

PERSPECTIVES ON GUIDANCE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN A GLOBAL SOCIETY

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Abstract

The world is changing rapidly. People today face numerous challenges in achieving a meaningful and fulfilling life. In many countries, there are enormous systemic barriers to address, such as: massive unemployment, HIV/AIDS, social disintegration, and inadequate infrastructure. One job for life is over. For many it never existed. Old metaphors and old models of career development no longer apply. New ways of thinking about careers are necessary, that take into account the context in which people are living, the reality of today's labour market, and the fact people's career-life journey contains many branching paths, barriers, and obstacles, but also allies and sources of assistance.

Flexibility is important, as is keeping options open and making sure the journey is meaningful.

Guidance professionals need to begin early, working with other professionals and those seeking assistance to develop attitudes that facilitate people taking charge of their own career-life paths. People need a vision for their life that will drive a purposeful approach to career-life planning and avoid floundering. Helping people achieve that direction can be most effectively accomplished when policy makers and practitioners work together to ensure that effective and accessible services are available for those who need them and when a large part of focus is on addressing the context in which marginalized people work and live.

Palabras Clave: social changes; social context; career/life planning; guidance.

Humanity today is experiencing unprecedented change. Increasing globalization and decreasing barriers to trade and commerce have created trans-border possibilities that have never existed previously. Opportunity abounds and increasing numbers of people experience privilege that would have been unimaginable even a decade ago. Yet these experiences are not shared universally. Within countries, there often is a concentration of wealth, whereby a select few hold a disproportionate proportion of the resources and the gap between the haves and the have nots is growing. A similar situation exists across countries, with some nations experiencing enormous wealth and abundant resources while other nations experience endemic poverty and struggle for survival.

In this changing climate, there are some factors that seem to be shared across most countries, and within an individual country, across residents. For example, in most

countries there is a widening gap between rich and poor, those with opportunity and those who are marginalized, those with education and those without, and those who struggle for survival and those for whom survival generates barely a passing thought. In most countries, women continue to earn less than men. Equal pay for work of equal value is a commonly expressed goal, but most evidence indicates that the goal is far from being met, even in so-called developed countries (Jackson, 1989). In many (perhaps even most) countries, status is attached to a university education, and young people (and their parents) seek career paths in the so-called professional occupations, even though unemployment for university graduates is chronically high. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is often regarded as an inferior second, regardless of a student's interests, passions, or abilities, and despite the fact that many jobs in the trades go unfilled. Thus, many (perhaps most) countries import workers to fill blue-collar jobs while their own young people seek training in professions for which there are few employment opportunities. Many young people dismiss promising and meaningful career paths in areas where employment demand is great, simply because of the stigma attached to working in technical and vocational occupations.

Frequently, investment in training goes unrealized, because young people drop out of training, or complete training, but then do not enter the occupational field for which they have been trained. Educational systems continue to be directed primarily towards preparation for university education, even though the majority of students end up making transitions directly into the labour force (Heinz, Kelle, Witzel, Zinn, 1998; King, 1993; Morris, 1996). These are phenomenon that are experienced in many countries, regardless of whether they are thought of as developing" or "developed' countries.

A paradoxical context

The situation described above results in many anomalies and in numerous situations where the link between stated values and priorities and existent practices seems weak or perhaps even non-existent. Consider the following examples taken from Hiebert and Borgen (2002).

- An intergovernmental aid project in Latin America was instrumental in bringing canned soft drinks into small towns, where there is no clean drinking water. One of my colleagues, while visiting a small town in this country, observed a worker unloading soft drinks from a truck in front of the town well where there was posted a sign saying that the water was not drinkable. In that town there were soft drinks, but no clean drinking water. Think of the contradiction!

- Another project in Latin America enticed local farmers to convert their cornfields into fields of roses to sell to the United States. The purpose of this plan was to increase cash flow in order to meet payments to the bankers funding urban redevelopment. This project was deemed a financial success, even though that area now needs to import corn for the staples in the basic diet of its citizens. Flowers for corn ... and now an area once self-sufficient in supplying the staple in their basic diet (corn to make tortillas) grows flowers for export, and needs to import corn.
- I was talking with a high ranking official in the Ministry of Education in a small Polynesian country who told me that an initiative to improve the entrepreneurial skills of women in the local craft guilds produce an interesting picture. One day, while women in a local craft guild were working outside their houses, they observed an ox cart loaded with computers journeying by. Apparently, the computers were “needed” to teach the women how to be better entrepreneurs.

I am sure that most people have similar stories that they could share, of situations where the good intentions of people from “more developed” countries create a plan for helping those in “developing” countries move into more contemporary times. However, the result of many of these stories is that little success, and often, substantial frustration, is experienced by both groups of people involved in the initiative. At a cognitive level, we are aware that ideas and approaches often do not translate well from one country to another or from one culture to another. Many people are encountering that lesson again at a practical level.

If guidance is going to have a meaningful impact on social inclusion, we likely will need to dramatically change the way we think about our mission, our mandate, and the scope of our practice as guidance experts. We may even need to revise the way in which we view the role of guidance in society and we most certainly will need to reform the way we prepare practitioners. We must share our expertise, but also develop processes that assist others in sorting through what we have to offer to find the nuggets that are particularly relevant for their context. These themes are elaborated below.

The mission of guidance: context is important

The motto of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance is *Maximising the World's Potential through Guidance*. This motto is intended to serve as an organizing principle or guiding beacon for those involved in providing guidance services. Frequently, guidance practitioners attempt to maximize potential through interactions with individuals (clients), sometimes with groups of individuals, sometimes with classes of

students in schools, and sometimes (although more rarely) with other stakeholder groups such as parents, community leaders, or other professionals. Most of the educational programs that prepare guidance practitioners focus on the knowledge and skills needed for these types of interpersonal interactions.

Non-hierarchical structures

To effectively address social inclusion issues, and maximize the world's potential, the mission of guidance likely will need to place greater emphasis on contextual factors that influence individual clients. Perhaps the focus of guidance will need to expand to include social action and public education that addresses structural and infrastructure factors, as well as the way people talk about their careers and their personal vision for their lives. For example, in many countries education and training is organized into *public* or *basiceducation* and *higher* education. *Higher* education system is organized in various levels, graduate education, bachelor's-level university education, college education, polytechnic education, and so on. It is a hierarchical system with university education at the top and all other forms of education and training ordered underneath. In some countries, the various types of education are even ordered, e.g., Level VI, Level V, etc.

Such a hierarchical system automatically results in status differentials between different types of jobs, not according to the usefulness of the contribution the job makes to society, but based instead on the amount of education and training required.

Some writers are now pointing out that it might be more useful to replace traditional hierarchical structures with ones that are non-hierarchical, perhaps characterized by *circles* (rather than *levels*) of education and training (cf. Hiebert & Borgen, 2002). This new structure would emphasize the importance of all work and life roles in making a society function. The new structure would value all types of education and training for their contribution to the educational and vocational fulfillment of members of society, and to the economic, social, and cultural well being of communities and regions. A *Circles of Education and Training* paradigm would allow for greater movement across and within circles and could begin to break down some of the stigma attached to technical and vocational education and training, and the jobs associated with non-university education.

Career-life planning: developing a vision for one's life

Career Development *refers to a life-long process of managing learning, work, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future.*

People's careers develop over time regardless of whether they are planful about the process or leave it to chance. However, people are more likely to achieve a meaningful

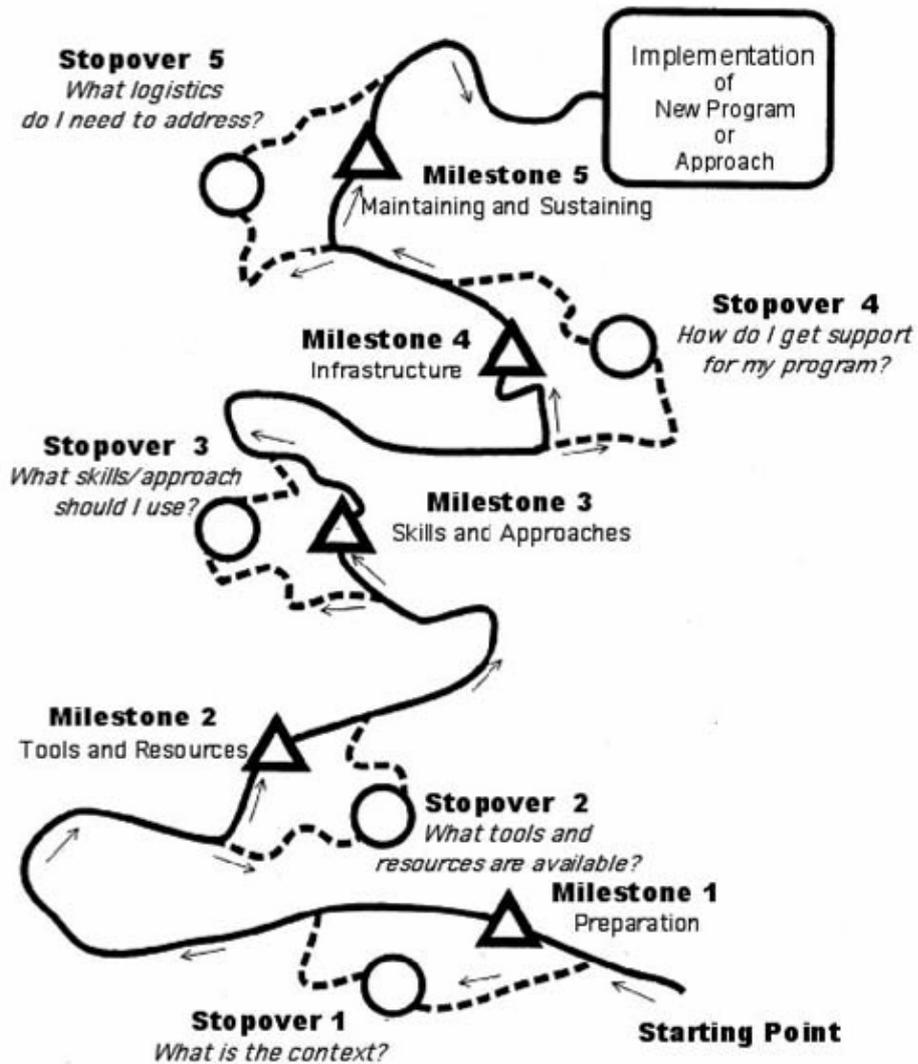
and satisfying life if they are planful about their education and training, and the opportunities they pursue. When people have a vision for what they want to do with their lives, they tend to be more focused, better able to spot opportunities, and be more persistent in pursuit of those opportunities. Some people naturally develop the ability to create focus in their lives, but others need assistance, especially as the rate of economic, occupational, and social change escalates. One of the roles of guidance is to provide that assistance, to develop an infrastructure that makes such services available, and to create a culture that encourages people to seek assistance when they need it (Van Estroeck, 2002).

People's careers and their lives unfold over time, as the result of a series of events, some of them deliberate choices, some of them circumstantial. People are *not* where they are today as the result of a single choice made at a single point in time. To illustrate this, a metaphor for career-life planning is needed that depicts the multitude of choices people make and the multitude of factors that impact a person's life. Some people use the metaphor of a ship on the ocean, buffeted by winds, pulled in certain directions by unseen currents, influenced by tides, pushed on one direction or another by unexpected waves.

Another compelling metaphor refers to life as a journey along a path. Every so often travelers will come to a clearing where they can look out and get directions. There will be branching paths, sometimes leading to dead ends and sometimes leading to unexpected treasures. A person's career-life path can lead in many directions and sometimes there are multiple routes to the same destination. In many cases, the journey is just as enjoyable as reaching the destination, in fact, sometimes the destination turns out to be a disappointment, even though the journey has been a pleasure. Along the journey there will be milestone events, and stop over points where travelers may obtain information, gain new knowledge, or acquire skills to help them on the remainder of their journey. The general direction of the journey may be clear, but often the specific spot in the journey is not certain. A traveler's persistence and determination, along with the help of others and an adequate resource network, that can make the journey a success. The purpose of this illustration is to emphasize that it will be important for guidance workers to help people develop a new way of thinking about their career and their life, if we are to succeed in maximizing the world's potential.

One approach to creating this new mind-set is illustrated below. It views helping people be more planful with their lives and their careers as having five main components: Preparation, Accessing Tools and Resources, Acquiring Skills and Approaches, Infrastructure, and Maintaining and Sustaining the Journey (See Borgen, 1999; Borgen & Hiebert, 2003; Westwood, Amundson, & Borgen, 1994).

Guidance and Counselling Planner



At each milestone, a traveler may need to stop and take stock, in some cases, to address certain barriers, in other cases to obtain information or skills in order to continue the journey. To make sure travelers are well prepared, careful consideration needs to be paid to the context of the journey, i.e., the terrain, direction of the path, others involved with the journey, etc.

Travelers will need to possess the proper tools and resources to make the journey successful and some ability to sift through what is available to select the specific tools and resources that are best suited for the journey. Some travelers may already have the necessary knowledge, skills, and support in order to continue successfully. However,

others may need to stop over and gain additional knowledge, skills, and resources in order to continue. Guidance workers who find this sort of metaphor appealing, are left to complete the picture. The purpose of introducing the idea at this point is to illustrate that new metaphors are possible and in fact are necessary in order to adequately illustrate a contemporary approach to helping people develop a sense of vision for their lives.

The high 5+ 1: new messages for young people

In Canada, many professionals involved with career-life planning are advocating another way help people develop a more contemporary approach to creating focus in their lives. It has been called the *High 5 + 1* (cf. Hiebert, 2002; Redekopp, Day, Robb, 1995) messages for youth.

1. ***Change is constant.*** In all countries, society is changing and the rate of change is accelerating. In some respects, the only thing that is not changing is the fact that everything is changing. Many jobs that exist today did not exist 5 years ago and will be obsolete 5 years from now. Thus, people need to be flexible in order to be able to adjust to the rapid change that is taking place. People also need to understand that it is possible to influence the type of change that takes place and many events that seem to be accidents have a large element of planned happenstance embedded in them. However, in order to influence the direction of change, it is necessary to take some risks and be willing to engage in things where the outcome is uncertain. There also is a need to reflect on one's experience and learn from it. A colleague once remarked that some people seems to have 10 years of experience, while others have 1 year of experience 10 times. The first group learns from their experiences, while the second group repeats the same mistakes time and time again. Thus, while change is inevitable, growth is optional. There is no need to be a victim, the nature of the change is open to influence.
2. ***Focus on the journey.*** Since change is happening so rapidly, the job we are preparing for today may not exist when the training is complete. Thinking of an occupational destination is a thing of the past. Not only can we influence the direction of the journey, we also can influence the nature of the journey. The degree of enjoyment in the journey is largely a function of a person's state of mind. When occupational destinations are uncertain, it important to enjoy the journey. The journey is all that can be counted on, so it is important to enjoy it.
3. ***Follow your heart.*** Passion drives the soul. People tend to strive for, and be motivated by, things in which they are interested. Many people who find their jobs drudgery develop a new zest for living when they change jobs to something that is

more in line with their passions. When the job market is strong, workers frequently make dramatic change in their mid-forties to pursue a dream job that they “always wanted to do.” Students who are doing poorly in school can suddenly begin to succeed when they encounter a teacher who gets them interested in a subject. It is important for teachers to assist students to begin the process of integrating their developing career and life passions with short-term and longer-term goals.

4. **Keep learning.** Lifelong learning is a buzz word in many countries and governments are encouraging people to participate in lifelong learning opportunities. However, in reality all people do continue learning across their life spans. The question is whether or not they will be planful with their learning experiences or leave them to chance. It is important to assist students to understand that people continue to learn and change their career-life goals several times over their life. It is not a matter of *if* people will keep learning, but of *what* they will continue to learn. Lifelong learning is not optional, it is really just a question of whether or not people will be planful with their continuing learning.
5. **Access your allies.** It continues to be the case that personal contacts are the largest source of job leads. In many countries, 80% of all jobs are filled through the informal labour market. Thus, it is important to view parents, relatives, neighbours, and others in one’s personal network as sources of career education and potential job leads. It is important also to be allies for others and experience the richness that results from expanding personal networks. Personal networks are what keep our thinking straight (or not), keep us motivated, and help us grow.
6. **Believe in yourself.** Belief in self is one of the most important personal characteristics – it pervades everything we do. If people don’t believe in themselves, it will be hard to get others to believe in them. Everyone has many positive characteristics. Building a belief in self is largely a matter of focusing on the positives, rather than dwelling on the negatives. Assist students to focus on their personal and vocationally related strengths, in face of the tendency to focus on deficits in times of change, uncertainty or decision. At the bottom line, you don’t believe in yourself, others likely will not believe in you either.

Tailoring services to differing needs

People have differing needs and the same individual may have different needs at differing points in time. For some, information and advice is all that is needed. Practitioners provide information, and those who receive it process the information, and take action.

Other people need career guidance, tailored to their concerns or goals and designed to give them greater opportunity for personal development and work-life satisfaction. Others require career counselling, that creates a climate where people can explore, examine, and clarify their own thoughts, feelings, and actions, to arrive at answers that are best for them.

Advising is most appropriate for people who are seeking information, know how to use it, and are open to the advice they receive. Guidance can assist people to consider their suitability for different career and educational opportunities, explore alternatives they may not have considered previously, and engage in appropriate decision-making about their future career-life path. Counselling is required when people need to explore their beliefs and attitudes related to career and educational opportunities, their personal level of readiness to pursue various options, their cultural and societal contexts, and the need to include others who may be important in the decision making process for that person. In many countries, advising is readily available. Guidance services often are available in basic education, but are frequently not available for those outside the school system.

Counselling services are more rare, especially outside the school system, even in so-called more developed countries. What is required to replace these fragmented services is an integrated and holistic approach geared towards meeting people's needs.

Basic career development principles

Regardless of the type of service sought, it is important that practitioners keep in mind some basic career development principles. It also is important for educators who provide preparatory training for guidance professionals to keep these principles in mind. These principles are especially important in addressing the needs of those who are underprivileged or are excluded from the mainstream.

Multi-potentiality. Typically, people have a variety of talents and most jobs require a broad range of competencies. Thus, most people have a broad range of jobs in which they could be successful. It most often is not productive to seek the perfect match between an individual's characteristics and the requirements of a job.

Career self-concept. Personal values, beliefs, abilities, the activities one finds meaningful or enjoyable, the tools and techniques a person feels comfortable, all interact to form a person's self-concept. Self-concepts change over time and thus people's career preferences change over time. Without job satisfaction, it is difficult to achieve life satisfaction. Career satisfaction results from integrating work roles with a person's self-concept.

Planned happenstance. Many things that happen to people look like accidents. However, closer examination reveals that people position themselves in ways that help them capitalize on unplanned events. Planned happenstance involves opportunity awareness to identify potentially productive events as they unfold, plus willingness to risk taking action when the result is unpredictable, and flexibility to adjust one's plans as events unfold.

Career education. Career education plays an important role in the career paths of children, youth, young adults, and older adults. At its heart, career education involves developing an attitude that encourages the belief that it is OK, or even preferred, to plan one's career. Developing this kind of attitude is best done in small doses, beginning when children are young, in order that the attitudes can be personalized. Career education is life education. The skills needed to make meaningful career choices are the skills needed to make meaningful life choices. Thus, the process is referred to as *career/life planning*.

Career/life planning for girls and women. Research suggests that the career development of girls and women does not parallel that of men and boys. Women face additional and different career-related issues than do men. There is a need to pay attention to individual differences and not generalize from one sub-segment of society to another when working in the career/life planning area.

The role of advocacy

Social inclusion is about change: individual change, but even more importantly, societal change. It is important for diversity groups to understand the dominant culture in which they reside, but it is important also for the dominant culture to understand and address the unique needs of members of diversity groups. Social inclusion must go beyond helping people integrate into a dominant culture, or adjust to their unique conditions.

These factors are important to address, but they are not enough. Genuine attempts to promote social inclusion must include a focus on social change, i.e., an attempt to change systems and people's attitudes to make it easier for all people, not just a privileged few, to live fulfilling lives. The role of guidance in promoting social inclusion through social and systemic change is important, even though the nature of that role has only begun to be developed.

In order to be successful in promoting a social inclusion agenda, counsellors and guidance workers need to move beyond restricting their focus on their interpersonal interactions with the immediate clients. There needs to be a far greater focus on working with policy makers and managers and coordinators to create support and infrastructure

that supports creating opportunity for all. Advocacy with third parties will need to become a more prominent role for guidance professionals. Typically, the underprivileged are not very good at advocating for themselves. Initially, guidance professionals will need to advocate on behalf of the clients they serve, while at the same time teaching people in marginalized groups to advocate effectively for themselves. This will need to be done in a way that is respectful of the local context and also in a way that can point to a more sound/alternative model. Guidance experts will need to work with those in the field to develop criteria that describe what social inclusion looks like in a given local context, so that all concerned will have a more clear idea of what is needed. Training programs also will need to be modified to include greater focus on the knowledge and skills needed for effective advocacy and the competencies needed to work effectively with policy makers to achieve a combined and integrated strategy for addressing social inclusion issues.

Policy-practitioner dialogue

Over the past 5 years, there have been three major international symposiums designed to facilitate interaction between policy makers, practitioners, and researchers (Bezanson & O'Reilly, 2002; Hiebert & Bezanson, 2000). These events have been instrumental in getting careers guidance on the radar screen in many countries and have resulted in some major accomplishments, for example studies by the Organization for Economic cooperation and Development, World Bank, and European Commissions on guidance policies in 36 countries (OECD, 2004; Sultana, 2003; Watts & Fretwell, 2003); national symposiums on career development and public policy in several countries, the establishment of an International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy; discussions aimed at including guidance indicators in the next round of PISA; and at least in part, the recent European Union Declaration on Guidance. These are all examples of what can be accomplished when practitioners begin to view policy as their friend and begin to work with policy makers on common goals.

Some other important observations grew from the international symposiums. It was clear that both policy makers and practitioners saw themselves as primarily interested in what was best for clients. Both groups also agreed that, in times of rapid and ongoing economic and societal change, people have an increased need for assistance. However, each group tended to see the other as interfering with their ability to provide assistance to people who need it. There was agreement that an integrated, holistic, lifelong approach to guidance and counselling services would be achieved most effectively when policy makers and practitioners work together towards common, or at least complimentary, goals. For example, services can be operating within a holistic model, but can face

limitations because of funding restrictions. On the other hand, policy supporting holistic, one-stop, integrated services can be in place, but not operationalized because practitioners have out-dated beliefs or false assumptions about education and training alternatives and status differentials between jobs. During the symposiums, there was the realization that policy makers and service providers need to have a shared, and expanded view of the nature of services and resources available for career-life planning and how those resources can be used effectively within a social inclusion context.

In some countries, there will need to be substantial infrastructure expansion in order to support guidance and counselling services and promote a social inclusion agenda. In other countries, there will be substantial barriers to address, such as massive unemployment, HIV/AIDS, and social disintegration. Policy will be needed to create and maintain adequate support resources such as: public health service, labour market information system, job posting service, job bank, career information resources, as well as public education about the availability and use of these services. For the system to work well, practitioners, agencies, funding authorities, and policy makers will need to be partners in a larger consortium that represents the entire community; linking community development, capacity building, and community economic development; and working together to more adequately address the needs of the people they serve. Addressing policy issues through dialogue with practitioners and service seekers helps to ensure that policies are realistic and useful for maximizing support for those who need it. As guidance professionals, we can wait for others to initiate action, however, there is an opportunity for us to be proactive and initiate the dialogue ourselves.

Communication: send me a message i can understand

A common theme emerging from the international symposiums mentioned above was the need for increased communication between policy makers and practitioners. Each group tends to use language that is not readily understood by the other. For example, basic concepts such as *career development* tended to be viewed in a variety of ways by practitioners and tended to be not understood at all by policy makers. Practitioners lamented that policy makers did not “get it” and policy makers were frustrated because practitioners could not agree on the meaning of standard terms that seemed to be a part of everyone’s lexicon. As a result, an initiative is now taking place in several countries to develop a glossary of career development terms and to promote its use so that there might be greater consistency in the meaning attached to key concepts. There also was a plea from policy makers to convey messages in more manageable units. Few policy makers have time to read a 20 page paper put forward by practitioners. However,

condensing the central themes into a 1-2 page briefing note would increase dramatically the chances of it being read, i.e., reaching its intended audience.

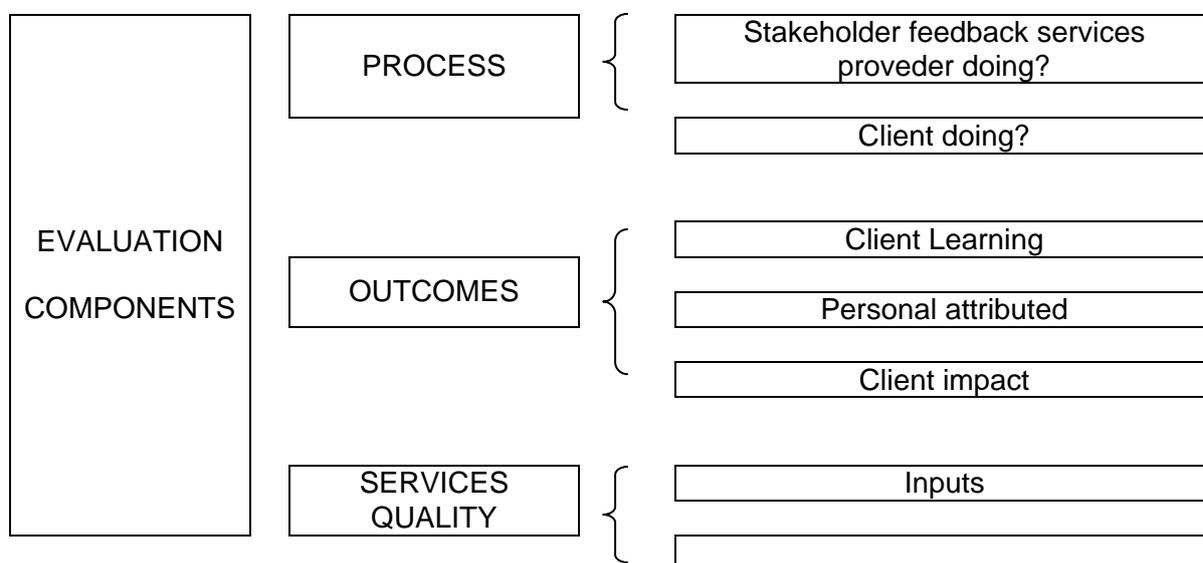
This observation has important implications as we move to address a social inclusion agenda. It will be important to do the developmental work needed to create a framework for approaching the main issues involved, and once developed to use the framework as a guide for the messages we send. It will be important to be clear about the goals for which we are striving, and to package the documentation of our attempts to achieve those goals into readable communication documents, *sound bites*, rather than full length texts. By being aware of who is our audience, and packaging our communication so that it is user friendly for the intended reader, we will enhance greatly the chances of being able to work together with policy makers towards common goals.

Another theme arising from the international symposiums centered around the need for better documentation of the effectiveness of the work done by practitioners. There was a general belief that practitioners were providing services that were important and effective, but there was a shortage of evidence to support that belief. It seems that practitioners seldom evaluate their work with clients, and when they do, it often is by asking them if they found the services useful. Policy makers and funders do not find such data very compelling. This is another lesson that we need to be mindful of as we move to take a more active role in addressing a social inclusion agenda. If we are to be credible in a comprehensive attempt to address social inclusion issues, guidance practitioners will need to incorporate evaluation into their normal practices and counsellor educators will need to make evaluation a more prominent and integral part of training programs for guidance practitioners.

A model that I have been using is outlined below in the hope that it might spark dialogue on developing improved ways for demonstrating the value of guidance services. A goal in this model is to integrate evaluation into service delivery so that evaluation and intervention become partners in the delivery of guidance and counselling services (Hiebert, 1997, 2003). The model builds on the premise that in order to evaluate a program of service, there needs to be evidence that the program has been followed or that the service has been provided as intended. Therefore it is important to track the processes followed by both clients and practitioners in order to confirm that the program has been followed. There also needs to be evidence of the outcomes associated with the program. Most often these data will be a combination of informal and formal data, which may be soft and fuzzy, and impact indicators such as economic trends and participation rates. All of these data are important in demonstrating the value of the services provided through guidance. It is important to have evidence of the competencies clients acquire,

the personal changes that clients experience, and also the larger life-impact associated Evaluation Components Process with guidance services. Finally, it is important to track the resources that are brought to bear on providing services and stakeholder perceptions of quality of services provided. When guidance practitioners begin to adopt a more comprehensive approach to gathering evidence attesting to their effectiveness, it places them in a position to be an ally to policy makers in the pursuit of common goals. As guidance moves more squarely into addressing social inclusion needs, an effective and easy to use approach to demonstrating the value of what we do will be a big asset in recruiting the support that will be needed.

Table 1: Basic Model for Evaluating Guidance and Counselling Effects



Practitioner competencies: the need for change in training agendas

In September 2003, the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance adopted the International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners (Repetto, Malik, Ferrera, Manzano, & Hiebert, 2003). The International Competencies are of two types: Core competencies that all practitioners should have (e.g., ethical behavior, professional conduct, advocacy, awareness and appreciation of client cultural differences, awareness of their own capacity and limitations, ability to design, implement and evaluate guidance and counselling programs, knowledge of labour market information, and being able to communicate effectively with colleagues and clients) and specialized competencies, that depend on the nature of a person’s work (e.g., assessment, educational guidance, career development, counselling, information management, consultation and coordination, research and evaluation, programs and service management, community capacity building, and placement). It is noteworthy that

advocacy and awareness and appreciation of client cultural differences are seen as core competencies that all practitioners should have. However, more work is needed to articulate in greater detail the specific nature of those competencies, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and attributes that career counsellors and guidance practitioners need in order to work effectively with a diverse range of clients, within a social inclusion perspective, and in the context of a global labour force. More specifically, it will be important to, for example, identify the knowledge, skills, and attributes that are needed to advocate effectively, and in a similar manner to identify the more specific knowledge, skills, and attributes embedded in other areas of the competency framework. Once these competencies have been identified and validated, it will be important for practitioner training programs to modify their curriculums to give greater emphasis to these competencies. In the discussion above, other areas have been identified where there also is a need to modify existing practitioner training programs. These include: making evaluation a more integral part of training programs and training greater expertise in program evaluation, teaching the knowledge and skills required for more effective interactions with policy makers and funders, expanding the role boundaries of guidance practitioners to include social action and advocacy, and including a greater emphasis on assessing and intervening with contextual variables that affect clients, introducing new metaphors and ways of viewing career-life planning. The areas will all be needed if Guidance is to play a central role in addressing the social inclusion needs of the societies in which we live.

Conclusion

As I look around the various countries I visit, and observe the content and training practices of programs designed to prepare guidance practitioners, I see a remarkable similarity across most programs and a remarkable similarity to the program where I did my graduate work 30 years ago. Most would agree that the world is dramatically different today, compared to 30 years ago. Given that observation, it seems strange that our training programs for guidance practitioners have not changes substantially over the past 30 years.

Society today is on a roller coaster ride for many. The prosperity and abundance enjoyed by a few are not shared by most. Models for guidance and counseling have for the most part been developed with middle class populations in developed countries. Even in the so called developed countries, large portions of the population are not well served by existing approaches. If we are to realize the dream of maximizing the world's potential through guidance we will need to expand our mission, mandate, and scope of practice to include an explicit and substantial component focused on a social inclusion agenda,

implemented in partnership with all stakeholders, and incorporating specific steps to demonstrate the added value that guidance brings to attempts to provide a more meaningful and fulfilling life for the citizens of our countries.

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