

Editorial message from Guest Editor
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Revitalizing (career) counseling in education to help all people who are able and willing to work redesign their career-lives and find sustainable decent work

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Background

Fundamental changes in the world of work are leaving many workers insecure and uncertain about their future. The situation is aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has resulted in billions of job losses globally (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2020), approximately 1.6 billion people in the informal sector are among those who have lost their jobs. This has led to greater uncertainty in occupational contexts, which have already been unsettled by increasing job changes (Hooley et al., 2020; Kelly, 2020). Work environments are no longer able to 'hold' (Winnicott, 1965) workers, leaving them insecure, traumatized, and without any sense of meaning and purpose in their work-lives. Numerous changes in the workplace (largely the effect of technological advances) have compelled workers to reconsider, reconstruct, and redesign their lives to improve their chances of finding sustainable, decent work (Di Fabio & Maree, 2016; Duarte & Cardoso, 2015; Guichard, 2018; Hartung, 2016, 2018, 2019; Ribeiro, 2016; Rossier, 2015a, 2015b; Savickas, 2007, 2019; Savickas & Savickas, 2020; UN, 2016).

Workers have to contend with major occupational transitions (Savickas et al., 2009) requiring career counseling theorists, practitioners, researchers, and policy-makers to reconsider their theoretical and conceptual approaches and, accordingly, the practice of career counselling as a whole (Savickas et al. 2009). It serves no purpose to continue drawing on career counseling approaches and traditions that have lost their currency in today's postmodern occupational world (Savickas & Savickas, 2019). What is needed is innovating and updating career counseling so that it can help people link career choices to a mission (personal meaning in the workplace) and a vision (social meaning of people's work). Above all, people must be guided and counseled on which skills to master to increase their adaptability and

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employability (Hartung & Cadaret, 2017). This will then enable them to manage repeated work-related transitions more successfully (Sensoy-Bridnick & Bridnick, 2017).

In summary: Career counseling clearly needs to come up with a practicable, theory-driven way of promoting career counseling in primary, secondary, and tertiary education – an approach that can serve as “a general rubric that covers a myriad of interventions and services” (Savickas, 2015, p. 129). At the heart of such an approach is the elicitation and implementation of ‘subjective’ aspects (‘stories’) as well as ‘objective’ aspects (‘scores’) of career counseling in education (Maree, 2013, 2020; Savickas, 2019). An approach that can encourage workers and prospective workers to choose and construct careers and design themselves successfully (Guichard, 2005, 2009; Savickas, 2019, 2020). It should also provide a platform for reconceptualizing and redesigning career counseling interventions to meet the challenges discussed above. Such an approach will enhance people’s (critical) self-reflection, reflexivity (meta-reflection), embracement of change, and conversion of aspiring intention into experienced action (moving forward) (Maree, 2020; Savickas, 2019, 2020; Savickas, 2020, in Arthur, 2020). Ultimately, it should help all people who are willing and able to work to acquire work-life identities that will enable them to recognize and use the opportunities contained in challenges to survive and flourish in these unstable times (Savickas, 2007; Savickas, 2020, in Arthur, 2020).

Typical research questions could include the following: How can career counseling in education

- ✓ help worker-seekers take responsibility for their own future, become resourceful and adaptable, and manage repeated transitions in a rapidly changing world of work?
- ✓ be updated in terms of theory and praxis to promote decent work and sustainable development for all who are able and willing to work?
- ✓ be reconfigured to promote success in the workplace by increasing workers’ adaptability, employability, and career resilience?
- ✓ be used to help prospective workers clarify their career(-life) identity, make the most of change, and promote self-reflection, reflexivity, and life design?
- ✓ be provided in group contexts to promote people’s sense of meaning, rekindle their sense of purpose in the workplace, and foster their sense of critical consciousness (Blustein, 2015)?

We (the editorial board) received several provocative and constructive contributions that covered a broad spectrum of research methodologies. They also covered theoretical as well as practical issues and reported on research from a quantitative, a qualitative, a mixed-methods, and an integrative qualitative-quantitative perspective.

As always, this issue includes diverse contributions in terms of gender and race and national, international, and interdisciplinary standpoints. Individually and collectively the contributions shed light on issues underlying the renewal of career counseling in education.

What Can Readers Expect in This Issue?

In the leading article, *Using My Career Story to foster reflective capacity, hope, and narrative change*, Santilli and Hartung (2022) describe the development and use of the My Career Story (MCS) approach. This self-guided autobiographical workbook is designed to help people across the lifespan and diversity continuum articulate and shape their career-life stories. The authors discuss the outcomes of a research project where the MCS was used with young adults in Northern Italy. The findings confirmed the trustworthiness and validity of the instrument in their research context. The research participants had moved towards more action-oriented, more positive, and more lucid language in their stories by the time they had

reached the end of the intervention and once they had constructed their life portraits (compared to the stories they had recounted at the outset of the intervention). The participants also achieved better scores on measures used to assess reflective capacity and hope after the intervention. The need for an approach such as that discussed in the article has never been greater – readers working in the fields of career guidance, career education, and career counseling should find the article of great value.

In the second article, *Countering master narratives with narratives of persistence: A liberation perspective in career counseling*, Briddick and Briddick (2022) deal with a highly topical matter. The authors argue that many youths today have to contend with discrimination and marginalization in their daily lives, despite global efforts to eliminate such evils in society. Discrimination here is often based on youths' (social) identities and related power systems and subjugation (Brewster & Molina, 2021). The authors add that minoritized youths especially are caught in the trap of culturally contrived 'master narratives' that maintain the privilege systems in their own countries (Liu, 2017). The authors maintain that reflecting carefully on such 'master narratives' can facilitate a key initial step in career counselling interventions with marginalized youths. The authors advocate an innovative and practicable strategy based on narrative counselling and related constructs aimed at disassembling 'master narratives' and providing space for the construction and enactment of 'alternative' stories of hope and purpose-filled futures for marginalized youths. This article, too, is a 'must read' for all career counsellors.

In the third article, *Life design group-based intervention fostering vocational identity, career adaptability, and career decision-making self-efficacy*, Cardoso et al. (2022) examine the process and outcome of life design group intervention with Grade 9 participants. Using a quasi-experimental, mixed-methods design, the researchers investigate the effect of the intervention on the participants' vocational identity, career adaptability, and career decision-making self-efficacy. The outcomes confirm the effectiveness of the intervention in respect of the above features as well as in advancing the participants' reflexivity, their sense of direction and, ultimately, the construction of their careers and themselves. The research outcomes are consistent with previous findings on the topic. Researchers involved in this kind of intervention should find the article most illuminating.

In the fourth article, *Revitalising career counseling for sustainable decent work and decent lives: From personality traits to life project reflexivity for well-being*, Di Fabio et al. (2022) maintain that people are increasingly being confronted with critical life and professional challenges and having to take personal responsibility for their career-life stories. The authors argue that to remain relevant career counseling requires revitalized views on counseling interventions. The authors administered the *Big Five Questionnaire*, the *Life Project Reflexivity Scale*, and measures of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing to University of Florence students. They then analyzed the research results by considering the relationship between life project reflexivity (LPR) dimensions and wellbeing (while controlling for the 'Big Five' personality traits). 'Authenticity' emerged as the strongest of the three LPR dimensions. The authors conclude by advocating an innovative, strengths-based prevention strategy for providing sustainable decent work and constructing meaningful life trajectories. A study well worth considering in the context of rapidly changing work and career counseling contexts

In the penultimate article, *Precariousness in the time of COVID-19: a turning point for reforming and reorganizing career counselling for vulnerable workers*, Di Fabio and Svicher (2022) propose innovative career counseling approaches for vulnerable workers during the COVID-19 pandemic based on a recently developed work precarity framework consisting of three broad 'work' categories: precarity of work (fear and concern associated with employment continuity), precarity at work (psychosocial or physical insecurity at work), and precarity from work (uncertainty and insecurity due to work that does not satisfy the basic

needs of workers). Recommendations for mitigating the impact of the pandemic relate to the psychology of sustainability, the psychology of sustainable development, and the psychology of working theory. In conclusion, the authors argue that vocational psychologists need to modernize specific career counseling practices in order to (1) support vulnerable workers in their search for sustainable, decent work and (2) promote inclusivity in occupational contexts.

In the concluding article, *Enhancing group self- and career construction counselling: A review of outcome research*, Maree (2022) reviews the outcomes of five purposely selected group-based career counseling projects conducted in developing country contexts. Using thematic data analysis, the author examined the outcomes of these projects in order to identify the strengths as well as the areas for development (weaknesses) of the career counseling approach followed in the five projects. The findings demonstrated the value of contextualized career construction in contexts substantially different from the context in which the career construction counseling was originally developed. The author concludes that in the light of the current situation (including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on employment), research on the unemployed should be prioritized.

In conclusion, I thank all colleagues involved in the editorial and publishing process for their help and guidance. I especially thank Professor Hüseyin Uzunboylu (editor-in-chief) for his professional support in putting this issue together. Last, but certainly not least, I thank all our reviewers for their selfless and expert help.

We hope readers will enjoy reading this special issue of the *CJES*.

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