die auf einem AIOSP-NCDA-Symposium mit dem Titel “Internationale Perspektiven der Berufslaufbahnentwicklung” gehalten wurden. Die Artikel dieser Sonderausgabe repräsentieren eine Anzahl von Themen, die internationale Entwicklungen und Perspektiven, die Auswirkungen der Globalisierung auf Praxis und Forschung zur Beruflichen Beratung sowie vergleichende Untersuchungen zur Bildungs- und Berufsberatung betreffen, die Beratungsansätze in verschiedenen Ländern voneinander differenzieren. Die Ergebnisse der allgemeinen Diskussion auf dem internationalen Symposium rund um diese Themen wurden bereits in einer gemeinschaftlich herausgegebenen Sonderausgabe des *Career Development Quarterly*, Jahrgang 54, Nr. 1, veröffentlicht.

**Resumen. Introducción al Número Especial: Perspectivas Globales de la Orientación Profesional.** Este número temático de la *Revista Internacional de Orientación Educativa y Profesional* incluye una selección de comunicaciones presentadas en un Simposio Internacional de la AIOEP-NCDA (Asociación Nacional del Desarrollo de la Carrera), denominado Perspectivas Internacionales sobre el Desarrollo de la Carrera. Los artículos de este número especial abordan una serie de temas relacionados con diversas perspectivas y avances en el ámbito internacional, el impacto de la globalización sobre la investigación y la práctica de la orientación, y análisis comparativos de la orientación educativa y profesional que permiten diferenciar prácticas de

desarrollo de la carrera en distintos países. Los resultados y conclusiones de la discusión general que se generó en torno a estos temas en el Simposio Internacional se publicaron conjuntamente en un número especial del *Career Development Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1.

This special issue of the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, together with the jointly published special issue of the *Career Development Quarterly*, presents the outcome of an international symposium entitled “International Perspectives on Career Development.” The Symposium was organized by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance and the National Career Development Association. It took place in San Francisco on June 29–30, 2004, under the leadership of Raoul Van Esbroeck (IAEVG) and Edwin L. Herr (NCDA).

When the IAEVG and NCDA Boards entrusted Ed Herr and Raoul Van Esbroeck with the task of organizing an International Symposium, the first hurdle was to clarify what was meant by *Symposium*. This required going back to the classics. The word symposium, in the classic Greek tradition, was used to refer to an after-dinner meeting that would include music, drinking and – more important – conversation. In those early days, Greek citizens often gathered to participate in constructive discussion. Key to the success of any symposium was that the participants should be in the appropriate mood of serenity, enjoy peace of mind, and all conflicts should be appeased. For the ancient Greeks, harmony with the gods was essential for a good discussion. This can now be operationalised in the modern global world as: a gathering of free thinking minds, prepared to listen to one another and understand possible differences between them. In such a picture, harmony of mind is still essential.

The planning committee tried to realize, in line with ancient Greek tradition, a gathering of career development specialists from all over the world that would engage in constructive discussion about the worldwide phenomena of career development and related support activities. The idea of building the gathering around discussion groups was approved early on. There were to be seven groups centred around the following themes:

- Career theory in an international perspective (Chair: Jean Guichard, France)
- Techniques and assessment (Chair: Mark B. Watson, South Africa)
- Techniques and interventions (Chair: Rich Feller, USA)
- The implementation of technology in career guidance around the world (Co-chairs: JoAnn Harris-Bowlsbey and James P. Sampson, Jr., USA)
- The structure and organisation of programmes of career development in different nations (Chair: Sunny Hansen, USA)
- Public policy and career development (Chair: Peter Plant, Denmark)
- International competencies for career practitioners (Chair: Bryan Hiebert, Canada)

The goal of a discussion group is to offer specialists, academics, and practitioners a platform that will help them to engage in in-depth discussion around a specific theme. The chair of the group introduced the discussion topic for each group. The chair then moderated a discussion that is prompted by a set of papers selected participants have prepared in advance. There were two types of papers presented in each group. One type consisted of papers chosen from submissions in an open call for papers; the other type was comprised of invited papers. Although the selected papers constitute an important contribution, the discussion remained the real goal.

It is rather exceptional for a small group of international specialists to sit together for six hours to discuss a narrow topic within the broad issue of international perspectives in career development. One of the advantages of this approach is the possibility for specialists to listen to and learn from each other. There are, however, a number of hurdles that need to be cleared. The confrontation of ideas and concepts, embedded within different national, social or ethnic cultures, may be hindered by differences of interpretation of these ideas and concepts – differences that are not always apparent at the moment of the first confrontation. To discover and recognize these differences may take a long time and may cause some misunderstanding before the issue is cleared.

Another major hurdle is the language. Indeed, it can be expected that in an international group participants speak different languages. When English is used as the common language of communication, the non-English speakers will translate the terminology from their own mother tongue into English. Though all participants may, in that case, be using the same terminology, they may not necessarily be using the same concepts. This is, for example, the case for even very basic terms such as *guidance* and *counselling* (Watts & Van Esbroeck, 1998). The term *guidance* is generally translated in French as *orientation* and in German as *Beratung*. But *orientation* and *Beratung* do not cover the same tasks and activities as what is understood to constitute guidance in Anglo-Saxon countries (Watts & Van Esbroeck, 1999; Rott, 2002). In the French Community of Belgium the word *guidance* is even used as a French term. It does, however, not entirely correspond to what the term means in the US or UK. The same is true for the term *counselling*. Jean Paul Broonen, in his translator's note points out that "the term *counselling* is exemplary in this respect. There exist no single appropriate term in the French language, short of paraphrasing, that can render exactly the type of practice ..." (Watts & Van Esbroeck, 1999, p. 6). In French, several terms and descriptions are used to cover partial aspects of *counselling*. The term *aide* (help) is used and frequently combined with the word *psychologique* (psychological). While others use the term *conseil* (advice) (Blanchard, 1996), also in combination with the term *psychologique* or other terms such as, for example, educational. But this is not so universal in the French speaking world. Indeed, in the French speaking community of Belgium

the term counselling is used by career practitioners as a standard French word. However, it covers a very different content (Watts & Van Esbroeck, 1999). The same is true in Quebec (Canada), where they use it, however, in line with the US tradition (Bujold & Gingras, 2000).

It is clear that the participants in the 2004 IAEVG-NCDA Symposium had to overcome a few hurdles. The results of their discussions prove they were successful. The outcome of the activities in the discussion groups at the international Symposium, along with two keynote activities, have been published in a companion volume to this special issue, namely Volume 54, Number 1 of *The Career Development Quarterly*. This special issue of the *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* includes eleven of the papers presented in the discussion groups along with one keynote presentation. This selection is a fair representation of the contributions in the seven thematic discussions groups, while at the same time reflecting the international mix of the contributions. Each contribution, though sometimes rooted in national or regional experience, should trigger an international reflection or send out a message that can be applied or transferred to other situations.

The first article in this issue is the text of the keynote presentation by Norm Amundson in which he focuses the relationship between economic and societal changes and career theory and practice development. He reflects, while providing an overview of some recent theories and counselling practice issues, on the influence of new developments on guidance activities. Although his material is mainly of Anglo-Saxon origin, his analysis is truly representative of what is happening worldwide in the career guidance community.

The article on guidance policies by Peter Plant is mainly embedded in the European experience and pays special attention to “coping” within guidance. This is related to the contribution of guidance in helping persons to prepare them to manage and cope with difficult situations themselves. He argues that this strategy, unlike the two traditional strategies of preventing and solving, is one of the ignored areas of guidance. This contribution includes a plea to let guidance play the role of a Trojan Horse within the policy system to put the coping strategy firmly on the agenda.

Jean Guichard's contribution is situated within the context of theory development. Guichard's article builds a theoretical framework to explain a life-long self-construction process. This particular framework is very important because it helps explain how persons can build their “own lives within their own context”. It is in some way a theoretical framework for the “coping strategy” that appeared in Plant's article. On the other hand, it also relates to Reid's contribution on narratives. While Nancy Reid stresses the importance of narratives in guidance on the basis of experience and practice, Guichard includes it as a part of his theoretical framework.

The topic of competencies appears in Nancy Arthur's contribution. She emphasizes that in the present context of globalisation the need for

multicultural career counselling has increased. Within the competencies needed for multicultural counselling, there should be a shift of the attention from laying “an emphasis on cultural diversity to incorporating social justice competencies”. Once again, this ties in with some of the reflections found in other articles such as, e.g., the contribution by Plant. Also, Neault’s article is to some extent related to competencies. Neault highlights the complexity of worldwide moves within a career context, and explores the challenges and problems. With relation to the counsellor, she implicitly refers to competencies for multicultural counselling and to some extent also to social justice aspects.

The topic of assessment within an international setting appears in the articles by Duarte and Rossier. Duarte approaches the topic on the basis of her participation in projects of adapting well-known international assessment instruments for use in Portugal. She describes the pitfalls and hurdles encountered while adapting the Adult Career Concerns Inventory (ACCI) and the inventories developed within the framework of the Work Importance Study Project (WIS). While Duarte remains on a more reflective level, Rossier opts for a more technical approach. This author refers to personality inventories, including measurements based on the Five-Factor Model, which are frequently used in a career guidance setting. He analyses the structural and metric or scalar equivalence of these instruments as used in different cultures. The conclusions of both authors indicate that adapting tests is not so easy and requires substantial efforts and specific competencies. But even after a successful development stage, counsellors using the adapted instruments will also need specific competencies such as, for example, achieving a good understanding of the client’s culture and tradition.

In his article George V. Richard describes an effort to develop a framework to identify components that may contribute to successful career planning and guidance programmes. On the basis of an extensive literature search, labelled by the author as “not exhaustive and failed to locate a substantial amount of rigorous (international) research”, he concludes that more international studies are needed to identify international best practices. This conclusion is echoed by Norman Gysbers’s contribution that describes the US comprehensive school guidance programmes, and Wendy Patton’s description of guidance policy in Australia. What is happening in the two countries may serve as a source for further reflection in other countries.

The theme of ICT in career guidance could not remain absent in this issue. The article by Brown, Bimrose and Hughes is a non-traditional contribution in relation to ICT. Instead of dealing with the use of ICT in student guidance support, the authors outline the development of a website in the UK to support a wide variety of users such as, for example, counsellors and researchers. Though the advantages of such a website are evident, the authors make it clear that the efforts and hurdles in the development process are considerable.

All these contributions feature a small number of messages. First, there is general recognition that preventing and solving problems are no longer the only strategies in career guidance. The issue of supporting the development of coping should receive more attention. Second, the role of the interplay between the person and the environment – as the person perceives it – in the career development process enjoys wide recognition. The construction idea is becoming the guideline for theory development and guidance practice. Third, globalisation is a fact, but theories, support systems, and intervention techniques need to follow this development. Fourth, to respond to economic and societal globalisation may require a shift in career counselling approach and needed competencies. The issue of social justice should more than ever receive special attention.

This issue together with the companion issue of the *Career Development Quarterly* will give the reader a good idea of the results achieved at the IAEVG-NCDA 2004 International Symposium.

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