Personnel Psychology and Vocational Psychology:

A Family Reunion for Siblings Separated Since Adolescence

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I begin by telling the story of the synergy with which vocational psychology and industrial psychology originated and progressed for four decades. In the first half of the 20th century, practitioners of these two disciplines showed a cooperative interaction that enhanced their combined effect. Unfortunately the interaction decreased following World War II until today communication is infrequent and sporadic at best. I conclude by offering a suggestion for revitalizing the link between vocational and industrial/organizational psychologists.

Beginning with Synergy

In forming what are now the two disciplines of vocational psychology and industrial/organizational psychology, the key figure viewed them as complementary. Meyer Bloomfield was the organizing mastermind behind both the National Vocational Guidance Association (now the National Career Development Association) in 1913 and the Employment Managers Association (now the American Management Association) in 1915. Bloomfield believed that vocational guidance personnel must work closely with personnel managers to benefit the community in the appropriate use of its human resources. He feared that the work of counselors would be "nullified" if not coordinated with the work of personnel managers, a fear that to some degree has been realized today. To foster communication among practitioners of guidance and selection, he systematically invited guidance personnel to meetings of the Employment Managers Association. At the same time, he invited employment managers and business leaders to

meetings of the National Vocational Guidance Association. For many years, this complementary collaboration succeeded. For example, Meyer Bloomfield himself was both a leading expert in vocational guidance and a highly regarded consultant to business and industry on personnel management and labor relations.

The founders of vocational psychology worked closely with industrial psychologists. In fact, many of these pioneers of applied psychology worked in both vocational psychology and business psychology. For example, Harry Hollingworth, published the first book on vocational psychology, entitled *Vocational Psychology: Its Problems and Methods* (1916), and also wrote books on *Advertising and Selling* (1916) and *Applied Psychology* (1917 with Poffenberger). Walter van dyke Bingham, a pre-eminent industrial psychologist, led the Carnegie Tech group that designed the first interest inventories and aptitude tests while funded by department store owners such as Kaufmann to devise methods to select salespeople. A member of Bingham's group, E. K. Strong, became a professor in Stanford University's Business School where in 1927 he published vocational psychology's most durable psychometric measure, the *Strong Vocational Interest Blank* (now the *Strong Interest Inventory*). Strong also wrote *The Psychology of Selling and Advertising* (1925) and *Psychological Aspects of Business* (1938). Harry Dexter Kitson, the leading figure in vocational guidance between the two world wars wrote books entitled *The Mind of the Buyer: A Psychology of Selling* (1921) and *Scientific Advertising* (1926). Douglas Fryer began his career as a vocational counselor at the Brooklyn YMCA. Later as a professor at New York University Fryer became a noted pioneer in industrial psychology. He published *The Handbook of Applied Psychology* in two volumes (1950 with Edwin Henry) and *Developing People in Industry*

(1956 with Mortimer Feinberg and Sheldon Zalkind). Yet to me Fryer's masterwork book was *The Measurement of Interests* (1931), in my opinion the single best book ever written on vocational interests.

In the 1930s, Morris Viteles exemplified the close connection between industrial and vocational psychology. In the morning he worked as Director of Personnel Research and Training at the Philadelphia Electric Company. In the afternoon he held a full-time professorship in vocational guidance at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1921, Viteles founded a vocational guidance clinic where he applied principles of psychology and its clinical methods to children and adults faced with the problem of choosing a vocation. Each case was discussed at a conference during which the staff considered a client's interests, competence, and personality along with social and economic factors (Viteles, 1925). In adapting the clinical techniques of Lightmer Whitmer to vocational guidance, Viteles initiated the adolescent age of vocational psychology (Williamson, 1965, p. 87). The psychological reformulation of vocational guidance initiated by Viteles was later advanced at the University of Minnesota by the further integration of differential psychology methods with clinical psychology techniques. The Minnesota point-of-view on vocational guidance was initiated by Donald Paterson, who edited the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. In 1932, Viteles published a book entitled *Industrial Psychology*, which became the most popular textbook in the field. Published when he was only 34, this landmark book established him as a leader in the field because it served to define the field itself. For the next two decades, this book was considered the "bible" of industrial psychology, until in 1953 it was supplemented by his 500-page *Motivation and Morale in Industry*. Viteles never lost his interest in vocational guidance and today he is

remembered by career counselors for his book written with Franklin Keller entitled *Vocational Guidance Throughout the World: A Comparative Survey* (1937).

It may be fair to conclude that these luminaries and dozens of their colleagues conceptualized themselves as applied psychologists, not as either vocational or industrial psychologists. Looking back, we can see clearly that they applied the person-environment fit model and methods equally well to educational guidance, personnel selection, and military classification. At mid-century, the synergy between selection and guidance may be exemplified by John Holland who formulated his preeminent model of matching people to positions during World War II while working as a personnel clerk doing military classification of recruits.

In 1937, with the support of Patterson, applied psychologists formed the American Association of Applied Psychology (AAAP) with four sections: clinical, consulting, educational, and industrial (Street, 1994). The Industrial and Business Section, although not a large, produced four of the total of eight AAAP Presidents: Fryer, Paterson, Bingham, and Poffenberger. The founding of AAAP is important in the context of this book because it marks the beginning of the drift apart by vocational psychologists interested in individuals from those interested in industries. While applied psychologists interested in vocational psychology had typically served both guidance and selection functions, over time industrial psychologists began to concentrate on selection and work adjustment. Although still interested in the individual worker, they offered their services to industry, persuading employers that well-adjusted workers were more productive.

Based on their success in aviation flight training World War II, some applied psycholgists became organizational psychologists as they offered social psychological

consultation regarding advertising, public relations, and market research. As they started to concentrate on "organizations," testing remained part of industrial psychology, but organizational psychology became concerned with the problems of hierarchical bureaucracies, including things such as organizational structure, norms, conflict, management techniques, and communication with employees. They were hired by organizations to help management by integrating the needs of healthy individuals with those of effective organizations.

In 1945, following three years of work and negotiation under the leadership of Yerkes, APA was reorganized with 19 charter divisions, and absorbed AAAP. The Division (14) of Industrial and Business Psychology (now the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychologists) had 130 members. In 1947, the American Psychological Association established Division 17, which originally was known as the Division of Guidance and Personnel. Vocational psychologists who worked with adolescents and young adults aligned with Division 17, and in1952, they renamed it the Division of Counseling Psychology (now the Society for Counseling Psychology). These organizational initiative institutionalized the separation of vocational psychology into two wings: counseling psychologists interested in vocational choice and industrial psychologists interested in work adjustment (Crites, 1969). While some psychology department retained both counseling and industrial training programs, there was a substantial exodus of counseling psychologists to schools of education and industrial psychologists to schools of business. The few universities which retained both programs in the psychology department became noted for this structure (e.g., the University of Minnesota and the Ohio State University). Columbia University had a unique structure in

that the psychology department concentrated on basic science and let applied psychology be taught in Teachers College which had outstanding programs in personnel psychology, counseling psychology, and clinical psychology. Albert Thompson, a protégé of Viteles, led the personnel psychology program and contributed greatly to the counseling psychology program led by his friend Donald Super, the renowned counseling psychologist whose first publication was on job satisfaction. The basic outcome of the split was that vocational psychologists soon identified themselves, not as vocational psychologists, but as counseling psychologists or industrial/organizational psychologists. Over time, this identification with a profession left vocational psychology as an applied science without many practitioners.

From Job to Career

As industrial manufacturing and the factory systems grew in heterogenity of functions and division of labor, it required a bureaucratic organization to direct and control the diversity of activities. By 1950 the modern factory system was indeed a large-scale, internally differentiated bureaucratic structure. While in the first half of the century the factory system focused on manufacturing, the mature bureaucracy had a large component of non-manufacturing jobs. As they grew larger, companies organized themselves more and more to put order to complexity and chaos. For example they formed departments and units, each characterized by a particular function and expertise. They became bureaucracies, which means management or administration marked by diffusion of authority among numerous offices and adherence to inflexible rules of operation. This includes development of a managerial elite and large proportion of white collar jobs. While the bureaucratic form provided a structure for progressive promotions,

career provided the value. It is safe to say that we did not have careers until we had large hierarchical, bureaucratic organizations.

Career, with its predictable path, became the individual value that fit the bureaucratic form of organizations during the second half of the 20th century. So we saw counseling psychologists move from vocational guidance to career counseling. A career could be developed within the organization as one progress up the ladder of positions. A second paradigm joined that of vocational guidance's model of individual differences. The complementary paradigm became career counseling's model of individual development. It focused not on how individuals differed from other people relative to jobs but instead concentrated on how people differed from themselves over their careers. Super's formulation of career stages along with Miller and Form's construct of career patterns focused attention on how people could expected predictable developmental tasks over the life course as they moved through stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. The metaphors were maturation and unfolding of a worklife within a hierarchical organization that promised stability and security. Vocational psychologists working in both counseling psychology and industrial/organizational psychology extensively studied careers, led by scholars such as Donald Super and John Crites in vocational psychology and Walter Storey and Douglas Hall in organizational psychology. Unfortunately for vocational psychology as a whole, the counseling psychologists concentrated on students and their career choices whereas organizational psychologists concentrated on adults and their career enactment. Crites (1969) influential book on *Vocational Psychology* codified the field's two wings as choice with chapters on

and adjustment with chapters on topics such as job satisfaction, occupational success, and work motivation.

From Career Development to Life Design

Today, the bureaucratic structure that organized corporations impedes their ability to change, innovate, and work across boundary lines. The 21st century has brought a new social organization of work, one that flattens hierarchical bureaucracies. Organizations have become smaller, smarter, and swifter in response to market conditions. Bureaucratic organizations lack the flexibility to adapt in a rapidly changing, global economy. Jack Welch (1992), when he was president of General Electric, addressed this lack of flexibility when he coined the term "boundaryless organization." He advised organizations to remove barriers that slowed response to problems and environmental changes. He identified four types of boundaries: *hierarchical layers* of organization, *horizontal units* within a layer, *geographic distribution* of offices in different states and countries, and *external blocks* that make it difficult for customers to deal with organization. At General Electric, Welsh made the boundaries more permeable by dissolving partitions. In contrast to a bounded holding environment, Welsh shaped the boundaryless environment of General Electric to respond to change by being open, collaborative, proactive, and creative.

Breaking the bureaucratic chains of an organization dissipates the form a modern career. The employee in a postmodern organization becomes unbound and ungrounded. Consequently, entering the work world and moving through occupational positions requires more effort and confidence today than it did during the modern industrial era. Working in the postmodern global economy entails more risks because in a substantial

way jobs are being replaced by assignments and organizations are being replaced by networks. The dejobbing of organizations has produced the "insecure worker" as companies now look for work not workers. Insecure workers include those who are temporary, contingent, casual, contract, free-lance, part-time, external, atypical, and self-employed. Henry Ford would be pleased, as he once remarked that he wanted to hire only "hand" rather than the whole worker.

Once taken for granted, matters such as job security, healthcare, and pensions have become problematic. Individuals can no longer plan to work 30 years developing a career within the boundaries of one organization. Instead, they can expect during their lifetimes to occupy at least ten jobs, more properly called assignments. Healthcare, which was once the province of the employer, is now the concern of the employee. Pensions that once consisted of defined benefits promised by an employer are now reconstituted as defined contributions to a retirement plan managed by the employee. Retirement has become "rehirement" characterized by "encore careers."

Postmodern careers are no longer contained and constrained by bounded organizations. Boundaryless organizations do not function as holding environments that stabilize and normalize the lives of their employees. I/O psychologists have responded to the new social arrangement of work by formulating new concepts and innovative models of career. For example, they have introduced models of boundaryless and Protean careers in which occupational paths are not bounded within a single organization for life. Instead, they are routes ploughed, not by jobs, but by a series of assignments and projects in which one develops competencies to add to their portfolio, thus the emergence of the portfolio career. The routes may be within one occupation yet they may cross

occupational lines. In a sense the process of organizing has replaced the organization as a structure. Career studies in I/O seem more responsive to these changes while, in comparison, counseling psychology seems to lag behind in recognizing the postmodern organizational structures and consequent changes in worklife. From my perspective, both specialties could benefit from more cross-fertilization, something apparently blocked by counseling's focus on adolescents versus I/O's focus on adults.

Disjointed Today

The lack of communication between vocational psychologists and industrial psychologist hurts the vocational field more than it does the organizational field. I/O remains vibrant in career matters as it responds to changes in the social arrangement of work and in reshaping of organizations with innovative constructs and creative ideas. Unfortunately, from my perspective and I could be wrong, these ideas are not finding there way into vocational psychology and career counseling. From the other side, I do not see innovative ideas from vocational psychology informing I/O. They live in two different worlds, schools and organizations. Some prominent figures have been aware of this problem for years.

Leaders of counseling psychology such as John Crites and leaders of organizational psychology such as Audrey Collin have for years called for a summit meeting, a call that remains unheeded. A summit meeting to discuss ideas sounds good to me. A possible topic for such a meeting would be discussions on how to revitalize vocational psychology as an applied psychology that informs the professions of counseling psychology and organizational psychology. Maybe the term "vocational

psychology" has out-lived its usefulness and we need a new term such as "career studies."

If we were to have a summit, then what would we discuss? Maybe model is the old annual review chapter on career exploration written by Super and Hall. Super wrote about exploration during adolescence and Hall extended the topic into adulthood. Together, they presented a rich portrait of the career exploration across career stages. Following their example, we could invite matched pairs of I/O and counseling psychologists to present papers and write chapters on the following topics: (a) emotional intelligence and psychosocial education, (b) emotional labor and microskill training in empathy, self-exploration, and assertiveness, (c) the Big Five Factors of personality and Holland's vocational personality types, (d) work-family balance and Super's life-role rainbow, (e) the school-to-work transition and new employee socialization, (f) career success, (g) self-efficacy in career choice and work motivation, (h) Handy's portfolio life and Schlossberg's transitions models, (i) Hall's learning cycles and Savickas' adaptation cycle, (j) person-environment fit in vocational choice and work adjustment, (k) psychological contract and occupational information, (l) emerging adulthood and boomer employees, (m) employability and career adaptability, (n) employee mentoring and youth mentoring, (o) expatriate assignments and cultural competence, and (p) organizational identification/commitment and vocational identity development. At the very least, this would open the lines of communication between twins separated during adolescence.

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