



INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT GAINED AT THE 2010 SYMPOSIUM

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Career development is increasingly a global issue. International dialogue through venues such as this joint international symposium will be the impetus for career development to go forward in the 21st century.

Twenty-six countries were represented by 117 people at the International Symposium held in San Francisco, California, this past July prior to the NCDA conference. The symposium was a joint effort of NCDA, The International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), and The Society for Vocational Psychology (SVP). The attendees were there to work! The seven work groups discussed their assigned topics during and after several invited presentations, and all worked hard and effectively. After the work groups completed their tasks, each was asked to develop two action items to guide further symposia and to be presented to the Boards of the three sponsoring organizations.

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HISTORY AND PURPOSE

In 2004, NCDA and IAEVG jointly organized the first International Symposium in San Francisco. This meeting was successful and proved to respond to a need among international career guidance workers. The second international symposium, in Padua (Italy), where the SVP joined the organizing team, confirmed this impression. The question now becomes why is this? Why do we need such international symposium?

The field of career guidance, development and counseling is strongly influenced by theoretical developments in the Anglo-Saxon countries. The same is true in relation to career guidance practice. Most of the world-wide instruments and methods are of Anglo-Saxon origin. In many occasions the theories and instruments are used in other countries and cultures with only minimal adaptation. Under influence of the growing awareness of the role of culture and the recognition of the need of cross-cultural approaches in the field of career guidance, practitioners as well as academics started having doubts on the adequateness of this approach. All over the world grew the awareness that it is not always possible to apply theories and methods developed in one culture for use in another culture. This led to the creation of new methods and theories adapted to the needs of specific cultures. Unfortunately many of these new developments are not widely spread and remain unknown to many career specialists. This is related to the fact that the publications on these developments appear in local or regional journals and in many different languages. Language is one of the important hurdles that practitioners and academics are facing. Because English is at the present the "lingua franca" of the modern world, as was Latin in the middle-ages, in many

cases translations into English appear as the norm. However, the problem is not solved by doing so. Indeed, in many cases the problem of the meaning of the terminology remains. Though international colleagues are using the same terms, they do not always refer to the same content. Some good examples on the different interpretations given to the concept guidance and counseling were described by Van Esbroeck, Herr and Savickas (2005) in their introduction to the proceedings of the first symposium. These subtle differences are not always evident in short and formal contacts. They only become visible when specialists and practitioners take the necessary time to listen to each other and engage in in-depth discussions.

Through such discussions, international colleagues will develop a greater awareness of what is happening in other places in the world and at the same time they

will learn from each other. The advantage is that they will have a real understanding of what their colleagues are trying to explain, because they are aware of how concepts should be interpreted in the light of cultural and linguistic differences. The recognition of these problems and the awareness of the great opportunities that a confrontation could have was the driving force behind the ideas on an international symposium. Those who started organizing the symposia targeted from the beginning to create a platform where international specialists and practitioners could meet and engage in such in-depth discussion on a specific theme. The success and outcome of the first symposia proved they were correct and hopefully their ideas may be taken up by others. Perhaps it is also the start of a new tradition and a long series of symposia in the future.

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ACT Summer Internship Program

ACT annually conducts an 8-week summer internship program for outstanding doctoral students interested in careers related to assessment. In 2011, the program will run from June 6, through July 29, at the ACT headquarters in Iowa City, Iowa.

The Summer Internship Program provides interns with practical experience through completion of a project, seminars, and direct interaction with professional staff responsible for research and development of testing programs. The program is also intended to **assist in increasing the diversity of professionals in measurement and related fields.**

Interns are provided a \$5,000 stipend plus reimbursement for round-trip transportation costs. In addition, a \$1000 supplemental housing allowance is available for applicants living outside a 50-mile radius.

CAREER AND VOCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Vocational Psychology interns will participate in analyses related to career interest, values, and skill assessments, evaluation of career interventions, computer-assisted career guidance, and college and career readiness. To qualify, candidates must be doctoral students currently enrolled in counseling psychology, counselor education, or related programs.

TO APPLY

Application deadline is **February 11, 2011**. Applicants must be enrolled in a doctoral program and attending an institution within the U. S. Information and application materials are available at www.act.org/humanresources/jobs/intern.html. You may also get further information by e-mail (working@act.org), by telephone (319-337-1763), or by writing to: ACT Summer Internship Program, Human Resources Dept, ACT, 500 ACT Drive, P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, IA 52243-0168.



ACT IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

SEVEN WORKING DISCUSSION GROUPS

About three years ago, the second NCDA-IAEVG-SVP International Symposium emphasized many common global challenges in vocational psychology and career guidance research and practice. The outcomes of that symposium provided further support for need for an international platform that allows international scholars, practitioners, and policy makers to exchange ideas and to learn from each other (Schultheiss & VanEsbroeck, 2009). Thus, it became clear that we must continue this fruitful international dialogue through venues such as this joint international symposium. Hence, the aim of the 2010 NCDA-IAEVG-SVP International Symposium was to bring together a limited group of scholars and practitioners from across the globe to discuss some of the most pressing issues facing vocational guidance today. With the exchange of ideas as the main thrust, this one-day symposium was built around seven discussion groups. These seven thematic groups, each with approximately 17 members, formed the basis of the symposium.

The purpose of each discussion group was to engage in intense

small group discussion to cultivate a comprehensive exposure to issues such as international and comparative approaches to policies, theoretical perspectives, resource commitments, deployment of practitioners in educational and vocational guidance, and issues and outcomes that differentiate career development practices in different nations. To facilitate an in-depth understanding of each particular theme, participants remained in the same discussion group throughout the symposium. In each group, only a limited number of invited and selected papers were presented as a starting point for further in-depth discussion.

The *Public Policy and Career Development Group* focused on the impact of international, national, and regional policy on the roles and activities of career guidance practitioners and researchers, as well as career development services as important instruments to achieve policy goals in relation to education, work and employment issues. The *Techniques and Assessment Group* addressed the pitfalls and hurdles of using tests and questionnaires measuring interests, maturity, personality, decisiveness, etc., in global and cultural contexts outside of the ones in which they were developed. The *Interventions during Economic Hardships Group* centered its attention on the current global

economic crisis, unemployment, and repercussions for personal and family stability, as well as the extent to which counselors and guidance workers possess the necessary competencies to meet higher demands for these services. The *Career Development for Underserved Populations Group* focused its attention on the degree to which our present methods and services could be adapted to provide adequate service delivery to global workers, immigrants, older workers, and other yet unidentified groups. The *International Collaborations for Research Group* engaged in a collaborative dialogue to add to our knowledge of the factors that support the development of facilitative career development interventions and new research methods with the capacity to develop long-term mechanisms for engaging resources across global institutions to form borderless models of international research. The *New International Constructs for the 21st Century Group* discussed the need for constructs and paradigms that do not separate career issues from the cultural context in which they are embedded. Contextualist and constructionist paradigms were proposed to meet these new demands on career development practice. The *Techniques and Technologies for Career Development Group* addressed the importance of Information and Communication



Technology (ICT) in educational and vocational guidance, and examined the extent to which ICT is creating new difficulties and inequalities. For additional information, the Discussion Group Chair may be contacted:

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ACTION ITEMS YIELD KEYS FOR THE FUTURE

Donna Schultheiss' above synopsis of the group work can be holistically viewed in her summary at the end of the conference. She noted that the groups had discussed a global world and

therefore global work, that they talked about sustainable networks of career practitioners, that they believed that it was important that theory be used to guide practice and that there should be evidence that theory was effective for diverse and underserved populations. She also stated that the participants believed that it would be helpful to have common competencies and guidelines, including how to use technology. Undergirding much of the discussion was a belief that social justice is an important component of career development.

The fourteen action items developed at the close of the group work were then sent to the attendees with a request that they rank them as critical, high, medium or low priority. The items that received the highest combined critical or high priority ratings were:

- Develop a framework of identifying indicators of success in career development (71%)
- Identify best practices related to type of assessments, including their use both in print and online applications assessments, interpretation of assessments, integration with practice in multinational, multicultural contexts, etc. (61%)
- Produce a written document highlighting best practices in

intervention programs to foster, enhance, and achieve both employment success and services to people who face significant contextual barriers (66%)

- Develop interventions for underserved, at-risk populations to take into account culture, ethnicity, nationality, social class, gender, religion, disabilities, age, and sexual orientation (61%)
- Exchange about the best practices concerning interventions with underrepresented populations. Find out about programs in different nations that have rendered results (70%)
- Develop sustainable research networks to develop international research proposals, to disseminate research findings, to provide research resources, provide a support network, and assist in the development of research capacities (57%)
- Create a feedback loop for planning of next conference; for example, have groups submit international research proposals for work groups that would be held all day the second day (56%)
- Give theory a chance - make theory more prominent (57%).

Many respondents wrote thoughtful comments. Peter

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McIlveen's comments spoke for many when he wrote on his survey, [comments abbreviated]

“All of the items listed are important and worthy of action, however, ‘Develop framework of identifying indicators of success in career development’ is a key public policy matter, and has been for several years. Governments around the world want simplistic measures-- yes simplistic --of outcomes that can be used as indicators of the impact of career development interventions that relate to public policy initiatives. We in the field must look beyond what we regard as the gold-standard of empirical measurement, and work with public policy boffins to determine measures that suit their needs. If we can win over the bureaucrats who, in many respects, are the gatekeepers to power and resources for the work that we know needs doing in the communities, schools, and workplaces, then it is likely that career development will go forward a few more steps as a well-regarded, scientifically-informed program for social reform and good.”

CONNECTION TO THE WORK OF NCUA MEMBERS AND CAREER PRACTITIONERS WORLDWIDE

The links between the symposium and our wider career professional membership are significant. The challenge is in making those links between what was primarily a policy/research focused event and the front line delivery of services to people in our communities more transparent. A comparison with the work of politicians and linking that to their constituents is not unreasonable. None of us can get by without the other yet we often do not see the links that bind us.

Career development is increasingly a global issue, particularly in developed countries, and in most cases is linked closely to wider government policies that either directly or indirectly provide funding. Symposia such as the recent one in San Francisco look particularly at the issues that confront career professionals from a wider policy and research perspective. No workshops were found here about how to deliver services or using the latest testing instruments, but discussions about how we can gain a stronger foothold in the wider political context to advance our cause.

This requires quite a different mindset than we may apply to our thinking when amongst professional colleagues. But without symposia such as these and the work that flows from them, the ability to sustain delivery of services can be severely impacted. This can occur due to competition for public funding and a failure by us to represent our cause in a compelling manner. This inevitably involves making very direct links between the results of the work that we do and the perceived wider public value resulting from that work, in the face of pressure from a range of other services competing for money from the public purse.

Words such as efficiency, evidence, impact are to the fore in these debates. As association members nationally and internationally we need to understand how the system that broadly sustains us works and to appreciate that without the policy level action, all else becomes vulnerable. Politicians don't 'just get it' like we do, and spend only a very small amount of time seeking to understand what we do and the worth that we bring. We need to play this game harder and smarter, particularly in these times of tightening government expenditure. That is how we must move forward in the 21st century.

REFERENCES

- Schultheiss, D., & Van Esbroeck, R. (2009). Vocational Psychology and Career Guidance Practice: An international partnership. *Career Development Quarterly*, 57, 366-377.
- Van Esbroeck, R., Herr, E., & Savickas, M. (2005). Introduction to the proceedings of the first symposium. NCUA-IAEVG Symposium, San Francisco, California.



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Watch for announcements regarding NCUA's plans to host another International Symposium at the centennial year conference in Boston, Massachusetts in 2013.