

# TOWARDS A MODEL OF CONTINUOUS PARTICIPATION:



## The Central Role of Career Counselling



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PARTICIPATION:  
The Central Role of Career Counselling***

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
Adult Career Counselling Strategies .....	3
The Origin of the Classification .....	4
The Strategies and Policy Development .....	6
The Broad Outline of the Document .....	7
CHAPTER I: THE HARMONIZING STRATEGY OF ADULT CAREER COUNSELLING .....	9
Issues.....	9
Theoretical Elements of the Harmonizing Strategy .....	10
Policy Elements (a few suggestions) .....	12
Educational Approaches (a few suggestions) .....	13
Need for Complementary Approaches.....	16
CHAPTER II: THE INTERACTIVE STRATEGY OF ADULT CAREER COUNSELLING .....	19
Issues .....	19
Theoretical Elements of the Interactive Strategy .....	20
Policy Elements (a few suggestions) .....	23
Educational Approaches (a few suggestions) .....	24
Need for Complementary Approaches .....	25
CHAPTER III: THE DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY OF ADULT CAREER COUNSELLING .....	27
Issues .....	27
Theoretical Elements of the Developmental Strategy .....	30
Policy Elements (a few suggestions) .....	32
Educational Approaches (a few suggestions) .....	33
Need for Complementary Approaches .....	36

CHAPTER IV: THE CONTEXTUALIZING STRATEGY OF	
ADULT CAREER COUNSELLING .....	37
Issues .....	37
Theoretical Elements of the Contextualizing Strategy.....	39
Policy Elements (a few suggestions) .....	44
Educational Approaches (a few suggestions) .....	45
Need for Complementary Approaches .....	50
CHAPTER V: GENERAL THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	53
Educational Philosophies of Adult Counselling (a few suggestions) .....	53
Policy Development Theories (a few suggestions) .....	59
Policy Evaluation Models (a few suggestions) .....	60
CHAPTER VI: GENERAL THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	67
Action Plan (a few suggestions) .....	67
A brief comment on self-guidance .....	68
Hetero-guidance .....	71
Co-guidance .....	71
A word on eco-guidance .....	71
Outstanding questions .....	75
Scenarios .....	76
Implementation Approaches (a few suggestions) .....	77
Target Groups (a few suggestions) .....	80
Competencies Required (a few suggestions).....	82
CONCLUSION .....	85
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	87

## INTRODUCTION

In the new knowledge economy, as we all know, continuing education and training and ongoing career management are now essential for everyone. This new economy is in fact characterized by perpetual change and the constant need to integrate new knowledge (Inkpen and Tsang, 2005; Tanriverdi and Venkatraman, 2005; OECD, 2003a; von Barloewen, 2003).

What adult will not be faced, sooner or later, with a restructured organizational role resulting in remodelled duties? Who has not experienced having to adjust to new coworkers, perceive an entirely different organizational culture and gain increasingly advanced knowledge? Who hasn't felt a bit intimidated by the steps that have to be taken to find a new job? Above all, who among us has not either chosen or been forced to rethink our career management and education, in whole or in part?

The above observations, however, relate to individuals. They refer to the various types of sociovocational transitions adults go through in the course of their lives. These include intrapersonal transitions (phases of work life, occasional recurrent periods of questioning the meaning of or approaches to work life, the shift at midlife from an impression of infinitude to a growing feeling of finitude, career changes). They also include many intra-organizational transitions (change of duties, vertical mobility) and inter-organizational transitions (voluntary job changes, unexpected initiatives to reenter the labour market following company closures or mergers).

However, if we look at the broader social context, other crucial findings become apparent. Western societies, characterized currently by the knowledge economy, can no longer afford to lose workers. The sociovocational participation of all citizens is more than ever necessary to the development of society (Rifkin, 2000; von Barloewen, 2003). This participation entails in particular the sharing of information and ideas, but especially involvement in the various sectors deemed useful by the community (Rogoff, 2003; von Barloewen, 2003). This multidirectional involvement thus concerns the activities of social, economic, political, community, and family life. We should note in passing that the concept of "participation" is related to one of Graham's (1991) three categories of civic citizenship, which refers back to classical philosophy (for example, Aristotle, Plato) and to modern political theory.

In Québec, as in the rest of Canada, "the movement [is to] make attachment to the labour market a goal of both the education and the career development systems" (CMEC and HRDC, 2003, p. i). This expanded participation, especially since it affects various sectors including the occupational, organizational, and

community sectors, ensures that there is a minimum of social cohesion (Rifkin, 2000; Thurow, 2000; Gorz, 1997). Because it is precisely social cohesion that guarantees the economic progress of a community, and not the other way around (Putnam, 2002; 1996). Markets are derivative institutions that exist only so long as the reserves of social trust are sufficient to guarantee the terms of the exchange. In order to fully prosper, the economy must be able to rely on the strength of social and economic links, the sole creators of social confidence (Rifkin, 2000).

To respond to this collective need for social participation by all adults, career counselling must operate on several levels. We have identified four, which we call "career counselling strategies." Although these strategies seem fairly independent or complete in themselves, they must be viewed essentially as complementary factors. Thus, we can speak of a continuous participation model based on a four-part concept of career counselling.

This model of continuing education and training is intended as a proposed basis for a policy on career counselling and career management for adults, a proposal that is in keeping with the definition of "international career management" used by the OECD and Canada. The term "career management" includes services intended to help individuals, of all ages and at all periods in their lives, to make choices regarding studies, education, and occupation, and to manage their careers (see <<http://www.iaevg.org/iaevg/index.cfm?lang=2>>).

The proposed basis for the development of this policy focuses on a constructivist understanding of a person's vision of the world, and especially of the person's participation in the world. This vision forms the basis for processes of continuing education and training and career management. While these processes are cyclical in the knowledge economy, they necessarily involve an uninterrupted series of sociovocational changes and re-evaluations. They thus require from adults a constant reorganization of their conception of work and of their participation in the socioeconomic world. In fact, this constantly shifting world, it should be recalled, includes a constantly developing ego dealing with a knowledge society, which is itself ceaselessly generating new phenomena.

The basis proposed in this document is also founded on the following general principle: in order to succeed in involving adults in a process of continuing education and training and career management throughout their lives, counselling and support services must help them always be aware of their conceptions of the ever-changing world and of their social participation in this world. In order to do this,

these services must help adults constantly enrich and renew their vision of things, according to various career counselling strategies.

### **Adult Career Counselling Strategies**

Our proposal for the basis of a policy on counselling and support services refers to, it should be recalled, four career counselling strategies for the broad clientele of adults. These strategies are based on philosophical and metatheoretical substrata (see the four sections on the theoretical elements) linked to this widely recognized principle: "the world is my representation." They will be covered in the first four chapters of this document.

Career counselling is generally defined as a constant process of reactivating the sociovocational participation of adults, which makes it possible for them to be better able to:

1. know the elements intrinsic to themselves and to the environment, and discover possible ways of harmonizing these elements (the **harmonizing strategy** of career counselling refers primarily to an understanding of similarities, adequateness or compatibility of self and environment)
2. perceive the mutual effects of these two entities (self and environment) (the **interactive strategy** of career counselling generally refers to the importance of identifying the reciprocal strengths of self and environment)
3. reposition themselves, taking into account the constant future modifications in their professional lives and the ever-developing aims and visions of organizations and the labour market (the **developmental strategy** of career counselling generally focuses on the need to continually renew vocational plans, to constantly keep up-to-date on development plans in the environment, and to develop awareness of the immediate impact of the mutual influence of these projects and plans for the future)
4. learn to cope with the unknown, in which the main factors (self, environment, specific context, present moment) are constantly recombining to create unique and unpredictable situations (the **contextualizing strategy** of career counselling gives priority to enhanced development of the



following skills: managing unpredictability, understanding the relativism of events, and sharing accountability and responsibility for turns of events)

These four strategies are necessary for a complete process of ongoing career counselling. Each must serve in its own way as a basis for developing a policy on counselling and support services for adults. As we will see below, while the first strategy may help adults make immediate decisions, the three others are vital to teach them to better manage their career paths.

And it is in fact one of the major missions that the OECD now attributes to those responsible for guidance services: provide services that are not limited to helping persons make immediate decisions but also teach them to manage their careers. "The future challenges are: to make a shift so that [guidance] services focus upon developing career-management skills, as well as upon information provision and immediate decision-making" (OECD, 2004, p.7). "In addition to learning, labour market and equity goals, conceptual and theoretical arguments support [career counselling's] potential to contribute to the development of human capital" (OECD, 2004, p. 29) as long as it makes possible a more intensive development of adults' ability to plan. In addition, this ability is necessary for "the development of people through lifelong career planning" (OECD, 2004, p. 144).

The need for the four strategies therefore seems to be all the greater. Not only are they likely to meet the objectives of educability in career management throughout their lives, but they are very promising because they take the long view. This is imperative in today's knowledge economy. Because we still find that "significant gaps exist in adults' access to career counselling, and there are indications that demand exceeds the supply of services" (OECD, 2004, p. 9).

### **The Origin of the Classification**

In this document, the various career counselling strategies are grouped according to a classification that has been recognized since the dawn of humanity. But especially since, and this is the most important point, this classification is still widely used, in this new millennium, in various scientific fields. It is specifically based on Aristotle's theory of causes: material, effective, final, formal. These causes are now presented in formulations that have been revised and adapted to more recent discoveries (von Barloewen, 2003; Bastit, 2002; Blader and Tyler, 2002; Larson, 2002; Lyddon and Robin, 2002). While "for Antiquity, the most famous classification remains Aristotle's" [translation] (Pérussell, 1989, p. 285), it

should be noted that despite controversial interpretations "the situation of the issue of [Aristotle's] causes . . . persists logically, physically and ethically" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 3).

As we enter the twenty-first century, researchers continue to argue, for example, that these four causes dictate our ethical attitude in the area of justice (Blader and Tyler, 2002), the way we process various types of information (Killeen, 2001), our understanding of scientific facts (Sunday, Eyles and Upshur, 2001) and historical facts (Larson, 2002). In particular, these Aristotelian causes have also been the basis for Stephen Pepper's (1942) four-part division of concepts of the world (*formist, mechanistic, organismic, contextualistic*), terms that are now classic and still widely used today (Lyddon and Robin, 2002). Finally, these causes also form the basis for Lyddon's (1995) definitions of the currents of constructivist thought in psychology (*material constructivism, efficient constructivism, formal constructivism, final constructivism*), which are constantly underlined in the proliferation of current literature on constructivism (Lyddon and Robin, 2002; Le Moigne, 2001).

In this document, Aristotle's classification is applied in terms of his complementary interpretation of causes. This is a richer interpretation. "It is necessary to broaden the interpretation [of Aristotle's causes] to move beyond the sole perspective of unity of causes and make room as well for their complementary plurality" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p.26).

Thus, the four strategies proposed in this document (harmonizing, interactive, developmental and contextualizing) focus respectively on:

1. **the intrinsic properties of the entities "self" and "environment"** (linked to Aristotle's material cause<sup>1</sup>)
2. **the particularities of influencing and being influenced** for each of these entities (linked to Aristotle's efficient cause<sup>2</sup>)
3. **the characteristic that each of these entities has to tend towards an ideal final goal.** This direction will be more or less respected according to the quality of the intrinsic properties of these entities and the interplay of their cross-influences (linked to Aristotle's final cause<sup>3</sup>)

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1. Cf. Section entitled: Theoretical Elements of the Harmonizing Strategy

2. Cf. Section entitled: Theoretical Elements of the Interactive Strategy

3. Cf. Section entitled: Theoretical Elements of the Developmental Strategy

4. **The nature of each of the entities to merge within a constantly new context and moment.**

The uniqueness of this merging depends not only on this constantly new context and moment, but is contingent on the quality of the intrinsic properties of these entities, their cross-influences and their final goal (linked to Aristotle's formal cause, which includes the three other causes<sup>4</sup>)

The four strategies are associated with each other through their increasing complexity, but especially through their complementary nature.

### **The Strategies and Policy Development**

To facilitate the constant enrichment and renewal of the adults' vision of the world based on one of the four career counselling strategies, specific policy elements are required. We are proposing a few under the headings "policy elements" in the first four chapters of this document.

Overall, these proposed policy elements are as follows:

1. For the harmonizing strategy of career counselling, the policy on counselling and support services should ensure that adults always have access to the latest information on the intrinsic characteristics of self and environment, especially on the similarities, the affinities, and the differences between those two entities.
2. For the interactive strategy of career counselling, the policy should focus first on making adults more aware of the effects of their actions on the environment. To achieve this, they will focus sustained attention on developing interpersonal skills (persuasion, cross-influence) and awareness of their power (individual or as a group) on the environment (organization, community). Moreover, this policy should also increase adults' awareness of the presence of effects of the environment on them (for example, impact of the quality of working conditions and of the organizational structure).
3. For the developmental strategy of career counselling, such a policy should help adults develop more effective skills to project themselves, as well as the environment, into future perspectives.

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4. Cf. Section entitled: Theoretical Elements of the Contextualizing Strategy

The policy should also give adults a clearer view of the cross-influences of the future orientations of these two realities (for example, individual career plan, organization's development plans).

4. For the contextualizing strategy of career counselling, such a policy should do everything possible to ensure that adults are able to develop their tolerance for ambiguity with respect to the unknown aspects of every sociovocational change. The policy should also help adults better manage the unpredictability of any particular combination of self, environment, present time, and context.

### **The Broad Outline of the Document**

This proposal for the basis of a policy on counselling and support services for adults thus includes four career counselling strategies, to each of which correspond particular theoretical foundations, specific policy elements, and particular educational approaches. These strategies are presented in the first four chapters.

The other two chapters (V and VI) are devoted to considerations that will have to be taken into account subsequently. Chapter V presents various aspects of theory that could help with choices related to an educational philosophy of counselling, to a theory of policy development, and to a model for policy evaluation. Chapter VI makes a few practical suggestions that could help determine certain options for action plans (self-, hetero-, co-, and eco-guidance), the implementation approaches (preventive, curative, incentive), the target groups, and the competencies required.

Finally, this proposal for the basis of a policy on counselling and support services for adults has been conceived on the basis of a thorough reflection on the extensive literature related to the unknowns of adult life and the socioeconomic community, as well as on the relationships that need to be constantly redefined among these various constantly shifting realities.

Many people are therefore invited, through the explanation of this *continuous participation model*, to take part in an ongoing redefinition of their conceptions of their relationships with this "active" society. We are thinking here of school administrators, and of experts and practitioners who are concerned about the proactive links between the person and the world of work, as well as of all the adults living through periods of questioning of their vocational lives.

## CHAPTER I

### THE HARMONIZING STRATEGY OF ADULT CAREER COUNSELLING

#### Issues

The harmonizing strategy sees adult career counselling as a question of similarity, correspondence or compatibility of self and environment. It is based on the following principle: in order to be better able to endlessly make and remake their educational and vocational choices, individuals need to substantially increase their knowledge of themselves and the environment, and especially of the possible points of harmonization between the intrinsic properties of these two realities. Thus, the more adults possess this information, the more they are able to enrich and renew their world-views, and the more capable they are of making educational and vocational choices that are consistently appropriate for both themselves and society.

The harmonizing strategy is related in particular to the trait-and-factor view, in which the central process is the identification of compatibilities between the characteristics of the person and those of the environment. This vision was formulated by Parsons in 1909, but it is still recognized, in the twenty-first century, in various domains. For example, personality theories illustrate the current contribution of this vision (Schultz and Schultz, 2001), which made it possible to propose a personality model in five factors (*the big five*) the stability of which would last beyond thirty years during adult life (McCrae and Costa, 2003). In addition, researchers must always take into account these trait-and-factor variables in their research protocols (Lohman and Bosma, 2002; Poortinga and Van-Hemert, 2001; Dowds and Marcel, 1998).

According to the harmonizing strategy, the perceptions of the intrinsic characteristics of the individual and of the environment are the main ones responsible for psychological functioning. The emphasis is therefore on the representations of the relatively stable dimensions of the person and the environment. Consequently, very little importance is given to situational or contextual factors.

When applied to counselling and support services, the harmonizing strategy considers the person and the environment as two entities, each having its own intrinsic properties and functioning distinctly and separately. Thus, the harmonizing strategy views cross-influences between self and environment as secondary. It refers mostly to a particular counselling process that is related to the level of compatibility between the intrinsic characteristics of these two distinct entities, the person and the environment. This strategy therefore consists in matching as appropriately as possible the person (attitudes, competencies, skills, values, personality type) with the specific characteristics of the world of work (types of work organizations, trades or occupations, tasks). In addition, according to the harmonizing strategy, if these entities share many points in common, the processes of continuing education and training, career counselling, and career management will then be successful.

### **Theoretical Elements of the Harmonizing Strategy**

The harmonizing strategy is linked to several theories of vocational choice and career management described in the book by Bujold and Gingras (2000). It is also related to Holland's typology (personality types, types of work environment), Dawis's theory of person-environment correspondence and Sampson's cognitive approach to the processing of information on the self and the environment, as well as several psychoanalytic concepts. In the latter case, according to Riverin-Simard (2002), the work:

1. makes possible the expression of certain personality traits (trait-and-factor theories)
2. favours the sublimation of biological drives in a form of participation that is socially acceptable (psychoanalytic theories)
3. makes it possible to resolve internal conflict between the id and the superego (Lantos), to sublimate instincts (Menninger), or to respond to the drives for mastery, control, and domination over one's environment (Hendrick)
4. is a means of satisfying aspirations and needs (Maslow's needs theory)
5. makes possible the realization of one's personal or vocational identity (theory of the self)
6. often has the purpose of developing personal identity, or else, turns out to be a means of self-actualization or self-realization (developmental strategies)

In modern psychology, the harmonizing strategy is based on similar postulates. In trait-and-factor theories, for example, the main research themes refer to individual cognitive characteristics, including those related to personality and psychological processes (Lyddon, 1995; Lyddon and Robin, 2002). These characteristics largely determine the psychological functioning of the individual; they are less concerned

with the relationships the individuals have with each other or with the community. The relatively stable components of the individual are also emphasized, leaving little room for contextual variables. In the nineteenth century, for example, psychological studies on behaviour based on concepts of instinct, spirit or soul were part of this type of approach. In fact, these studies obscured the various relational factors and contextual variables that influenced these behaviours. We might mention in this regard Cabanis's psychophysiology, Berkeley's subjective psychology and Condillac's spiritualist psychology (Altman and Rogoff, 1987).

The harmonizing strategy of counselling also has much in common with the following schools of thought: *formist* (Pepper) (1942), *self-action* (Dewey and Bentley) (1949) and *material constructivism* (Lyddon) (1995).

The harmonizing perspective is based among other things on Aristotle's concept of "material cause," which refers to "what comes from a specific reality . . . what performs the function of serving as possible [what has the function of determining the possibilities] on the basis of which the thing is done" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 99). According to this concept, substances are endowed with their own existence; they are capable of autonomous action. This concept employs the principle of immanence, which states that the cause of an action is located essentially in the very nature of the acting subject (Rychlak, 1977). In the harmonizing strategy, this Aristotelian concept of material cause applies both to the "self" and "environment" poles. The elements that adults possess for their career counselling and their career management are thus two-fold: there is, at the same time, information on the properties intrinsic to the self (values, competencies, interests, occupations) and information from the environment (labour market, current or possible employers, socioeconomic situation in the community).

According to Aristotle's concept of material cause, phenomena are governed by their stable, intrinsic properties. This principle is valid for social, physical, and psychological phenomena. Illustrations of this harmonizing vision can be found in the history of the physical, biological, and social sciences. The concept of vitalism in biology is related to it, as are the chemistry and physics of the last century (Altman and Rogoff, 1987). The scientists of that time, who adhered to this prescientific perspective, sought to identify the essence of a molecule and thus understand its behaviour. To do this, they would analyze its intrinsic properties, paying little attention to the reciprocal actions that occurred between it and the environment.

A great deal of research subscribes to the harmonizing strategy. It involves the analysis of the intrinsic properties of these two distinct entities: the individual and the environment.

Let us first of all look at the studies on the "individual" aspect. Ebberwein (2001), for example, presents certain characteristics of the persons who succeed best in their career transitions. Pederson and Smith (1986) have identified the distinctive qualities of clients who are ready to make the transition from school to working life. Other studies have highlighted the characteristics of persons hastening or delaying their entry or reentry into the labour market (Bandura, 2003; Schroth, 1987; Healy and O'Shea, 1984; Ellis and Taylor, 1983; Barron and Harrington, 1981). According to these studies, the main personal variables facilitating the process of matching the world of continuing education and training and the world of work are the following: self-efficacy beliefs, an internal locus of control, high self-esteem, an aptitude for self-marketing, creativity, and skills related to decision-making, communication, and teamwork.

In addition, the harmonizing strategy has also inspired several researchers to take an interest in the second aspect: the environment. For example, studies have analyzed the main qualities sought by employers. There is a great deal of literature on the staff hiring criteria established by various employer organizations (Preston, 2002; Dyer, 1987; Simonetti and Nykodym, 1987; Thivierge, 1987).

Thus the source of knowledge in the harmonizing strategy is distinguished mainly by the study and the classification of phenomena according to the affinities of their intrinsic characteristics. But this relatively static approach to the juxtaposition of phenomena essentially ignores any consideration of temporal variables. It also obscures the reality of change within these variables.

When applied to counselling and support services, the harmonizing strategy suggests conceiving counselling first of all in terms of the identification of the intrinsic characteristics of each of the entities: the person and the environment. It then proceeds with an effort to harmonize similar elements and distinguish elements that are different.

### **Policy Elements (a few suggestions)**

Within the framework of this harmonizing strategy of career counselling, the main policy elements for counselling and support services would be, overall, to make adults capable of recognizing the elements intrinsic to themselves and to the environment and to discover possible ways to harmonize these elements.



To do this, ACTION must be taken so that adults become, **for example**, more capable of:

- i. gaining a more thorough knowledge of themselves and the environment, in order to be able to achieve the best possible harmonization between them
- ii. seeking a constantly renewed awareness of their personal and vocational identities (personality traits, particular skills and competencies, specific aspirations and motivations)
- iii. upgrading their competencies in order to truly find their places in the knowledge economy and, especially, to make their vital contributions to this new economy
- iv. further clarifying their conception of the world of work
- v. renewing their knowledge of the requirements of employers, particularly those for targeted jobs
- vi. becoming more and more aware of the importance of applying to employers whose requirements correspond more closely to their personal qualifications
- vii. frequently re-evaluating their situation, once they have been hired, in light of the degree of correspondence between their own conceptions (with regard to themselves and the world of work) and the visions shared by the people in their organizational settings
- viii. renewing their competencies assessment in order to better plan their return to continuing education and training activities
- ix. regularly assembling several sources of information on themselves (experiences in various organizations generating varied and sometimes convergent comments)
- x. constantly consulting multiple sources of information on the socioeconomic world (data banks, Internet)
- xi. remembering that an unrealistic perception of oneself or of the environment can lead to negative choices

### **Educational Approaches (a few suggestions)**

While the basis of the trait-and-factor approach is related mainly to Parsons' tripartite model (1909) (the definition of the characteristics of: 1. the self; 2. the environment; 3. compatibility between the self and the environment), the guidance counselling related to this approach is attributed to Williamson. The educational approaches of the harmonizing strategy are therefore especially related to Williamson's trait-and-factor career counselling (1939).

Parsons' original trait-and-factor theory and Williamson's first educational approaches for counselling are considered to be incomplete (Patterson and Watkins, 1996), but they continue nevertheless to generate new developments both in practice and in theory (Rounds and Tracey, 1990; Betz, Fitzgerald and Hill, 1989). For example, the existence of many positive effects, both for the person and for the organization, are recognized when there is a match between the aspirations and the specific characteristics of these two entities (Holland, 1997; Osipow and Fitzgerald, 1996; Osipow, 1990; Lofquist and Dawis, 1991; Mobley, Griffeth, Hand and Meglino, 1979).

It should be recalled that the traditional version of trait-and-factor counselling is based overall on the characteristics of the person and those of the environment for the purpose of working toward harmonization or compatibility between these two series of characteristics. This theoretical approach emphasizes self-knowledge in order to make the best career choices (Rounds and Tracey, 1990). In keeping with this, Williamson's contribution was to include psychometric tests in the career counselling process (Rounds and Tracey, 1990). In fact, several authors had recognized the need to be informed as much as possible about oneself, and to do this using valid measuring instruments (Brown, 1984). Moreover, in spite of how old-fashioned they seem now, Williamson's formulations are still valid in career counselling, and are even present in most of the current educational approaches related to career counselling (Rounds and Tracey, 1990; Osipow and Fitzgerald, 1996).

The harmonization process is also found in many other recognized vocational guidance processes. For example, Super's specification stage (1992; 1963) seems to refer to a process that achieves a kind of intersection (harmonization) between the values of the individual and the offerings of the environment. In addition, in strictly cognitive terms, harmonization also seems to concern one of the five cognitive operations of Guilford and Hoepfner's structure of intellect model (1971), evaluation. This evaluation consists precisely in making a value judgment on the fit (harmonization) between the person and the environment using various criteria. Moreover, the harmonization process of the trait-and-factor approach also seems to correspond to one part of the steps included in the various concepts of problem-solving and information processing (Rounds and Tracey, 1990). In the latter case, this process refers to the third stage in Anderson's model (2000), which is related to an operation of developing plans and patterns of harmonization. Finally, another example of the harmonization process can be found in Heppner and Krauskopf (1987). According to these authors, this process is related to three ways of thinking (*solutions thinking, means thinking, consequential thinking*), and a deficiency in any one of these modes of thinking can result in the failure of the process of harmonization between the self and the environment.

In short, the educational approaches of the harmonizing strategy in education refer especially to a tripartite process based on Parsons (1909) and Williamson (1939) including: 1. analysis of the self, with one's particular skills and interests; 2. analysis of occupations and organizations, with their specific characteristics and requirements; and 3. true reasoning, or the process of harmonization itself, which consists essentially in establishing an analogy between the specific characteristics of the self and the occupations.

Moreover, it should be recalled that many deficiencies have been noted in Parsons' guidance counselling, at least in his preliminary formulations. He did not say how information is processed, or how the harmonization is achieved. Rounds and Tracey (1990) state that the process of explaining how information is handled and pairing is achieved is, in the trait-and-factor approach, a veritable black box in comparison with the information required in any current theoretical formulation. According to these authors this harmonization remains invisible and therefore lends itself to a number of mistaken interpretations.

This is one reason why recent reformulations of the trait-and-factor approach go beyond mere harmonizing. Williamson himself, in his last publications (Williamson and Biggs, 1979), goes beyond this single perspective, including certain elements of Lofquist and Dawis's model (1991) (congruence model, which is related in particular to the interactive strategy: Chapter II of this document) and Super's developmental theory (1957) (related mainly to the developmental strategy: Chapter III of this document). More recently, the trait-and-factor approach was reformulated in various models of person-environment congruence and fit (Rounds and Tracey, 1990; Betz, Fitzgerald and Hill, 1989).

These more contemporary theories of the trait-and-factor approach can no longer, however, be classified as part of the harmonizing strategy since they go far beyond it. For example, Zytowski and Borgen (1983) have formulated postulates central to their congruence models, including one specifically related to the interactive strategy of career counselling. This postulate says that personal characteristics interact with vocational representations. In this case, the entities "person" and "environment" are not seen as being relatively static (harmonizing strategy) but as influencing each other (interactive strategy). Moreover, the theories of person-environment fit also refer in particular to the interactive strategy rather than the harmonizing strategy. For example, according to their main postulate, the adjustment process is reciprocal: "The individual shaping the environmental context and the environmental context influencing the individual" (Rounds and Tracey, 1990, p. 18). In short, overall, recent reformulations of the trait-and-factor approach can no longer be classified in the harmonizing strategy.

Beyond these more recent considerations, we would, however, like to emphasize the specificity of the harmonizing strategy. This career counselling strategy proposes educational approaches based on three main phases: "1. information on the person; 2. information on the environment; 3. an evaluation of the fit between the two. Parsons defined the pairing process in three phases, and this has been called the tripartite model: 1. analysis of the self, with its skills and particular interests; 2. analysis of the occupations and organizations, with their particular characteristics and requirements; 3. reasoning (true reasoning), or pairing in the strict sense of the term, which is essentially an analogy to be established between the particularities of the self and the occupations . . . a diagnosis in which a comparison is made between various characteristics of the subject and the demands of the environment" (Parsons, 1909, p. 5).

However, beyond these few suggestions, our reflection on the identification of the educational approaches characteristic of the harmonizing strategy of adult career counselling must obviously be continued.

### **Need for Complementary Approaches**

The harmonizing strategy has proved to be indispensable, but also very incomplete.

However, should we reject it outright simply because it mainly belongs to ancient history? No! say its defenders (Brown, 1984; Rounds and Tracey, 1990).

As we enter the twenty-first century, this strategy still remains the one mainly used: "while it often is not clear what career guidance entails, . . . the dominant approach to vocational guidance places heavy emphasis on information as well" (Grubb, 2002, p. 3), that is, information about the self and the labour market in order to detect compatibility between the two realities.

In addition, many consider the decisions "as [strictly] one-time events, with information marshalled to make a single best decision" (Grubb, 2002, p. 10). But that is a mistake (OECD, 2003a; Grubb, 2002; Dowds and Marcel, 1998).

Of course, the extent of the use of this strategy, which is associated with the *formist* vision of Pepper (1942), is **still** recognized, but it has been severely criticized as being incomplete (Dowds and Marcel, 1998). These researchers have observed that it has been used to the detriment of the contextualizing strategy (the subject of Chapter IV), which is much more relevant and complete for the realities of the

twenty-first century. For example, according to Poortinga and Van-Hemert (2001), the trait-and-factor approach is responsible for the glaring absence of an interactive and situationist (contextualizing) vision of, among other things, cross-cultural differences.

Grubb cautions against this deficiency. While "the dominant approach to vocational guidance places heavy emphasis on information" (Grubb, 2002, p. 3), this aspect is far from being complete. "The centrality of information in the vocational guidance process, and the interest in many countries in providing more and more information, may seem a logical response to the proliferation of educational and occupational alternatives that potential workers confront" (p. 4). But, Grubb adds, "if individuals are unsophisticated in their use of information, or lack the ability to use information in their decision-making, then simply providing additional information—an 'information dump'—will be inadequate to improving their decision-making, about careers or any other goal" (2002, p. 4). Lohman and Bosma (2002) express a similar opinion. For them, the use of the trait-and-factor conception, which has much in common with the harmonizing strategy, would have significant limitations with respect to the study of cognitive styles. Thus, while being enlightening and necessary, the harmonizing strategy neglects various operations, prior or subsequent, related to problem-solving or information processing.

In short, "information alone may be necessary to career decision-making, but not by itself sufficient" (Grubb, 2002, p. 4). For example, the harmonizing strategy does not take into account the full complexity of interactive person-environment dimensions. However, as we will see below, these considerations have proven to be, particularly among adults, one of the key elements for success in meeting educational and vocational objectives.

In addition, "most developed societies place a high premium on future orientation and planfulness [and consider this capacity to be] crucial in making decisions of any sort about a . . . trajectory of education and training . . . in individuals considering the steps they might take to change their careers or jobs." However, in spite of the widespread high premium placed on this principle, "this dimension of decision-making is nowhere apparent in any form of 'information dump'" (Grubb, 2002, p. 7). This principle, as we will see below, is part of another strategy, the developmental strategy.

## CHAPTER II

### THE INTERACTIVE STRATEGY OF ADULT CAREER COUNSELLING

#### Issues

The interactive strategy sees adult career counselling as a question of cross-influences between self and environment. Even though these two entities possess certain distinct intrinsic qualities, they are primarily defined here by their ability to affect each other in the way they function.

Under this interactive way of seeing the world, career counselling mainly emphasizes the educability of the person regarding the identification of reciprocal person-environment strengths, and the development the skills required to be appropriately proactive with that environment. Thus, the more adults perceive these cross-influences, the more they are able to enrich and renew their world-views, and the more capable they are of making educational and vocational choices that are consistently appropriate for both themselves and society.

The harmonizing strategy of career counselling introduced the phenomenon of individual differences. The diversity revealed by these multidimensional aspects helps us to become aware of the richness and wide range of human and organizational resources. It also prompts us to recognize the constant difficulty of maintaining up-to-date information on these heterogeneous realities.

The interactive strategy of career counselling invites us to explore another complex and just as daunting area of personal and social resources: these are the aspects related to the reciprocal influences of the elements involved.

According to Poortinga and Van-Hemert (2001), the interactive strategy is superior to the harmonizing (trait-and-factor) strategy. They argue that this superiority can be attributed to interpretations associated with the role of culture, both organizational and social, to vocational development and the expression of the personality. For example, the interactive strategy appears very useful for training guidance counsellors

working in schools (Shoffner and Briggs, 2001), for the issue of creativity in the workplace (George and Zhou, 2001), and in the medical sciences (Sunday, Eyles and Upshur, 2001). In particular, this interactive concept is related to many contemporary theories of psychology and enjoys a high level of credibility (Lyddon and Robin, 2002; Lyddon, 1995; Altman and Rogoff, 1987).

According to the interactive strategy of guidance, the characteristics of the elements (specific characteristics of the person and the environment) influence each other according to certain known laws. For example, how individuals make contact with their peers is related to their personalities, including their style of interpersonal relationships. But this particular intrinsic characteristic is not static: even though it is fundamentally unique, it can be partly modified thanks, among other things, to a certain level of educability. In interpersonal relationships, this would involve a constant circulation of mutual influences. The workplace exercises a certain pressure on the motivations and behaviours of a person, and the reverse could also be true.

The interactive strategy of career counselling puts particular emphasis on one point: adults should be acutely aware of the mechanisms of cross-influence. This awareness is necessary if we want this interaction of influences to be as favourable as possible to them and changes to be really beneficial for both parties (self and environment). Thus this strategy emphasizes the cross-influences, tacit or explicit, that are integral to intra-, inter- and extra-organizational interpersonal relationships. These cross-influences in turn inform a whole series of reciprocal actions based on the multidimensionality and heterogeneity of human and organizational characteristics. According to the interactive strategy, there are also classical ways in which the entities involved (the person and the environment) affect each other and create reciprocal impacts, which can be divided into two categories: mutual (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli, 2001; Bandura, 1974; 1969) or alternating (Berne, 1971).

### **Theoretical Elements of the Interactive Strategy**

The interactive strategy is linked to several theories of career choice and career management. It is related in particular to the theories concerned with the dimensions related to, according to Bujold and Gingras, "the environment and its multiple influences on adult vocational development" [translation] (2000, p. 199). We could mention, for example, the theory of human capital proposed by Becker. According to this concept, "individuals are considered to have a set of specific resources (for example skills, time, efforts) that they invest in several projects (for example, education, training, work) in order to maximize their

benefits (which are usually expressed as gains throughout their lives)" [translation] (Bujold and Gingras, 2000, p. 210).

While theories of career choice have a lot to say about the influence of the environment (and how this influence should be used, or overcome), they are more silent on the reverse relationship: the contribution to the organization generated by the adult. However, theories about learning organizations and organizational learning have much more to say on this topic. They emphasize, for example, the need for optimal effectiveness of the employee in the expansion of a business (Riverin-Simard and Simard, 2003a).

In contemporary psychology, we can also see extensive use of the interactive perspective. This is found especially in the definition of the antecedents of certain behaviours or psychological processes (Altman and Rogoff, 1987). The psychological phenomena and the contextual variables are thus seen as entities interacting with each other. We could mention, for example, the taxonomies that take into account the reciprocal effect of persons and their contexts that are found in the studies of Frederiksen and Westphalen (1998) and of Pervin and Lewis (1978).

The interactive strategy is also linked to currents such as Pepper's (1942) "mechanistic conception" and Dewey and Bentley's (1949) "interactional perspective," as well as Lyddon's concept of "efficient constructivism" (1995).

This strategy is also based on Aristotle's concept of "efficient cause" (which produces an effect), a concept that corresponds to "the agent of a movement or a change" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 219). "The principles of change . . . are agents and causes as origins of movement" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 220). In addition, in the interactive strategy, this concept is applied to both the "self" and "environment" poles. Thus, each pole is not only its own agent of movement and change, but it can also act as an agent of movement and change for the other pole. This interpretation relates back to the question, well known in research, regarding the antecedent relationships and consequences between phenomena.

The interactive strategy thus postulates that phenomena, while possessing certain intrinsic qualities (harmonizing strategy), also have the characteristic of being affected in their functioning if they come into interrelation with each other (interactive strategy). But, as we will see below, "it seems obvious that effectiveness alone [Aristotle's efficient cause], that is, the highlighting of an origin previous to the movement that is its origin . . . is not sufficient to explain the movement satisfactorily" [translation]



(Bastit, 2002, p. 335). Hence the need for the complementary contribution of other causes (and other strategies) in the explanation of phenomena (including adult career counselling).

This Aristotelian concept of efficient cause has had a great influence in a wide range of fields in contemporary science (Gauthier, 2003; Capra, 1986). In classical physics, for example, the Newtonian principles are connected to this interactive vision (Altman and Rogoff, 1987). Particles are seen as separate elements, but it is less their inherent properties that are interpreted as being responsible for the generation of new phenomena than their reciprocal actions and reactions. Studies based on the interactive strategy analyze mostly the reciprocal effects of certain elements (environmental or situational characteristics) on other elements (psychological, behavioural processes).

Beyond these major differences, the interactive and harmonizing strategies also have certain similarities, which are related to concepts of time and change. In both strategies, temporal variables are considered secondary and are seen as relatively autonomous. They are thus seen as having little relationship to the phenomena involved. As in Newtonian physics, for example, time is seen as a variable that is relatively independent of matter. As for the concept of change, it is also classified as a variable external to phenomena. Time is thus seen as an element that makes it possible to identify states at various moments in a process of change. In the interactive perspective, change is therefore described as a series of relatively static states; it thus becomes possible to evaluate this change (using arbitrary or absolute chronological units) by measuring the dissimilarity between a previous situation and another consequent situation.

Beyond these similarities between the interactive and harmonizing strategies, there are also certain significant differences. In the harmonizing strategy, change originates in a programmed series of events inherent to the intrinsic properties of the entities, while in the interactive strategy, change results instead from a series of mutual interactions between the independent realities of self and environment. In this strategy, for example, sociovocational change is described as a process of reciprocal actions between the individual and the environment.

In this strategy, counselling and support services policy would thus emphasize the person-environment interrelational aspect. For example, if this strategy is applied in the preparation of a selection interview (hiring, transfer request, promotion of a project), attention would be focused on the mutual impact of the actors involved. Under such a policy, one would therefore rely on ever-increasing awareness among adults of the cross-influences that characterize relationships between an individual and a workplace.

Because, it should be recalled, these person-environment cross-influences are actualized in various organizational experiences throughout one's work life.

### **Policy Elements (a few suggestions)**

According to the interactive strategy, counselling and support services should be seeking overall to make interpersonal relationships more positive in academic and vocational life. This overall objective is very important in the daily experience of: 1. continuing education and training (adult learner in actual or virtual interaction with teachers); 2. work (employees with their colleagues or employers); 3. crucial phases preceding involvement in continuing education and training (a potential or future adult student meeting with a counsellor); 4. the process of entry or reentry into the labour market (selection interview).

More specifically, the main elements of counselling and support services policies should, according to the interactive strategy of career counselling, promote, among adults, the development of a capacity to be aware of the reciprocal effects of these two entities (self and environment).

To do this, **ACTION** must be taken so that adults become, **for example**, more capable of:

- i. recognizing their own styles of interrelating with people
- ii. becoming aware of their individual power over a group
- iii. perceiving their power (as members of a group) over the organization and various social settings
- iv. knowing their own learning styles, that is, strengths and weaknesses when they are faced with various pedagogical methods in continuing education and training activities
- v. perceiving that every human contact has his or her own way of initiating a relationship
- vi. intuitively assessing the quality of interpersonal relationships in the workplace
- vii. recognizing their own spontaneous reactions towards any new colleague or work team
- viii. identifying the counter-reactions usually generated by their own behaviours towards those around them
- ix. defining clear clues that will permit them to have a first approximate understanding, both quick and careful, of possible interactions with a new environment
- x. remembering that this first understanding must be modified as daily experiences occur within that environment
- xi. recognizing that every personality type has its own way of interacting with others and with the organization

- xii. becoming aware that every personality type generates particular priorities, whose differences are manifested more dramatically during periods of stress or major upheavals (for example, labour disputes, closing or merger of companies)
- xiii. analyzing their own relational experiences during multiple continuing education and training activities and during work life
- xiv. adjusting, if necessary, their attitudes and behaviours according to the particular personalities encountered, while, however, respecting their own personalities
- xv. recognizing the cross-influence mechanisms that occur frequently in the relationships that are established between the self and the workplace
- xvi. using their interpersonal skills in varied, targeted and more effective ways
- xvii. initiating and maintaining relationships with the environment in various transitional or critical situations
- xviii. becoming aware of the impact of the quality of work and the organizational structure on the mental and physical health of the individual
- xix. becoming aware of the importance of their sociovocational contribution to the community
- xx. reinforcing their initiative in vocational person-environment relationships

### **Educational Approaches (a few suggestions)**

The educational approaches specific to the interactive strategy of guidance are also linked to learning to be proactive. They are aimed at increasing, among adults, the taking of initiative so that person-environment cross-influences are manifested in beneficial effects for both parties. In this way, not only will adults function in enriched and more effective and promising ways but, especially, they will become more aware of the fact that their functioning will be more positive in a healthy person-environment symbiosis.

The educational approaches of the interactive strategy are also related to the central concepts of empowerment (Johnston and Benson, 2000; Richardson, 2000; Chen, 1997), of mental health at work (Dejours, 2002), of harassment in the workplace (Hirigoyen, 2001), of social actors (Riverin-Simard, Spain and Michaud, 2000), and of interpersonal communication (Williams and Garrett, 2002; Bednarski, 2000; Hudson, 1999).

On the basis of the latter concept, for example, these educational approaches propose that: 1. communication extends well beyond verbal exchanges or vocal nonverbal aspects such as tone, delivery or rhythm (Weaver, 1990); 2. communication can be verbal, nonverbal or paraverbal (Weaver, 1990; Cappella and Palmer, 1989; Poyatos, 1983; Ekman and Friesen, 1981). This concept of communication can help adults take more initiative in the workplace. It can also make them more capable of perceiving the potential or actual influence the environment has on them, and thus to react more appropriately. One of the goals of the educational approaches of the interactive strategy based on the concept of communication is to make it possible for the mechanisms involved in interpersonal relationships to result in a minimal consensus (concept favoured by several authors, including Covey, 1996, with his win-win method) or an area of common understanding (element central to community interventions in Jones, 1990 and Lechner, 1988).

Many other avenues remain to be explored, analyzed and explained with respect to the educational approaches of the interactive strategy of career counselling.

### **Need for Complementary Approaches**

In spite of its great usefulness and its undeniable contribution in intervention and in research, the interactive strategy remains, like the harmonizing strategy, incomplete in many ways. For example, according to Cohen (2003) and Sunday, Eyles and Upshur (2001), research and intervention should be more open to other visions of the world, seen from the perspective of causes beyond the material and effective, that is, the final and formal causes (Aristotelian concepts that form one of the principle bases for, on the one hand, the developmental strategy, and, on the other, the contextualizing strategy).

### CHAPTER III

#### THE DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY OF ADULT CAREER COUNSELLING

##### Issues

The developmental strategy sees adult career counselling as a question of increasing awareness of movements towards the future. Adults, like the environment, are considered to be active, open organisms that possess a system of development, and that are capable of organizing and reorganizing themselves through the phases of working life (individual) or organizational life (company), and socioeconomic life (community).

This is why career counselling is seen mainly as a question of educating the person to always have a better understanding of: 1. the essential importance of continually establishing vocational projects; 2. the need to constantly update the development plans of the environment (organizational development goals; government labour market expansion and socioeconomic development policies); 3. the current, and even momentary, impact of the cross-influence of these projects and plans for the future. Thus, the better adults perceive these cross-influences brought about by the future orientations of the person and the environment, the better they are able to enrich and renew their vision of the world, and the more they are capable of making educational and vocational choices that are consistently appropriate for both themselves and society.

The interactive strategy presented in Chapter II emphasized that the persons involved interact with each other, thus affecting one another. The same is true for the reciprocal influences of an individual and a workplace. However, beyond these processes of cross-influence, there are all kinds of complex interactions including, this time, components related to their future orientations. The developmental strategy, which is the subject of this chapter, takes into account the current and ongoing impact of these various prospective components.

This strategy has a great deal of credibility in the research and practice communities. We could cite, for example, the wide range of theories and interventions related to developmental psychology as applied to cognitive, vocational, emotional, and ethical aspects (Bujold and Gingras, 2000). We will return to this in the section on "theoretical elements."

As we enter the twenty-first century, there are large numbers of studies in various scientific domains based on this developmental strategy, which is itself based on Aristotle's concept of "final cause" (Bastit, 2002) and on Pepper's organismic perspective (Altman and Rogoff, 1987; Lyddon, 1995). For example, with respect to research in physics, medicine, and chemistry, Sunday, Eyles and Uphur (2001) maintain that it is necessary to go beyond the concept of "efficient cause" (related to the interactive strategy), in the interpretation of reality, and focus on the concept of "final cause" (related to the developmental strategy). According to Schultz and Schultz (2001), many theories of personality recognize the life-span longitudinal approach (related to the developmental strategy) as making a substantial contribution to the advancement of knowledge. Other researchers continue to investigate the possible links between, on the one hand, the simultaneous interest in individual plans and the development of the organization, and, on the other hand, the level of satisfaction among employees and the profitability of the organization (Echols, 2002). Furthermore, in the area of creativity, Pepper's organismic approach (which corresponds to the developmental strategy) offers, according to Cohen (2003), a more interesting perspective for interpretation. In particular, he discusses possible connections between technical writing and creative writing, and vision of the world. According to Strobos (1992), persons who work in one or other of these two types of writing are distinguished precisely by their different ways of conceiving final cause in the world.

Parallel to the interactive strategy (Chapter II), which is exclusively concerned with current dimensions, the developmental strategy highlights the issues of a whole series of cross-influences, marked in particular by the "futur présentifié" (this expression from Louis Lavelle is explained below, in the section "educational approaches"). These cross-influences are specifically related to the vocational plans of the person and to organizational goals. These respective future orientations have an immediate effect on interpersonal relationships and vocational behaviours, since they convey, beginning in the present moment, images of the characteristic development of the person and the environment. "The intentions or goals refer to an image of the future, to a future state of affairs that is preferred" [translation] (Bertrand and Valois, 1982, p. 122). As soon as these goals being pursued can generate a perceptible effect, positive or negative, according to their resemblances or incompatibilities, it is very important to take them into account.

The temporal dimension is therefore largely taken into account in the developmental strategy. For example, "Super's . . . conception includes time perspective as one of five important dimensions of career maturity; Savickas' . . . conception includes time perspective (how individuals orient themselves to time), time differentiation (making the future seem more real), and time integration (a sense of connectedness among events over time), which in turn facilitates planning" (Grubb, 2002, p. 7).

The developmental strategy of career counselling thus emphasizes the complex interactions created by the goals of the entities involved. It has a distinct advantage. "This perspective implies that decisions at early phases may be improved upon, or corrected, or even reversed as individuals gather more information and experiences, or change their preferences or the way they see the future" (Grubb, 2002, p. 10).

According to the developmental perspective, an increased awareness of his or her own orientations or vocational plans intensifies the feeling of internal consistency of the person, since these projects refer to unifying elements of the personality; in addition, they favour the expression of its uniqueness and its richness (Nuttin, 1980).

Moreover, if the definition of an organizational development plan is essential for the survival and expansion of a company, it may be just as essential for an adult. For example, during a selection interview (hiring, transfer request, promotion of a project), the employer often wants to evaluate whether the candidate is concerned about the possibility of integrating his or her vocational projects with the development plan of the company. In addition, if employers perceive this concern among applicants, they may be more open to what the applicants are saying (Hamilton, Seibert, Gardner and Talbert-Johnson, 2000; Hamilton, 1984).

According to the developmental strategy, the value of the information, obtained for example through the harmonizing strategy (Chapter I), must absolutely be seen as "depend[ing] on the developmental process" (Grubb, 2002, p. 10). This means that information must not only be constantly updated, but especially "be used in different ways at different stages of development" (Grubb, 2002, p. 10) and the different phases in the evolution of the company (Riverin-Simard and Simard, 2003a).

### Theoretical Elements of the Developmental Strategy

The developmental strategy is related to, it should be recalled, numerous theories of career choice and career management. These include those related to adult vocational development (Miller and Form; Havighurst; Levinson; Super; Vaillant) and career development in organizations (Vondracek's developmental-contextual approach) (Bujold and Gingras, 2000). For example, the Riverin-Simard theory of phases in work life according to various variables related to age (1984; 1993), personality type (1996; 2000; 2003) and socioeconomic status (1990; 1993), highlights a vocational evolution in the adult from the mid-twenties to beyond retirement.

In the field of psychology, according to Altman and Rogoff (1987), there are many currents of thought that are also related to the developmental strategy: 1. Heider's equilibrium theory; 2. Bandura's reciprocal determinism model; 3. Altman's theory of reciprocity and interpersonal exchange; 4. Lazlo's systemic theory; 5. Miller's systemic theory; 6. Von Bertalanffy's systemic theory; 7. Haley's family systems theory; 8. the family systems theory of Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson; 9. Piaget's cognitive development theory; 10. Lewis and Lee-Painter's theory of parent-child interaction. Moreover, Lyddon (1995) also classifies as part of this developmental strategy Wilber's, Maslow's, and Frankl's theories of transpersonal psychology. He highlights their postulates on the direction of the adult's development towards an optimal state. It should be noted that these theories, related to transpersonal psychology, could also be classified as part of the contextualizing strategy, if we refer to their explanatory principles on the inclusion of the human condition in a whole. We will return to this in Chapter IV.

The developmental strategy is also related to the concepts designated as *organicism* in Pepper (1942) and *final constructivism* in Lyddon (1995).

With respect to its philosophical foundations, the developmental strategy is based on, it should be recalled, Aristotle's concept of "final cause." This cause can be defined as the cause "in view of which something is carried out. It is identified with the goal" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 100). It refers mainly to the idea that phenomena act by orienting themselves towards a pre-established goal that corresponds, most often, to an ideal state. In this sense, it is often confused with a teleological concept: "the [Aristotelian] final cause is not only the end, but also the accomplishment, the best" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 101). With this concept of final cause, the concern is with the connections between parts belonging to various phenomena, but especially on how each of these phenomena is included in an ideal orientation.



In the developmental strategy, the final cause is applied both to the "person" pole and the "environment" pole. Given certain conditions, the self passes through various phases of work life that make it possible for the person to gradually achieve an optimal vocational development over the years (Havighurst; Levinson; Super, cited in Riverin-Simard, 1996; 2000; 2003). If all the conditions are fulfilled, the company develops through various organizational transitions that should ultimately lead to optimal expansion (Schein, 1978; 1984; Schein, 2001).

Moreover, according to certain philosophers, this final cause governs, in a sense, the efficient cause (which the interactive strategy is based on). Because "the final cause is still the cause of the efficient cause [the one the interactive strategy is based on], since it is in view of it that the latter acts" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 101). In the developmental strategy, the concern is therefore not exclusively for the interactions between the parts of a phenomenon or between two phenomena, as is the case of the interactive strategy, but also for the cross-influences produced by the very fact of the respective inscription of these phenomena within a movement towards a final goal.

As we can see, the future is related to a particular concept in the developmental strategy: it is a series of states a single phenomenon goes through, from its origin to its anticipated end. In this strategy, person-environment interrelation is not, as in the interactive strategy (Chapter II), a reciprocal ad hoc action between a person and an environment, but rather a complex interrelation between: 1. a person seen both in his or her current phase and with respect to his or her entire development, and 2. an environment evaluated in his or her current situation and with respect to all of his or her ideal aims.

Unlike the harmonizing (Chapter I) and interactive (Chapter II) strategies, the developmental approach is based essentially on the concepts of time and change, two variables considered to be intrinsic to phenomena. These phenomena are then described as systems seeking not only to maintain themselves (homeostasis, balance, and consistency), but especially to attempt to achieve a final ideal condition. The developmental strategy thus underlies many conceptions of career development that "view career-related decisions as a developmental process, unfolding over time" (Grubb, 2002, p. 10).

Compared to the harmonizing (Chapter I) and interactive (Chapter II) strategies, the developmental strategy requires becoming aware of the vocational development of the adult through the phases of life. It also requires becoming aware of the impact of organizational aims and their state of constant redefinition throughout the life of the company. Even though the knowledge economy seems to dictate the "throw-away" law, the developmental strategy requires on the contrary being proactive; in other words, one must

be aware of the need to project oneself into the future and to anticipate the degree of compatibility possible between one's personal orientations and those of the environment (company, labour market, community).

### **Policy Elements (a few suggestions)**

According to the developmental strategy, in order to constantly enrich and renew the educational and vocational vision of the world of adults, it is necessary, we should recall, to make them capable of continually repositioning themselves. To do this, they have to learn to better take into account the endless subsequent reorientations of their vocational lives and the constant renewal of their paths through the labour market. They should also develop skills to project themselves, and the environment, into future trajectories and to glimpse the complex cross-influences that the future perspectives of these two realities (person and environment) have between them.

Inscribed specifically in the developmental strategy of career counselling, counselling and support services must thus make adults capable of acquiring specific knowledge and always renewing their own projections into the future as well as those of the organization.

To do this, ACTION must be taken so that adults become, **for example**, more capable of:

- i. becoming aware of the immediate effect, on themselves, of their future projects
- ii. identifying the meeting points between their vocational aspirations and the plans of the organization
- iii. inscribing the various events (current and possible) of their continuing education and training and the management of their careers into the phases of work life, in order to better perceive their continuity
- iv. being conscious of the connections between the various modifications of their work lives and their entire vocational lives, including their existential projects
- v. developing their competencies for conceiving their future, and especially, of providing themselves with a mental representation of that future
- vi. organizing and refining their anticipated future
- vii. becoming aware of the importance of periodically redefining their educational and vocational plans given the continuous changes occurring in their selves

- viii. perceiving the connections between their current vocational goals and the ultimate goals of their existential projects
- ix. developing a constantly renewed awareness of their vocational identities within the path of their work lives
- x. becoming aware of the constant redefinitions of the development plans of the employer organization in order to be constantly able to readjust accordingly
- xi. perceiving the possible effects of interrelations between: 1. the actions undertaken to realize their vocational development and 2. the actions taken by their employer organizations (possible or actual) to achieve the objectives of the organizational development plan
- xii. constantly staying informed of changes related to the requirements of employers or employees
- xiii. regularly reviewing their continuing education and training activity plans in order to acquire the competencies required for their (imposed or voluntary) periodic reentries into the labour market
- xiv. clarifying the constant evolution of their vision of the world of work
- xv. periodically reconsidering their competency assessments in order to better plan their constant returns to continuing education and training activities, returns required in particular by the knowledge economy
- xvi. reinforcing their cognitive processes and their information tracking procedures

### **Educational Approaches (a few suggestions)**

One of the goals of the educational approaches specific to the developmental strategy is to help adults learn to better integrate their future with their own present and to become aware of the organizational future in the actual present of that organization. This learning will be made possible thanks to a better knowledge and a better understanding of the development of the two entities "person" and "environment." In addition, these educational approaches should help the adults become more aware of the cross-influences of these two developing realities. To do this, they base themselves on, among other things, two concepts: the *futur présentifié* and mediate congruence.

The term "**futur présentifié**" is a concept of the metaphysician Louis Lavelle (1992). This concept could also be designated by the term "anticipated future." It refers to increasing awareness of the actual presence of the future in us, hence the term "anticipated future." This concept is equally valid for a person (the adult) or for a group of individuals (the company). For this philosopher, the present "contains the past and the future in the form of present ideas" [translation] (1947, p. 252). One must become aware not only

of the influence of the future on the present, but also of the very presence of the future in the present. Because, for Lavelle, "the future towards which desire is carrying us . . . is part of my present self" [translation] (1934, p. 188). In addition, according to this metaphysician, this is a statement that is validated by feeling it. We are always in the present. "We know very well that we never emerge from the present and that we never have. The past and the future are only ideas present at the moment when I am thinking" [translation] (1955, p. 141).

On the basis of Lavelle's concept, the educational approaches of the developmental strategy are concerned with making adults more and more conscious of the impact of the anticipated future: 1. of their vocational projects, affecting their vocational lives and the lives of their companies, and 2. of the plans of the companies, which also have repercussions on their vocational lives and on the lives of their companies. Adults must therefore become more aware of the reciprocal actions between these two series of anticipated futures, both on their vocational development and on the organizational evolution of their companies. But, especially, it should be recalled, their perception of the anticipated future is undeniably present in the ongoing management of their careers.

The educational approaches of the developmental strategy are also based on a second concept: **the concept of "mediate congruence" between two anticipated futures**, that is, between the specific characteristics of the adults' vocational projects and the development plans of their companies. This concept includes various principles.

The first principle is related first of all to Lofquist and Dawis's concept of "correspondences" (1991) but especially Holland's very well known concept of "congruence" (1997). According to Holland, there is a tacit obligation, for a given type of vocational personality, to work in a compatible vocational environment. Holland (1997) first of all examined this concept from the perspective of immediacy: "different types require different environments. For instance, realistic types flourish in realistic environments because such an environment provides the opportunities and rewards a realistic type needs" (1997, p. 5). Given the permanent validity of the concept of congruence in the vocational path of the individual, the concept of "mediate congruence" also has an implicit longitudinal connotation. It is for this reason that we include it in the educational approaches of the developmental strategy.

The concept of "mediate congruence" thus shows the fundamental importance of the existence of a minimal degree of fit between the vocational projects of the person and the goals of the organization. This congruence is, it should be recalled, one of the main factors in the vocational development of the adult

(Holland, 1997). With respect to the organizational environment, we could mention the broadly validated statement of Argyris (1964) and Schein (1992; 1984; 1978): the key to the success of an organization is based on the similarity and complementarity between the aims of this organization and those of its adult employees. Moreover, Schein (2001) has reviewed the literature related to the work of Edgar Schein in various countries (United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan) and arrived at essentially the same conclusions.

A second principle of mediate congruence is that of the meaning given to one's work life. This has proven to be a key factor in successfully meeting educational and vocational objectives, but it seems to have a tendency to change, that is, to be reinforced or demolished according to the aims of the organization in which the vocational life of the individual takes place (Holland, 1997; Schein, 1992; Thomas and Frederiks, 1992; O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell, 1991; Lofquist and Dawis, 1991). Moreover, according to these same authors, the positive and negative reinforcement from companies are based on these aims. In addition, they add, persons will only be able to fulfill themselves, in vocational terms, if they are in companies where the expansion plans match their vocational projects. That is why it is also a priority, according to the developmental strategy, to constantly evaluate the degree of actual correspondence between one's vocational projects and the development goals of the companies. A positive interaction between these plans has both immediate and medium-term impact. The educational approaches based on this strategy thus suggest a need to establish prospective tools that make it possible to carry out this global evaluation and immediately act accordingly.

A third principle of the concept of "mediate congruence" recommends training oneself to constantly position one's vocational projects from a medium-term and long-term perspective. This training is, according to Nuttin (1980), a necessary condition for ongoing vocational development.

A fourth principle of the concept of "mediate congruence" emphasizes the need to be informed about the constant redefinition of the medium-term or long-term organizational aims of the company. This condition represents, according to the educational approaches of the developmental strategy, another fundamental factor in successful career management, that is, being flexible and always adapted to the most recent developments. It should be recalled that the constant changes that occur in an organization constitute a reality the adult needs to continually come to terms with (Schein, 2001; Schein, 1992; 1984; 1978).

These educational approaches of the developmental strategy, based among other things on the concepts of "anticipated future" and "mediate congruence," thus recommend helping adults develop better perceptions of themselves from the environment, from a future-oriented perspective. In addition, according to this strategy, this proposed conditioning is a significant asset to help move through in a positive way the various phases of continuing education and training and career management.

More details on the educational approaches specific to the developmental strategy of adult career counselling should be provided, since they require further analysis.

### **Need for Complementary Approaches**

Even though the developmental strategy established its pedigree in the middle of the twentieth century, many researchers and practitioners still feel that it can be further perfected. Over the past few decades, they have proposed enriching it with elements from the contextualizing strategy. For example, according to Zorga (2003), the development of the adult can be understood much more completely if it is enriched with the concept of the context of social, economic, and cultural life. Because it is within this global context, which is relatively unpredictable and in constant flux, that these individuals actualize themselves throughout their lives.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONTEXTUALIZING STRATEGY OF ADULT CAREER COUNSELLING

#### Issues

The contextualizing strategy sees adult career counselling as taking place in a world filled with complex events that are interconnected and continuously changing. According to this vision, career counselling is particularly concerned with educating the person to develop skills in the:

- management of unpredictability
- understanding of the necessary introduction of relativity in interpreting events
- discrimination of the imputability and responsibility for turns of events

Beyond the initiatives of the person and the environment, there are necessarily unpredictable circumstances beyond their control. Consequently, according to the contextualizing strategy, career counselling should help adults better identify their own interpretations of these active strengths: chance, inevitability, social forces (materialist explanations of things); a god (religious beliefs); an absolute being (philosophical concepts of being). Thus, the more adults perceive the uniqueness of each event, the more they are able to enrich and renew their vision of the world, and the more capable they are of making educational and vocational choices that are consistently appropriate for both themselves and society.

"The circumstances weren't really suitable. Nothing turned out the way it was supposed to."

This comment is the kind of remark that has been made many times about continuing education and training or career projects. It illustrates, in a sense, one of the main characteristics of the contextualizing strategy: the uniqueness of every event and its partly unpredictable nature.

This strategy proposes a synthesis, which is at once very particular, refined and demanding, of all previous achievements. This synthesis has proved to be very useful and even indispensable, especially at strategic moments during the various phases of continuing education and career management. The contextualizing strategy is thus considered not only very important, but essential in various areas of intervention and research (Werner, Brown and Altman, 2002).

The uniqueness of each event is one of the main characteristics of the contextualizing strategy, which obviously distinguishes it clearly from the harmonizing (Chapter I), interactive (Chapter II) and developmental (Chapter III) strategies. In fact, the contextualizing strategy focuses on the particular aspect of the overall configuration that results from the integration of all the elements present: the person and his or her plan, the environment and its development plan, all at a specific moment and in a specific context.

This strategy does not involve the construction of a single representation of the self in the world, as is the case, for example, with Grubb. For this author, a constructivist conception is "one that facilitates individuals constructing their own identities, their careers, the role of education and work relative to the other possible interests in life" (2002, p. 22). The contextualizing strategy proposed here is considerably more encompassing: it includes the continuous construction of the individual's representation of the world, including at once the representation of the self and the representations of the environment, of the present moment, and of the particular context.

In the three other strategies, it should be recalled, the person and the environment are considered as separate entities that can be defined in and of themselves. The corresponding policy elements are aimed first of all at making the person capable of clearly understanding the main elements: person and environment (Chapter I), person-environment (Chapter II) and developmental changes in person-environment (Chapter III). They also help adults to better overcome the difficulties inherent in their processes of continuing education and career management. The common goal of the various educational approaches connected to these three strategies is therefore to perfect the anchor points of the person that generally form the basis for the performance of the behaviours adopted during these processes.

The contextualizing strategy sees these various anchor points very differently. It is not at all situated in a perspective of generalizing person-environment interrelations that are ad hoc (Chapter II) or inscribed in respective developmental trajectories (Chapter III). For this strategy, every event is unique, not made up of separate elements, but of elements that are essentially joined, forming a particular overall configuration.



These elements cannot be defined in and of themselves; they must be understood in relationship to the context in which they are involved. In a continuing education and training activity, for example, many elements combine to produce a special, unpredictable event: the actions and reactions of the persons involved, the rules and standards that govern their relationships, the relationship each of them has with the environment, and the temporal characteristics of this activity.

Applied to counselling and support services, this strategy sees continuing education and training and career management as an ongoing process of merged interrelations in which the individual is constantly faced with new situations. The only constant is change. In addition, if each moment is distinct, it necessarily involves an unexpected and ambiguous aspect with which persons must come to terms if they want to be successful in their educational and vocational activities. But it should be noted: while the principle of the uniqueness of every event entails unpredictability, it also brings hope. A previous failure does not necessarily mean another subsequent unfortunate event.

In addition to the uniqueness of every event (first characteristic), the contextualizing strategy is also based on three other characteristics, which will be explained in the next section: the relativity of any subjective evaluation, the taking into account of the plausibility of positive or negative outcomes, and the existence of chance (contingency), of a god or an absolute being as being possibly responsible for unexpected circumstances.

### **Theoretical Elements of the Contextualizing Strategy**

The contextualizing strategy is related to a few unusual theories of career choice and career management, including Young's contextual explanation of career (Bujold and Gingras, 2000). This approach could also be classified as part of Riverin-Simard's theory of vocational chaos (1996; 1998a). This theory certainly highlights certain longitudinal aspects, but it is very careful to place these aspects, and their opposites, within very broad contexts. These aspects include:

1. **the stable elements** (for example, personality type) **and unstable elements** (for example, the integration, as complementary elements, of opposites into one's personality type around the age of fifty)
2. **predictable alternations** (for example, periodic questioning of the goals of one's vocational life and of the methods used to reach those goals) **and unpredictable alternations** (questioning resulting from the unexpected circumstances of work life)

3. **spaces and times available** (for example, feelings of infinitude felt until midlife) **or to be invented**. In the latter case, the theory of vocational chaos refers to the feelings of finitude felt beyond midlife and which, sometimes, lead to fantasizing about various types of immortality: material (through works that endure after death), biological (the extension of the self through one's children), or religious (immortality of the soul, reincarnation)

In the area of psychology, the contextualizing strategy is related to a vision defined as "the study of the changing relations among psychological and environmental aspects of holistic unities" (Stokols and Altman, 1987, p. 24). Among the psychological theories related to the contextualizing strategy, there are, according to Altman and Rogoff (1987), the ethnogenic perspective, Sarbin's contextualizing strategy, and the ethnomethodological traditions of Cicourel and Garfinkel. These also include, according to Altman and Rogoff (1987), the dramaturgic analyses of social situations by Goffman as well as certain aspects of Saegert's transformative model of change, Riegel's dialectical psychology and Lewin's psychological field theory. While emphasizing the complex indissociability of the person-environment-context-present-moment, the contextualizing strategy is also related to conceptions that are systemic (Von Bertalanffy), holistic (Capra) or ecological (Lewin) (Altman and Rogoff, 1987). But it should be noted: according to all of these concepts, if one does not take into account the contexts in which the person is developing, one is then ignoring what is nourishing that person, what he or she lives and dies with. These concepts therefore emphasize the contexts within which adults evolve and through which they merge, that is, confront, interact and evolve.

If their postulates with respect to transcendence are highlighted, the contextualizing strategy can also be linked to several schools of transpersonal psychology. On the other hand, if one instead emphasizes the development goals proposed by these schools of thought, one must then classify them in the developmental strategy (see Chapter III, under the heading "theoretical elements").

The contextualizing strategy is also found in various other scientific disciplines. For example, modern biology defines cells and genes not as independent elements, but rather as intrinsic components combining in a unified, complex and constantly changing whole (Altman and Rogoff, 1987). This contextualizing concept is also related to certain currents of thought in physics, such as studies on high-velocity subatomic phenomena, including Einstein's famous work. This work concludes that, under certain conditions, mass and energy are interchangeable (Capra, 1986). The effects that occur when elements meet cannot be explained in terms of reciprocal actions between particles (interactive strategy), because particles disappear. These effects are therefore observed as nodes, short-lived and changing, of

energy and activity, materializing in an overall configuration merging all the particles present. This configuration is also expressed through energy patterns. Moreover, these configurations are not fixed; they are continually distributed and redistributed, generating varied forms.

The contextualizing strategy thus sees change and time as components intrinsic to phenomena. Change is a constant essential of this.

This strategy is also related to other concepts known by the following names: Pepper's *contextualism* (1942), Dewey and Bentley's *transaction* (1949), and Lyddon's *formal constructivism* (1995).

The contextualizing strategy is based among other things on Aristotle's concept of "formal cause." It should be noted that every type of Aristotelian cause (material, effective, final) is included in the formal cause. "The causality of form does not eliminate any of the other questions . . . but . . . each of these questions pushed to their final extreme receives an appropriate response from the form" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 76). Because "while the [Aristotelian] causes are realized according to four irreducible types, it is nevertheless possible, often but not always, to recognize that the three first causes are the result of the single formal entity exercising, in addition to its determinative function, the determination of the efficient cause and the determination of the end" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 107).

Thus, according to Bastit, "[Aristotle's] final cause is the full realization of the form" and "it is thus distinguished from the form in that it directs the efficient cause"; but the form "must be carried by an active agent [efficient cause] and a substance [material cause]" (2002, p. 385). Similarly, according to Lavelle's interpretation of Aristotelian philosophy, "matter aspires to form, but under the action of the final cause, as shown in the text of *Métaphysique, A, 3, 983 a 32*" [translation] (1991, p. 55).

Moreover, "relying only on the formal cause . . . is . . . unsatisfactory. It is not possible to either produce or create . . . [without] appealing to the driving cause [efficient cause] . . . and the driving cause is itself insufficient because it is necessary not only to act, but also to possess the reasons for acting [final cause]" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 37). Hence the need for a formal cause to encompass the other causes. It is not linked to one particular component; it refers to a merged whole. "Form is . . . not . . . only one part of the whole but is the whole itself" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 260).

However, it must be pointed out that for "the four types of [Aristotelian] causes, their functional hierarchy [is expressed] according to the primacy of the final cause and their true unity [is situated] in the formal

cause" [translation] (Bastit, 2002, p. 384). This formal cause in a way sanctions various possible, but not unlimited, final causes. Sometimes, the context does not lend itself to it at all. This is among other things why the contextualizing strategy, based on this concept of "formal cause," is centred on the pattern or the overall organization of a phenomenon in a particular context. Thus no hope is permitted in the processes of career management and continuing education and training, but neither is defeatist anticipation.

The contextualizing strategy, based on the concept of Aristotle's formal cause, emphasizes four characteristics of the issues of career counselling and career management:

1. the uniqueness of every event and its partly unpredictable nature
2. the taking into account of the plausibility of positive or negative outcomes
3. the relativity of any subjectivity evaluation (for example, behaviours chosen by the person) which, by definition, does not at all exhaust the overall reality (for example, behaviours expected by the environment)
4. the discrimination of the imputability for turns of events

Let us look one by one at the last three characteristics. The first one was explained previously in the "issues" section of this chapter.

**The taking into account of the plausibility of positive or negative outcomes.** This second characteristic of the contextualizing strategy concerns the result of the merger (person-environment-context-present-moment), which does not refer necessarily to the optimal development of the person or the organization, as was the case with the developmental strategy. In fact, even though this strategy takes into account this optimal development, it does not include a predefined goal as such. Thus the contextualizing strategy refers to various possibilities, some of which are desirable (final cause) and others feared, unforeseen or improbable. Because, it should be recalled, this final cause (optimal development) is necessarily included in the formal cause. For Aristotle, every cause is included in this formal cause (Bastit, 2002).

In this way, the contextualizing strategy is clearly distinguished from the developmental strategy, in which the final cause is unavoidable. However, it has much in common with the dissensions, now classic in biology, related to theories of evolution. As we know, according to Darwin, the evolution of species tended towards an ideal final state. "The environmental species inhabiting this world have been modified, so as to acquire that perfection of structure and coadaptation which most justly excites our admiration" (1859, p. 3). Having criticized this theory as being associated with a moderate finalism (developmental

strategy), writers such as Gould (1986) and Oster and Wilson (1986) have, for example, replied that, of the four possibilities relevant to the orientation of species, only one corresponds to optimal adaptation.

In other words, by taking into account unforeseen outcomes, the contextualizing strategy provides both the person and the environment with the possibility of experiencing change that does not necessarily correspond to an anticipated optimal development. This strategy thus imposes, even more so than any other (harmonizing, interactive or developmental), the need to consider the most diverse possibilities in the course of the pursuit of educational and vocational objectives (in the case of individuals) or socioeconomic development (organization, community).

**The relativity of any subjectivity evaluation.** This relativity is another specific characteristic of the contextualizing strategy. It emphasizes the following principle: individuals cannot grasp more than a part of the global reality of the context since they are located within this very context. This principle has been repeated many times in philosophy. For example, according to Lavelle, "each of us has only one perspective on the truth. There is no doubt a unity in the human consciousness, but one which needs to be achieved from the diversity of all human consciousnesses" [translation] (1991, vol. I, p. ix).

Thus, according to the contextualizing strategy, adults should, in order to attain their educational and vocational objectives, be more conscious of the global nature of the situation. This implies, among other things, the need to conceive of oneself and to conceive of the environment as each representing a group of factors that produce a specific event. Individuals thus need to remember that their perception of any event and the manner in which they should react are always fragmentary or incomplete. The same is true of the environment: for example, a negative assessment of their performance within an organization in no way eliminates the possibility of subsequently obtaining a positive assessment in another company.

**Discrimination of the imputability for turns of events.** Another characteristic of the contextualizing strategy is related to the existential and sometimes agonizing question every adult is constantly confronted with: who (what) directs those active forces that create surprises, good or bad, in the outcomes of their efforts, which have nevertheless been planned in good faith by the adult, and with all necessary preparation? Chance, fate, social forces (the materialist explanation of things), a god (religious beliefs), an absolute being (and not some sort of deity) (metaphysical philosophical concepts)?

Adults must find their own tendency among the choice of possible responses. They must in particular be able to discriminate the imputability for outcomes (predictable and unexpected) related to the attainment

(total, partial or absent) of their educational and vocational objectives. In other words, they must be able to do their own reading of their share of responsibility, that of the environment (organization, educational institution), and that related to the global context (chance, a god venerated by a religion, an absolute being as conceived of by metaphysics).

### **Policy Elements (a few suggestions)**

It should be recalled that, in order to enrich and constantly renew the adult's educational and vocational vision of the world, specific conditions, according to the contextualizing strategy of career counselling, are required. In this strategy, counselling and support services should promote in the adult the development of the capacity to better juggle with the unknown, in which the main elements (self, environment, specific context, present time) combine to endlessly form and re-create singular and unpredictable situations.

To do this, ACTION must be taken so that adults become, **for example**, more capable of:

- i. understanding situations globally
- ii. becoming aware of the global aspects of the reality of events related in particular to their continuing education and training and their career management
- iii. perceiving the need to represent the world as complex and multidimensional
- iv. understanding that different situations are never identical
- v. becoming aware of the changing aspects of any situation and learning to adapt to that variability
- vi. anticipating the inevitable presence of multiple unknown components in each of the next possible phases of work life
- vii. becoming aware of the importance of making an effort to discover both the points of view of others and their own
- viii. developing the aptitudes necessary to perceive the indissociability of all the aspects involved
- ix. perceiving the temporary coexistence of the various elements of a given situation
- x. negotiating with the novelty of every particular circumstance
- xi. developing a tolerance for the ambiguity of situations
- xii. identifying their spontaneous reactions to unexpected turns of events
- xiii. avoiding the trap of a rigid reading of events based on previous assessments, which are most often outdated and not very relevant

- xiv. understanding that events always take on a particular meaning over time and according to the sociohistorical context in which they occur
- xv. realizing that they cannot perceive everything, since they can imagine only one part of the overall reality
- xvi. respecting their vocational values while representing overall those of the various administrators of a company
- xvii. becoming aware of the many representations that people have of the same situation
- xviii. improving their ways of reacting to the weight of contingencies in the realization of vocational projects and continuing education and training activities
- xix. defining their vocational projects, not in and of themselves, but always within various contexts of hypothetical plausibility
- xx. generating proactive strategies that can influence, as much as possible, the configuration of these contexts
- xxi. becoming aware of the inherent relativity of their human condition
- xxii. expanding their behavioural strategies

### **Educational Approaches (a few suggestions)**

The educational approaches related to the contextualizing strategy should in particular answer the following questions: How can adults become capable of merging with certain components that are constantly unknown and strange? How can they achieve a relatively positive synthesis of all their previous achievements, and do so in specific circumstances that are most often anxiety-producing and relatively unpredictable? And, especially, in such conditions, how can they be successful in their continuing education and training and career management activities?

To increase the effectiveness of counselling and support services, the contextualizing strategy proposes educational approaches that facilitate the perception of an event in its totality. These strategies propose that adults adopt a synthesizing perspective, especially one that is encompassing and that takes them beyond their previous achievements. They are aimed at making adults aware of the uniqueness and relativity of any event in order to help them conceive previously acquired knowledge in constantly renewed ways.

Since reality is heterogeneous and usually goes beyond the ways adults see things, it seems unimaginable, according to the contextualizing strategy, to restrict oneself to a repertoire of usual behaviours. The educational approaches of this strategy therefore recommend a constant expansion of this repertoire, and this even becomes, for adults, an important condition for significantly increasing their chances of attaining their educational and vocational objectives, throughout their lives.

According to the approaches characteristic of the contextualizing strategy, it is necessary first of all to recognize that, in the current knowledge economy, any situation involves a large dose of unpredictability. It is, however, possible to prepare oneself appropriately, throughout one's educational and vocational paths. Thanks to this preparation, any situation can be transformed into a learning opportunity.

The educational approaches of the contextualizing strategy are based specifically on five concepts: perceiving the global nature of things, self-transcendence, dichotomization, the harmonious integration of opposites and relativization.

We will first of all take a closer look at the **first concept**: that of **perceiving the global nature of things**. To do this, we turn to metaphysician Louis Lavelle's concept of "experience of being," which consists precisely in attaining awareness of the global. This Lavellian experience refers to a process of raising awareness of an infinite, secular whole involving three undissociated phases: 1. an indistinct, vague intuiting of this whole; 2. the discovery of our presence in this confused unity; 3. consciousness of the self as being within this whole and of the connection of participation with this whole (Simard, 2003; in press). We will explain these three phases one by one, applying them to adult career counselling.

First phase: According to Louis Lavelle, achieving awareness of the global nature of things takes place first of all through the recognition of the existence of an indistinct whole. The world of work, current and future, includes organizational bodies, political institutions, and the social organization of society. Adults have constantly different and constantly present perceptions of these multiple elements. They need to pay attention to them. These hazy perceptions include, in a sense, all their reflections and all their action plans, since those perceptions necessarily influence them. In particular, these hazy and always renewed perceptions are what provide them with an authentic contact with the world of work, and also help them reconnect regularly with the global nature of things.

Second phase: The second phase puts adults back in contact with their selves. They differentiate their own presence from those multiple undissociated set of elements. Everything happens as if the self was



suddenly detached from the indistinct mass that was previously perceived. This is a coming to awareness, endlessly renewed, of the self faced with this indistinct mass. This phase is important if adults wish to reconnect constantly with the self in connection with or in confrontation with a global whole. Adults need to pay a great deal of attention to this.

Third phase: Thirdly, adults intuit themselves as elements internal to this global whole. To do this, they have to play their game well, that is, they must be proactive and react by taking part in that global whole or in that multiplicity of elements. But this participation must take place through a perception of their share of responsibility. They must also share the one resulting from the merging of elements, creating a configuration that is always unique. The expected result of this participation should correspond to a realistic hope: efforts may, or may not, bring results as anticipated. As we know, the efforts of adults are not the only dynamic involved; thus, the evolution of their careers may or may not continue. Their continuing education and training activities may or may not largely favour their career paths.

The **second concept** that forms the basis for the educational approaches of the contextualizing strategy is **self-transcendence**.

In explaining this concept, the physicist Capra (1986) considers that phenomena include two main components: self-regulation and self-transcendence. Self-regulation refers to the capacity of living systems to constantly renew and recycle their own elements in order to preserve the integrity of their structures. Self-transcendence refers to the capacity to go beyond limits creatively, through various processes: learning, development and evolution. For example, when adults rely on their usual ways of doing things, they activate their self-regulation mechanisms, but if they attempt to manifest a new behaviour that requires surpassing themselves to a certain extent, they then trigger a self-transcendence reaction. In order to respect the merger with the person-environment-context-present-moment whole, as called for by the contextualizing strategy, the principle of self-transcendence thus recommends that the adults go beyond the restrictions implicitly imposed by their usual ways of seeing or doing things. Because these ways relate to only one part of the whole of the realities inherent to a given context.

The **third concept** that forms the basis for the educational approaches of the contextualizing strategy is **dichotomization**.

The idea of conceptualizing the world in a particularly dichotomous way has been put forward many times. It is found, for instance, in literature related to religion (the atheist and the believer), chemistry (hot

and cold), geopolitics (the West and the East), psychology (the introverted and the extroverted) and problem-solving (focusing on facts or on emotions). For example, "the opposition between Confucianism and Taoism, [is] an opposition that . . . emphasizes the two opposite directions in which humanity always tended to move. . . . For Confucianism, value has no meaning except with respect to man and human society . . . while on the contrary, for Taoists, value resides neither in rite, nor in action, but in a union with the Tao, that is, with the absolute" [translation] (Lavelle, 1991, p. 40).

The very concept of dichotomization is associated with that of integration of opposites (see below). This integration is, in a sense, suggested at the same time by these two concepts, but it is distinguished from them by this important aspect: here, the educational approaches proposed for adults are based on their own dichotomies in order to seek the integration of opposites that they will themselves have determined. It should be recalled, finally, that dichotomization facilitates the global perception of a context.

The **fourth concept** on which the educational approaches of the contextualizing strategy are based concerns the **harmonious integration of opposites**. This concept is related to a prerequisite to the successful attainment of educational and vocational objectives. In fact, this integration constitutes one of the most useful means of getting a little closer to an intuiting of global reality. It suggests apprehending as if being divided between two opposite poles. This concept of the integration of opposites is itself also related to two other concepts: Lavelle's theory of opposites and Capra's holistic principle, which we will now look at one at a time.

The concept of the integration of opposites is based among other things on Louis Lavelle's theory of opposites. For this philosopher, two opposites do not have the same import or value. "While it is true that two opposites are always interdependent, they are never on the same level. There is always one that is both the reason for itself and for the other" [translation] (1955, p. 99). According to this philosopher, "one must never fail to consider the inequality that exists between the two opposites that are associated in different couples. There is always one that possesses in relationship to the other a positive priority and the other is always in a way its negation" [translation] (1992, p. 207).

This metaphysician gives several examples. We have selected two of these: freedom and necessity, and presence and absence. "Freedom and necessity have meaning only in relationship to each other; freedom is itself the primary term, since we certainly have an experience of freedom, while necessity can be defined only by negation" [translation] (Lavelle, 1992, p. 207). "We encounter the same features in the opposition between presence and absence. Because it is obvious that presence and absence can only be

thought of through their correlation. But there can be no doubt that it is presence that is positive, even though it is revealed to us with particular acuteness when absence suddenly ceases; and no one can doubt that it is absence that is felt as non-presence" [translation] (1992, p. 210).

This theory of opposites makes possible among other things an understanding of the possibility of integrating opposites harmoniously, but according to a particular perspective: a subjective and personal integration. For example, if introverted adults wish to integrate more extroverted behaviours into their behavioural repertoires, introversion will appear always to them as the stronger pole of these two opposites. In fact, they will regularly tend to see the adoption of extroverted behaviours as the absence of introverted behaviours. Hence the name "theory of the disparity of opposites" [translation] (Lavelle, 1992, p. 396).

Applied to the contextualizing strategy, this theory emphasizes the distinct values given by adults to one or the other of a pair of opposites. Furthermore, adults will have to integrate these opposites harmoniously if they want to be able to understand a given global whole as fully as possible.

In addition to Lavelle's theory of opposites, this concept of the integration of opposites is also related to the holistic principle, developed among others by the physicist Capra (1986). This term is derived from the Greek word *holos* meaning "whole." The holistic conception refers to a perception of reality in terms of integrated sets whose properties cannot be reduced to smaller units. In psychology the holistic principle applies particularly to systemic psychology and the gestalt theory of Perls (Altman and Rogoff, 1987).

The holistic perspective of the harmonious integration of opposites is not recent. It is found, for instance, in ancient philosophies, which postulate the need for the complementarity of opposites in order to come as close as possible to a healthy balance. This postulate applies to the individual, but also to civilizations and to the smooth functioning of any community. For example, ancient Chinese philosophy had the concepts of yin and yang, expansion or cooperation, conservation or progress; there is also Jung's *animus* and *anima* (1933). These are all unavoidable dimensions of healthy evolution, both personal and collective. These visions suggest understanding reality in terms of the interdependence of its components. They suggest going beyond our values, tendencies or usual means of action to apprehend them in a necessary complementarity.

On the basis of this concept, the educational approaches of the contextualizing strategy are aimed at, in particular, helping adults first of all identify opposites, then make the effort to situate them in their vision of things, or else to take them into account in various strategic processes.

The **fifth concept** underlying the educational approaches of the contextualizing strategy is **relativization**. According to this concept, individuals cannot grasp everything around them. They are unable to view in a satisfactory way the relative global outside reality, in its own ontological structure (Sarfatti, 1983). Because of this, no philosophical system, no scientific ideology can really understand completely one's relationships with the world for the simple reason that multiple conceptual systems are thought up and generated by humans. This philosophical postulate, derived among other things from the writings of Einstein, defines the current state of knowledge as being relatively inconsequential compared with the immensity of our psychological and cosmic reality. "One thing I have learned in a long life: that all our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike" (Einstein, 1949). Thus, according to relativism, the nature of human thought apprehends only partial aspects of reality and some of the relationships of its components.

On the basis of this concept of relativization, the educational approaches of the contextualizing strategy suggest specifically that adults attempt to expand and extend their ways of seeing things. They will thus become more aware of the innumerable heterogeneous elements that constitute reality.

Finally, it should be noted that other more sophisticated explorations, reflections and analyses are required for the identification of the educational approaches specific to the contextualizing strategy of adult career counselling.

### **Need for Complementary Approaches**

The contextualizing strategy is thus considered not only very important, but essential in various areas of intervention and research (Werner, Brown and Altman, 2002).

First of all, it is considered superior, in terms of complexity, to the harmonizing strategy. For example, according to Poortinga and Van-Hemert (2001), the situationist approach (linked to the contextualizing strategy) is better able to take into account the evolution of the personality than the trait-and-factor approach (related to the harmonizing strategy). The same can be said, according to Dowds and Marcel

(1998), of the explanation of critical thought and its educability. In particular, several researchers are now recommending the contextualizing strategy in information processing and in the vast field of the study of cognition (Ramsar and Yarlett, 2003; Friedler, Walther, Freytag and Plessner, 2002). However, it should be recalled that concern regarding information was traditionally connected to the harmonizing strategy.

The contextualizing strategy is considered more complete than the interactive strategy in various domains. For example, the importance of the former as compared with the latter is now recognized in the field of therapy for couples (Epstein and Baucom, 2002). In scientific research as a whole, especially, there is more and more recognition of the need to go beyond the concept of "efficient cause" (related to the interactive strategy) to interpret reality in more exhaustive ways, using among other things the concept of "formal cause" (Sunday, Eyles and Upshur, 2001).

Similarly, the contextualizing strategy seems to be supplanting the developmental strategy when it comes to placing knowledge in perspective. This seems to be the case in the field of child development (Rogoff, 2002) and the understanding of its evolution in the community (Rogoff, 2003); it also seems to be the case in the study of adult development, of which a better understanding is only possible, according to Zorga (2003), Kagitcibasi (2002) and Wallace (2001), for example, within the framework of the contextualizing strategy. This strategy makes possible, in fact, a better understanding of the evolution of the adult within the unpredictability of the context of life and the unpredictable events of the knowledge economy.

The relative superiority of the contextualizing strategy over the three others (harmonizing, interactive, developmental) substantially justifies the recommendation of its use as the essential complement to form the basis of the policy on counselling and support services for adults. Moreover, it should be recalled, the contextualizing strategy could among other things be understood as an original, demanding and promising synthesis of the three other strategies (harmonizing, interactive and developmental), which it would need in turn to rely on, in complementary ways.

## CHAPTER V GENERAL THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Several general theoretical questions need to be examined in the development of a policy on career counselling and career management for adults. Here are some of them.

On which educational philosophy(ies) of career counselling should this policy be based: functionalist? critical? adult-centred? spiritualist?

What concept(s) of policy development should it be linked to?

What should the evaluation model for this policy be? Are the criteria that need to be taken into account both numerous and varied?

This chapter does not provide answers, but rather elements for reflection and a few proposals.

### **Educational Philosophies of Adult Counselling (a few suggestions)**

First of all, a distinction needs to be made between the terms "educational philosophy" and "educational approach."

On the one hand, the former term refers to ultimate goals, while the latter (already discussed in the four sections entitled "educational approaches") refers to pedagogical and didactic concerns. On the other hand, the first expression transcends career counselling strategies, which is not the case for the latter. "Educational approaches" are specific tools recommended for the realization and applicability of these strategies.

We now need to clarify the concepts of "educational philosophies of counselling" and "counselling strategies."

The four strategies (harmonizing, interactive, developmental and contextualizing) inform us about the content of the learning adults need to acquire in order to better manage the course of their careers throughout their lives. However, and this is an essential distinction, the four strategies do not specify what adults will do with the whole set of that learning. Questions such as the following therefore need to be asked: with the learning acquired through the four career counselling strategies, will these adults succeed in focusing on themselves? In contributing to the smooth functioning of society? In participating in collective reform?

One of the key points to be specified during the development of policies on counselling and support services for adults is precisely the identification of the educational philosophies of counselling they are based on. In fact, these philosophies raise the following questions: towards what ultimate goal(s) are these services provided? What will the adult do with the learning acquired through one or another of the four career counselling strategies?

The classification of philosophies of adult education by Selman, Cooke, Selman and Dampier (1997) seems very useful for drawing up part of an overall portrait of educational philosophies of counselling for adults.

There are first of all the functionalist philosophies of adult education, which postulate, as a whole, that "the various parts of society contribute to its overall efficient functioning. . . . Schools, labour unions, the courts, businesses and other segments of society, each function as required for the operation of society" (Selman et al., 1997, p. 343).

When we apply these functionalist philosophies of adult education to the question of adult career counselling, we call them **functionalist educational philosophies of counselling**. With this philosophy, career counselling proposes as its ultimate goal the harmonious functioning of society.

Here are examples of objectives attributed to counselling and support services that are specifically based on these philosophies:

1. "to contribute . . . to increasing the number of registrations in postsecondary (most often university) studies" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 7)
2. to develop a greater attachment to societal values: "society (and the economy) as a whole can only benefit from effective career guidance, for example through attitudinal shifts which result in a greater attachment to prevalent societal values" (Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 5)

There are also critical philosophies of adult education that are aimed, among other things, at making learners aware of the conflicting interests of various social groups, including the subgroup of people who are in power (Selman et al., 1997, p. 344-5).

When we apply these critical philosophies of adult education to the question of adult career counselling, we call them **critical educational philosophies of counselling**. With these philosophies, career counselling suggests as its ultimate goal the struggle against social inequalities in order to achieve greater social cohesion.

Here are examples of objectives attributed to counselling and support services that are specifically based on these philosophies:

1. "to reduce the economic costs associated with unemployment, social and economic exclusion, and job losses" [translation] (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2002d, p. 10)
2. "to concentrate more on the quantitative economic or educational outcomes (sustainable employment, reducing the dropout rate" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 6-7)
3. "to reduce welfare spending; to shorten the length of time people are on welfare; to find jobs for certain welfare recipients" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 7)

There are also philosophies of adult education that focus on the learners, postulating overall that "educators . . . emphasize the active role of the learner in creating and defining the value of what is learned" (Selman et al., 1997, p. 345).

When we apply these philosophies of adult education to the question of adult career counselling, we call them **adult-centred educational philosophies of counselling**. With these philosophies, career counselling adopts as its ultimate goal the development and realization of the person. These philosophies often seem to be those closest to the learning objectives inherent to one or another of the four career counselling strategies.

Here are examples of objectives attributed to counselling and support services that are specifically based on these philosophies:

1. to be concerned about individualized service: "In its counselling services, Emploi-Québec, like the OECD countries, emphasizes guidance and appropriate support for participants in active measures to limit the dropout rate. In this regard, through the implementation of



- the intervention approach and of the individualized path to labour market entry, training and employment have contributed, among other things, to strengthening the client-centred approach" [translation] (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2002d, p. 16)
2. "to permit [adults] to enter interesting careers" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 6)
  3. "to foster the economic and social autonomy of individuals and to assist individuals in their efforts to enter, reenter or remain on the labour market" (Act respecting income support, employment assistance and social solidarity, R.S.Q., c. S-32.001) (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2002d, p. 11)
  4. to aim for "motivation, self-improvement and a sense of well-being among clients" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 8)
  5. to develop an image of the self: there is "the concern that individuals in liberal societies need to construct their conceptions of who they are" (Grubb, 2002, p. 22)
  6. to aim for "vocational adaptability . . . the ability to adapt to a job and to constantly changing working conditions" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 7)

Basing ourselves on the work of Selman et al. (1997), we have just presented the three main currents of thought, two of which are linked to the "environment" pole (the functional and critical educational philosophies of counselling) and one of which is linked to the "subject" pole (the adult-centred philosophies). But, in addition to these three currents of educational philosophies of counselling for adults, we are proposing another, based on the "subject" pole: these are **spiritualist educational philosophies of counselling**. They see career counselling as having the ultimate goal of helping adults construct a meaning of their sociovocational lives, taking into account the meaning they have given to the relationships between themselves and the universe.

These philosophies are based on many currents of secular (metaphysical, ethical) and religious thought. However, these many currents of thought have one point in common: adults have to construct a meaning for their lives, and a meaning for their relationship with the universe. "The word meaning implies this orientation in time, which, by proposing for us certain ends in relation to which we can judge things, makes it possible for us to understand and want them. . . . Meaning expresses the direction that value gives to our existence" [translation] (Lavelle, 1991, p. 23).

Several movements refer to the need, for adults, to give their own meaning to their various educational and vocational activities (Simard, in press). There are, for example, secular movements related to

transpersonal psychology, to ethical questions, and to metaphysical reflection (secular aspects). There are also religious movements associated with widely varied religious beliefs.

These spiritualist educational philosophies of counselling provide various types of answers to the question asked above: what will the adults do with this learning related to career management throughout their lives? By way of illustration, we have borrowed here Bertrand's classification (2000) to develop different hypothetical answers based on these philosophies. Will the adults develop codes of ethics based mainly on a concern for: 1. the self (ethics of authenticity); 2. others (community ethics, ethics of caring); 3. nature (ecological ethics); 4. a secular or religious absolute (ethics of secular or religious rules)?

And by way of example, we note here certain objectives attributed to counselling and support services that seem to be connected to these spiritualist philosophies that are particularly concerned with the meaning given to life. "Quebec views education broadly, adopting the UNESCO declaration of the right to learn, 'as a process that lasts throughout life, a process that can forge identity and **give a meaning to life**'" (CMEC and HRDC, 2003, p. 11). In fact, "the Ministère de l'Éducation subscribes to the declaration of the right to education adopted at the fourth UNESCO conference and more recently to the declaration adopted at the 5th international UNESCO conference in Hamburg in 1997, which presents adult education as a right, a process that lasts throughout life, a process that can forge identity and **give a meaning to life**" [translation] (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2002d, p. 10). Moreover, these spiritualist educational philosophies of counselling are somewhat related to one component of student services in elementary and secondary schools: "Program of student life services designed to foster [the development] of . . . their moral and spiritual dimensions" (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2002e, p. 31).

Observance of these philosophies, some old and some completely resurgent (Bertrand, 1998), is, however, sometimes very difficult. Moreover, the whole question of multicultural counselling often stumbles over the differences they present. These have daily repercussions that are very delicate and very often sources of explosive reactions (Tsang, Bogo and George, 2003; Locke and Kiselica, 1999).

However, we are of the opinion that it is important to take into account all these various educational philosophies of counselling (critical, person-centred, functional and spiritualist) in developing a policy on counselling and support services for adults.

First of all, a government policy should generally be respectful of social cohesion (priority for educational philosophies critical of adult career counselling), aiming for the reduction of inequalities between people.

The most important gaps are in the following areas: education or schooling, and the quality of sociovocational entry and reentry.

A government policy should also take into account the primary aspirations of the adults themselves (priority of adult-centred educational philosophies of career counselling).

A government policy should also be concerned with certain societal emergencies identified in particular by the structures in place (priority of functionalist educational philosophies of adult career counselling). However, these concerns must be limited to the short term, since measures must be taken simultaneously so that these structures can be gradually integrated into the changes demanded by the knowledge economy.

Finally, a government policy should respect the various paths of the quest for meaning, notably those based on secular or religious beliefs (priority of spiritualist educational philosophies of adult career counselling).

The recommendation to make room for various educational philosophies of career counselling is, in a way, already implicit in the four strategies. In this regard, we could reread the last sentence in the sidebars on the first pages of chapters I, II, III and IV. These sentences maintain that "the more adults . . . the more capable they are of making educational and vocational choices that are consistently appropriate for both themselves [adult-centred philosophies; spiritualist philosophies] and society [functionalist philosophies; critical philosophies]." The word "appropriate" is important here. It refers specifically to a philosophical judgment that must be made by the adults themselves, by the practitioner or by the setting (school, organizational, community, recreational, civil), a judgment that specifies the priority (and not the exclusivity) to be given to an ultimate goal proposed by one of the educational philosophies of adult career counselling.

This position with respect to a broad recommendation may surprise more than one purist, followers of airtight divisions between each philosophical educational current in adult career counselling. However, for the more eclectic, and there are many of them, this broad proposal is acceptable and appropriate. It takes into account all the goals expressed by the various societal bodies.

Of course, complementary and supplementary reflections are required on this subject of educational philosophies of adult career counselling.

**Policy Development Theories (a few suggestions)**

The relevant literature presents various currents of thought related to the development of policies. One of the questions that will have to be answered is the following: To which current(s) of thought is the current policy on career counselling and career management for adults linked?

We are proposing here a taxonomy that could help answer this question. According to Sabatier (1999), there are five major currents of thought:

1. the linear design model, in which development takes place in three phases: a) formulation of the policy; b) implementation; and c) evaluation
2. the institutional rational choices model, in which development of the policy is essentially based on concern for the rational rules of mega-organizations in a society
3. the coalition model, in which development of the policy is based mainly on consensus among competing stakeholders (for example, financiers and ecologists)
4. the alternation model of patterns of changes, in which development of the policy is mostly based on the prediction of rates of change, or else on the alternations in intense changes (peaks) and slow changes (continuous)
5. the constructivist model, in which development of the policy is based mainly on the constant shifts in the ideologies of the stakeholders (for example, the ethical principles of a society or a group of citizens may, according to current tendencies, favour: the individual, others, nature or a god)

It is moreover possible that the development of this policy on adult career counselling and career management will be based on two or more currents. It will therefore be necessary to specify how and in what way this policy is based on each of them.

It would also be important to explore and analyze other avenues, and especially other taxonomies or literature relevant to this question of the theoretical foundations of policy development.

### **Policy Evaluation Models (a few suggestions)**

Several classifications of models for the evaluation of policies are recognized, including the one proposed by Stetcher (Stetcher and Davis, 1990), which, indeed, he continues to use (Stecher and Hamilton, 2002).

We are proposing the classification of Stufflebeam's team (Stufflebeam, Foley, Gephart, Guba, Hammond, Merriman and Provus, 1971), which is still widely used (Stufflebeam, 2001; Kellaghan and Stufflebeam, 2002). Three types of models are explained, on the basis of the time chosen for the evaluation of the policy:

1. Evaluation **prior to** implementation of the policy. This evaluation includes two essential parts:  
a) the evaluation of the context in which this policy will be applied; b) the evaluation of the inputs or elements of the policy by several teams of experts.
2. Evaluation carried out **during** implementation of the policy. This is evaluation of the process, or of the way in which it is implemented. The necessary corrections are made along the way.
3. Evaluation that takes place **after** the implementation of the policy. This is an evaluation of the product, or of the positive or negative consequences of this implementation.

In addition to the choice of model for the evaluation of the policy, there is also the thorny issue of **determining the criteria** for this evaluation. First of all, since this document recommends that policies be in keeping with the various educational philosophies on guidance for adults, it necessarily proposes the establishment and use of criteria based on each of those philosophies. Second, while this document strongly suggests adopting the four career counselling strategies, it recommends at the same time the use of criteria from one or another of these strategies.

One thing is certain, in the absence of details on the choice of the educational philosophy(ies) on guidance counselling and guidance strategy(ies) it has been decided to adopt, the choice of criteria can be difficult, and even risky, and may even make impossible the achievement of a consensus among the various levels at which the policy would be applied. For example, in Canada, there does not yet seem to be a consensus on evaluation criteria. "Until now, we have not been able to develop a consensus in Canada among all the parties as to what the outcomes for professional and personal development and career counselling should be" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 6).

In addition, consensus is more difficult to achieve depending on whether guidance is seen as a private or public matter. "A distinction may be made between career guidance being viewed as a 'worthy *private* good,' which bestows benefits to individuals who should have a civic right to have access to it regardless of the resources at their private disposal, and as a '*public* good' which generates social and economic benefits over and above those accruing to the individuals who receive it" (Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 2).

We are presenting here examples of heterogeneous criteria, taken from various relevant publications, which are related to groups of individuals affected directly or indirectly by the various questions of the effectiveness of counselling and support services for adults.

**Policy development officials.** They "have a tendency to concentrate more on quantitative economic or educational outcomes (sustainable employment, reducing the dropout rate" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 6-7).

According to Mayston (2002), there are a certain number of significant, wider social benefits that can be expected from high quality career counselling, and which could be taken into account in the analysis of the benefits of such career counselling. "These are indeed 'wider' benefits, for they comprise: increased tax yields to the Exchequer; reductions in unemployment and other social security costs to the Exchequer; reductions in health care costs on the National Health Service; reductions in the frequency and costs of crime; macro-economic benefits; and net social benefits" (Mayston, quoted in Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 6).

**Adults.** Herr defines the economic benefits that individuals gain from their career paths as being "their ability to secure jobs with improved pay, in shortened periods of unemployment, in obtaining greater congruence between personal interests and abilities in a job chosen and in the experience of extended tenure in that job" (quoted in Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 5).

**Counsellors.** They have "a tendency to focus more on the quality of the process (client-counsellor relationship) and to a lesser extent on the qualitative outcomes (client satisfaction) with respect to career choice or choice of the next intervention" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 7).

Moreover, according to practitioners, "career counselling helps each individual to unfold his/her potential, thus providing a link between personal growth and economic growth" (Plant, 2001, p. 18).

**School administrators and teachers.** "Those working in the schools would like the career counselling programs to contribute to the improvement of academic performance, to increasing the number of registrations in postsecondary (most often university) studies, and to reducing the dropout rate" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 7).

**Government welfare system officials.**

"Several [Canadian] provinces have carried out reforms of their welfare systems and are now turning towards the programs based on active measures for labour market re-entry, including interventions in the area of professional development. Whether participation in programs is mandatory or voluntary, the provinces/territories and municipalities want in general to be able to . . . reduce welfare spending; shorten the length of time people are on welfare; find jobs for certain welfare recipients" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 7).

Referring to the social benefits of career counselling, Watts states that:

"the case for guidance having a role in reducing social exclusion is not difficult to make,' in that career guidance focuses on encouraging participation in learning and in employment. It can therefore be seen as a force for preventing 'at risk' individuals from becoming socially excluded, and alleviating the situation of those who have become excluded, by assisting them to be re-engaged through education, training or employment" (Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 5).

**Government employment officials.**

"For the purpose of employment benefits and support measures, including interventions related to professional development such as individual counselling and group service, HRDC [Department of Human Resources Development Canada] has established three success indicators . . . clients having found a job (including the self-employed); the amount of employment-assistance benefits not paid (i.e., the difference between the maximum amount allowed for regular income benefits and the benefits actually paid); the employment-assistance recipients served" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 7).

In addition, "the chances of market failure can be alleviated by effective career guidance, through reducing the propensity of learners to embark upon and subsequently drop out of education or training courses, by reducing the amount of mismatch between job vacancies and the available pool of unemployed labour, and by re-energizing previously discouraged workers, who were not

aware of potential opportunities for them to regain employment. A reduction in the length of job search may also be a valid 'positive' measure" (Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 5).

For our society at large, according to Herr (2001), "a purposeful, productive, teachable work force may enhance the competitive edge of a nation in competing for market share in a global economy, in being innovative, and in maximizing high skill/high pay jobs in the occupational structure" (quoted in Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 5-6).

**Researchers and practitioners.** They are concerned especially with "qualitative outcomes obtained through a series of professional development interventions . . . related to . . . vocational adaptability . . . the ability to adapt to a job and to constantly changing working conditions" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 7). Watts (1999) called these outcomes "learning outcomes." In addition, according to this author, these outcomes "are likely to continue to provide the most readily usable measures, because of their *appropriateness*, in that they reflect the guidance practitioner's concern to offer a range of alternatives, rather than being overly prescriptive, and *practicability*, in that the immediate, or short-term effects are able to be measured with relative ease" (quoted in Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 4).

Moreover, researchers "have determined that professional development measures should lead to a certain number of learning outcomes. Among these outcomes, we could mention attitudes, i.e., the capacity to develop useful strategies to cope with change. Among other significant intermediate outcomes, we could mention motivation, self-improvement and a sense of well-being among clients" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 7-8).

**Employers.** "Retention, productivity and greater efficiency and effectiveness among employees will accrue to employers from suitable guidance activity" (Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 4).

But the greatest differences of opinion on the evaluation criteria for guidance services are those between administrators and practitioners of career counselling.

According to Savickas (2001), policymakers and practitioners, as a general rule, view quality outcomes from two distinct vantage points: policymakers focus on workers' success, satisfactoriness and adjustment, while practitioners are concerned almost exclusively with workers' job satisfaction, personal development, and maturity. Policymakers look at what adults contribute to the economy and practitioners look at what they receive from employment and their various forms of sociovocational participation. Furthermore,



"whereas policy makers are concerned with macro-economic issues, such as overall levels of employment and unemployment, labour productivity, the position of marginalised or disadvantaged groups, the effective use of resources and 'in some cases, social justice,' practitioners are perceived to have a focus at the 'micro-level,' with a concern for individual clients and how they may achieve learning or employment goals which most nearly match their aspirations or provide job satisfaction" (Herr, quoted in Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 6).

In addition, according to Maguire and Killeen, "there is clearly a need for greater discussion, and, hopefully, agreement between policy makers, practitioners, and researchers over what will be deemed appropriate, desirable and measurable outcomes of career guidance. . . . We must . . . find and agree on criteria for evaluating outcomes, not just for the individual but also for societies" (2003, p. 17).

Given such differences, which have not yet been resolved, between policymakers on the one hand, and practitioners and researchers on the other, more attention will need to be paid to the definition of these evaluation criteria prior to the publication and dissemination of the policy on counselling and support services for adults. If not, a great deal of misunderstanding and intense frustration could result among the various subgroups of people whose own objectives have not been met. This could lead to many disastrous consequences: possible reduction of the budgets, which are already so slim, allocated to adult career counselling, decrease in the number of adults involved in continuing education and training activities or in various job re-entry processes, etc.

In addition, the inventory and the use of many other relevant criteria are required, because the evaluation of career counselling is encountering other substantial obstacles:

- "there are a wide range of factors which influence individual career choice and decision-making, and/or which can impact on outcomes;
- career guidance is frequently not a discrete input, but rather is embedded in other contexts, such as learning provision, employer/employee relationships, and/or within multi-strand initiatives;
- comparing the evidence available in different studies is problematic when the nature of career guidance, the depth of work undertaken and client groups, vary considerably;
- there is not an agreed set of outcome measures for career guidance, or common methods of collecting output, or outcome data, except in the case of a limited number of discrete programmes/areas of work" (Hughes, Bosley, Bowes and Bysshe, 2002, p. 19).

The question of duration, or longitudinal evaluation, also seems to be very important according to the criteria used. For example,

“Watts (1999) identifies **three locations** for assessing the outcomes of guidance, each of which has a different timescale attached to it. These are: the **individual**, where the outcomes, which are designated as 'learning outcomes' are immediate; **organisational**, where the outcomes, which are designated as 'school effectiveness (e.g.)' are intermediate; and **societal**, where the outcomes, which are designated as 'economic benefits and social benefits' are ultimate. The time period over which outcome measures are applied is extremely important, as it could be argued that longer-term outcomes, for the individual, the organisation, and society as a whole, are likely to reflect the true benefits of guidance” (Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 4).

Also, continue these authors, "one of the great dilemmas . . . is in being able to differentiate the impact of the 'guidance' component from other aspects. . . . Guidance can be highly influential in conjunction with other types of intervention, such as the provision of training. . . . [There are] difficulties . . . making claims for the impact of career guidance per se" (Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 14).

Another significant divergence concerns the difference between the evaluation of the learning outcomes and the economic benefits. For example, "As far as learning outcomes are concerned . . . evidence on the learning outcomes of guidance is substantial and convincing. This statement is based on an appraisal of forty studies, which overwhelmingly pointed to some positive outcomes, and is supported by American studies of a similar nature" (Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 14). On the other hand, according to these same authors, "studies providing evidence of the *economic benefits of career guidance* are thin on the ground" (p. 15). Plant makes a similar observation: "Few evaluations have considered, specifically, the quality of economic outcomes of guidance itself" (Plant, 2001, p. 15).

This wish is therefore formulated:

"if . . . a few strong studies could be mounted of the relationship between immediate learning outcomes and the longer-term social and economic outcomes, and if positive connections between them could be established, then the learning outcomes could thereafter be regarded not only as of value in their own right but also as proxies for the longer-term outcomes' (Killeen, White & Watts...). To date, such studies have not been conducted" (Maguire and Killeen, 2003, p. 18).

Finally it should be noted that many other considerations should be analyzed with respect to the delicate issue of the evaluation of the future Québec policy on counselling and support services for adults.

## CHAPTER VI

### GENERAL THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many practical questions need to be dealt with in the development of a policy on adult career counselling and career management. We will mention a few of them here.

The components to be included in the action plan could be the following: self-guidance, hetero-guidance, co-guidance, and eco-guidance. Should certain scenarios be favoured?

Should the approaches used for the implementation of the action plan emphasize preventive dimensions (activities offered to everyone), while also being concerned with the reactive dimensions (activities offered to target groups) and avoiding as much as possible coercive dimensions?

Should the principle of universal access be the primary principle to be observed in this policy? If so, how can this principle be reconciled with the problems related to certain target groups?

What are the competencies required for those responsible for the application of this policy?

This chapter will not provide answers, but some avenues for reflection and some proposals.

#### **Action Plan (a few suggestions)**

The action plan of a policy on adult career counselling and career management should, in our view, include four main components. It should be noted that these components can be part of each of the four strategies. It will, of course, be necessary to distinguish for each one specific relevant content and the corresponding adapted educational approaches.

The components to be included in the action plan could be the following:

- i. self-guidance (for example, self-directed on-line information and career programs)
- ii. hetero-guidance (for example, peer groups, mentoring)
- iii. co-guidance (for example, vocational counselling with a counsellor)

- iv. eco-guidance (supervised and facilitated by a counsellor) encouraging various types of social settings (adult school, organizational, community, recreational) to adopt an organizational policy instituting active participation of the community as a source of vocational guidance and career management

We will now comment on each of these components.

**A brief comment on self-guidance.** This component is the one most often referred to in self-directed on-line information and career programs.

In Québec, there are several services of this type.

"Quebec identifies the following Internet initiatives: development and implementation of the *Système d'information sur le marché du travail d'Emploi-Québec* (labour market information system of *Emploi-Québec*); staff of the *Centres locaux d'emploi* promoting and using a Web site to offer a virtual counselling service on academic and vocational information; the *Emploi-Québec* Web site, which allows users to carry out a self-assessment on their readiness to enter the labour market, overcome obstacles, acquire skills, search for work, and obtain and retain employment" (CMEC and HRDC, 2003, p. 50).

Self-guidance became a high priority in the context of reduced budgets. "All levels of [Canadian] government have devoted the lion's share of funding to self-service for the clientele. The spread of self-service stems from the desire of governments to reduce the costs of services. It was also motivated by the rapid changes that have taken place in Internet technologies, which permit a high degree of interactivity, are visually attractive and can even be used for audio communications" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 6).

The fact remains, however, that self-guidance requires that adults take responsibility for themselves.

"During the past five years [in Canada], public policies have emphasized individual responsibility, self-sufficiency and autonomy in the area of professional development and career advancement. Adults are encouraged to consult on their own the documents and services they have access to, namely federal, provincial/territorial and community resources, as well as the career centres" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 6).

But there is one drawback to self-guidance. In the knowledge economy, there is a tendency to dump everything on the back of the individual: education, career. For example, companies no longer take responsibility for their employees' careers. According to Doyle, "there has been a significant shift in some organisations away from a psychological contract which traditionally embodied the values of mutuality and reciprocity, towards one that represents a more calculative and instrumental relationship between employees and their work organisations. One effect of this new contract has been that traditional, on-wards-and-upwards planned, accessible, and secure careers are being replaced by an over-to-you philosophy where ownership and responsibility for career management are transferred or delegated to the individual employee" (2000, p. 233). Caspar also makes this point regarding training and employment. One consequence of the knowledge economy, he says, is "an increased reliance on individual responsibility in the area of training and employment" [translation] (2000, p. 67). In addition, there seems to be a clear danger in giving adults too much responsibility for themselves. Caspar talks about "the possible adverse effects of this desire to make human beings more responsible for themselves in all areas of their lives" [translation] (2000, p. 81).

Guidance services need to remember "to what extent this increasing individualization of the obligation for self-training and self-marketing of one's own personal evolution, within an uncertain, shifting, sometimes threatening society, can become guilt-inducing or paralyzing for some, especially if one goes to the extreme of considering the person as being primarily responsible for his or her unemployability" [translation] (Caspar, 2000, p. 78).

There must be support for this increased demand for individuals taking responsibility "through simultaneous investments in the means, the mechanism and the community rules that are indispensable in order to foresee what will determine their futures and act accordingly, at least for what depends on them" [translation] (Caspar, 2000, p. 81).

Moreover, there is the problem of the evaluation of the effectiveness of self-guidance.

No steps have been taken to carry out this evaluation, at least not with respect to the economic aspect. For example, it seems that "there is very little research to show that self-service directs individuals toward areas where there are shortages of skills or permits them to gain access to interesting careers" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 6).

As for the evaluation of self-guidance with respect to learning objectives, the outcomes are controversial. They are sometimes considered positive: "The self-service approach favours continuous learning and the acquisition of skills in career transition" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 6). On some occasions, however, these outcomes seem confusing and require that individual differences be taken into account. According to the OECD (2004), services disseminated on the Web do not meet the needs of all adults, many of whom prefer to be able to discuss their problems occasionally in personal interviews. According to our work (Riverin-Simard, 1996; 2000; 2003), the personality type seems to be a variable to be considered in self-guidance: an investigative-type personality would be more skillful at managing his or her own career using self-guidance on the Internet; social types would be less able, since the interpersonal relationships are more beneficial for them (Sampson, 1999).

As Watts points out, "constantly lurking beneath professional anxieties about the use of ICT in guidance has been the fear of reductionism: that the use of technology will lead to simplistic, 'quick-fix,' information-based approaches, in which the human element is marginalised or eliminated" (Watts, 2001, p. 9). Watts also notes that "in general, however, most commentators on the use of such systems advocate the benefits of integrating them into more broadly-based guidance services. The first is the *supported* model . . . the second is the *incorporated* model in which the system is used within another guidance intervention . . . the third model is the *progressive* one, in which the use of the [computer-aided guidance] system is preceded and/or followed by other guidance interventions" (2001, p. 7). Thus, continues this author, "it can [increasingly] be used within an integrated approach not only to supplement but also to extend the range of this human element" (2001, p. 9).

Furthermore, reiterating the conclusions of Sampson's team, Watts states that self-guidance is effective if certain factors are taken into account. For example, there are:

"three levels of service delivery. Individuals who are initially judged to have a high level of readiness for decision-making are referred to *self-help* services. . . . Those judged to have a *moderate* level of readiness are referred to *brief staff-assisted* services. . . . Those with a *low* level of readiness are referred to *individual case-managed services*" (Watts, 2001, p. 6).

The level of readiness can be measured so that people can be guided to one of the three categories of services.

Finally, according to the OECD, "there are still important limitations to the use of ICT, though many are transitional in nature" (OECD, 2004, p. 77). But, "it seems likely that ICT will continue to grow as a form of service delivery" (p. 77).

In short, a great deal of complementary and additional reflection will be required on the issue of adult self-guidance.

**Hetero-guidance**, based specifically on peer groups and mentoring groups, should continue to play an important role. The role of peers is very important in the four adult career counselling strategies. Many studies have been conducted, and are still being conducted, on hetero-guidance.

**Co-guidance** is related to the image, both classic and very current, of individual vocational counselling with a counsellor. There is very extensive scientific and clinical literature on this topic.

**A word on eco-guidance.** We should mention in passing that this term is based on Pineau's (2000) concept of "eco-training." "Eco-training is the backdrop that makes personal and social staging possible" [translation] (p. 132). But, he observes, "the current stagings dismantle it so much that its importance becomes apparent" [translation].

If we apply these words to the issue of adult career management, we could say that the current stagings in various social settings for adults dismantle their scenery so often that the importance of this scenery becomes apparent, among other things, for its potential help in the continuous redefinition of educational and vocational objectives, throughout the adults' lives.

In this document, it should be recalled that eco-guidance (supervised and facilitated by a counsellor) involves the need for the adoption, by various types of settings (adult school, organizational, vocational, community, recreational), of an organizational policy that can help adults manage their careers. Because, if we go back to the roots of the prefix "eco-," it refers to a house, a dwelling. The term "eco-guidance" refers to, in our view, a house helping its inhabitants in their orientation.

The term "eco-guidance" can also be defined in parallel to the *Québec Guidance-oriented Approach* (*Approche orientante québécoise*) for young people in schools. However, it also has broader connotations, since it is related to various social contexts. In addition, these contexts are not recognized as partners of the school, but as environments in themselves, orienting themselves, and having defined organizational policies for that purpose.

We should recall first of all the definition of the guidance-oriented approach adopted by the Ministère de l'Éducation and by the Groupe provincial de soutien pour une approche orientante à l'école (GPSAO) <<http://gpsao.educ.usherbrooke.ca/>>. (See also <<http://www.qesnrecit.qc.ca/goal/index.php>> for information in English.) It is "a concerted approach by a school team and its partners, in which objectives are set and services (individual and collective), tools and pedagogical activities implemented to guide students in their identity development and career planning. These activities and services are integrated into the school's success plan and its educational project" (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2002c, p. 18).

If we adapt this definition to describe eco-guidance, we obtain the following: adult **eco-guidance** is a concerted approach by a team in a given environment (adult school at various levels, vocational,<sup>5</sup> organizational, recreational, community) and its partners, in which objectives are set and services (self-, hetero-, co-guidance) implemented to guide adults in the definition of their educational and vocational objectives and, thus, in the management of their careers throughout their lives. These are therefore activities and services integrated into the development plans of the various social environments in which the adults are present.

The contribution of these environments could do a lot to encourage adults to take part more in continuing education and training activities. This need to be concerned about educational and vocational objectives in many environments is pointed out by the Institut canadien de l'éducation des adultes (ICEA). "The organization of a Québec 'adults in training' week was entrusted to the Institut canadien de l'éducation des adultes (ICEA), which recommends that the purpose of the week be to develop throughout the entire adult population of Québec a desire and opportunities for learning throughout their lives in the various areas of professional, social and personal life" [translation] (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2002d, p. 15). Moreover, the activity report reiterated this: "A great diversity of sectors for intervention were discussed: culture, training in the workplace and in businesses, grass-roots education, literacy, the environment, health and social services, immigration and francization, local and regional development, media and communications, the Anglophone community and the aboriginal community" [translation] (ICEA, 2001, p. 7).

In the action plan, care will have to be taken to avoid any confusion between eco-guidance and the presence of guidance services in various settings. The fact that guidance services are provided in certain settings does not necessarily mean that these settings are committed to adult eco-guidance. As we know,

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5. Such as professional orders and associations



"career guidance is provided to people in a very wide range of settings: schools and tertiary institutions; public employment services; private guidance providers; enterprises; and community settings" (OECD, 2003b, p. 41). But nor does it mean that the dynamics of these various settings have been integrated overall into adult eco-guidance education policies. In fact, the involvement of any setting in career education requires a very particular dynamic. It should, however, be noted in passing that certain settings seem to have already committed themselves to such policies. For example, in Wales, "some adult services are delivered, using an outreach model, in a wide variety of community settings, some through the offices of individual careers companies, some using a mobile facility, some by telephone, and some online. [There is also] an on-site service within enterprises to assist those facing redundancy" (OECD, 2004, p. 144).

In order to advance practices in counselling and support services, many proposals related to eco-guidance for young people in school settings have been made. We suggest that readers explore the GPSAO site <<http://gpsao.educ.usherbrooke.ca/>> and the related English-language site <<http://www.qesnrecit.qc.ca/goal/index.php>>. Furthermore, we would like to add here the words of Grubb, who lists certain means of approaching young people, which might be transferable to adults:

"Teacher training programs with a particular philosophy; in-service education or staff development that support the initial efforts of teachers; curriculum materials that suggest more active or exploratory exercises for students to undertake . . . project-based learning methods that help teachers and schools organize longer and more experiential approaches to learning; pilot programs and demonstration projects and small-scale reform efforts to introduce educators gradually to constructivist approaches; different forms of assessment, moving away from standardized multiple-choice tests; and approaches that try to make the pedagogical practices of principals, teachers, teacher training, curriculum development, and assessment consistent with one another, so that practices in one segment of education are undermined by the practices in another" (2002, p. 22-23).

But what about the actual effectiveness of eco-guidance in an adult education setting? That is the essential question.

If we can rely on the anticipated spread of the guidance-oriented approach in elementary and secondary school institutions (Dupont, Gingras and Marcel, 2002), it is possible that such promising outcomes could also be predicted for the adult education sector. Additional reflection and studies will, however, be necessary. This is particularly the case with eco-guidance in an organizational setting. For example,

Riverin-Simard and Simard (2003a) have emphasized the specific importance of this setting in career management, through, in particular, the informal contribution to the organization. The same can be said for eco-guidance implemented in a community setting. These authors (2002) specifically highlighted the obvious contribution of this type of setting to the educational and vocational objectives of adults. Analyses specific to eco-guidance in a recreational setting could also be useful and enlightening. For example, the same authors (2003b) have highlighted the role of recreational activities in the career management of adults.

Moreover, who would be the actors in eco-guidance for adults in the various academic, organizational, vocational, community, and recreational settings? Some answers might be found in the work of Dupont et al. (2002), applied to elementary and secondary school settings.

The first actors are the adults themselves, as those primarily responsible for their career management.

There is also the administration and governing board of the institution, as leaders of the project. Their role would be, specifically:

1. to assume responsibility for the proper functioning of the eco-guidance project in their institution
2. to integrate eco-guidance into the main development plans of the institution

There is the facilitator (teacher, activity leader) in direct contact with the adults, whose role would be, among other things:

1. to work towards the attainment of the objectives of the guidance programs adopted by the administration of the institution
2. to plan and organize activities with the participation of the guidance counsellor and lead the activities (sometimes with the help of the guidance counsellor)
3. to evaluate the activities

There is the guidance counsellor, supporting the facilitator. The role of the guidance counsellor would be, among other things:

1. to propose individual and group counselling meetings
2. to design and plan interventions that include eco-guidance (for example, workshops)
3. to provide tools for facilitators (for example, design and implement eco-guidance activities with them)
4. to design the implementation of planned activities

5. to validate these activities with the facilitators
6. to inventory and improve, if necessary, the tools and activities that are organized in the settings
7. to become involved in the promotion of eco-guidance activities characteristic of a setting
8. to provide support for facilitators in the realization of activities related to eco-guidance
9. to offer training workshops for facilitators
10. to establish partnerships with the various other social settings
11. to establish contacts with the various significant persons (colleagues, friends, spouses, children, parents)

Among the other actors in eco-guidance, there are also the support professionals (for example, the librarian can help adults navigate the Internet to better be able to understand the self-guidance programs or vocational information sites).

Finally, there are peers (colleagues), significant persons (spouses, children, parents, friends) whose roles can often be decisive.

**Outstanding questions.** Beyond the diversity of approaches (self-guidance, hetero-guidance, co-guidance, eco-guidance) proposed as components of the action plan for a policy on career counselling and career management, many questions are still outstanding. These questions are most often related to evaluation of one of these components, or else to the scientific support for the proposed activities. There is also the question of what sort of balance should be established between these various components. For example, "What is an appropriate balance between different information and guidance models and delivery systems (classroom-based career education; one-to-one counselling; group counselling; telephone advisory services; computer-based advice and information; community-based services) for young people and for adults? How can the boundaries between information services, advisory services, and guidance and counselling services be defined, managed, staffed and resourced?" (OECD, 2000, p. 9).

Finally, it should be recalled, a great deal of additional reflection is obviously required with respect to the components of the action plan for the policy on counselling and support services for adults.

**Scenarios.** There are several possible scenarios. We are proposing two here. The first one emphasizes the "eco-guidance" component, while the second revolves around activities related to the "co-guidance" component.

### Scenario 1

#### ECO-GUIDANCE ACTION PLAN

An eco-guidance action plan, capable of using, if necessary, aspects of self-, hetero- and co-guidance, could be very useful.

We should mention here the definition provided previously: eco-guidance is a concerted approach by a team in a given environment (adult school at various levels, vocational [such as professional orders and associations], organizational, recreational, community) and its partners, in which objectives are set and services implemented to guide adults in the definition of their educational and vocational objectives and, thus, in the management of their careers throughout their lives. These are therefore activities and services integrated into the development plans of the various social environments where the adults are present.

In our view, however, the effectiveness of this eco-guidance action plan depends on one essential condition: the use of the four strategies (harmonizing, interactive, developmental, contextualizing) of adult career counselling.

Likewise, another essential condition for success consists in determining the educational philosophies of adult career counselling that would form the basis for this eco-guidance action plan.

More reflection and further studies are required on various aspects (effectiveness, feasibility, etc.).

## Scenario 2

### CO-GUIDANCE ACTION PLAN

A co-guidance action plan could also be very useful if it is augmented, occasionally, with hetero-, self- and eco-guidance dimensions. It should be recalled here that co-guidance is mainly related to the image, both classic and very current, of individual vocational counselling with a counsellor.

This action plan should also meet the same essential condition: the use of the four adult career counselling strategies.

As for the educational philosophies of adult career counselling, the choice has, in a sense, already been defined: a prejudice in favour of those centred on the person is usually evident among most experts in guidance intervention.

With respect to the evaluation of needs in the area of human resources, a thorough budgetary assessment is required.

Even though there have been many relevant studies on this subject, various other types of analysis are imperative (for example: effectiveness with respect to the relative balance between the dimensions).

### Implementation Approaches (a few suggestions)

We will present here certain approaches to implementation of an action plan for a policy on career counselling and career management for adults. These approaches could be applied to the various components of the action plan (self-guidance, hetero-guidance, co-guidance, eco-guidance). It should also be recalled that these components can themselves be part of each of the four strategies (harmonizing, interactive, developmental, contextualizing).

These implementation approaches should, in our view, emphasize preventive dimensions (activities offered to everyone) and also be concerned with reactive dimensions (activities offered to target groups such as the unemployed and adults with no secondary school diplomas). It is very important to try to achieve this balance between the preventive and reactive (or curative) dimensions.

Currently there seems to be no such balance, at least not across Canada.

"In Canada, the policy on professional development and career advancement for adults is reactive in nature. Many services are generally accessible only to groups with a specific disadvantage with respect to the labour market or groups entitled to a certain form of income support. Employment insurance recipients receive income support and subsidized adjustment assistance (for example, counselling, diagnostic tests, training, subsidized job experience). Welfare recipients may, for their part, be entitled to income support, housing assistance, child care services, transportation, and other forms of assistance, as well as professional development and career advancement services such as counselling, training, job experience and employment assistance" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 5).

These implementation approaches could also, if really necessary, be coercive. However, it is our view that a great deal of caution should be applied in the adoption of coercive measures (government policies combined with financial or other penalties), because the conditions of employment become very difficult under such circumstances.

However, pending the outcomes of evaluations of such coercive measures, it should be recalled that "at least two [Canadian] provinces require that welfare recipients other than persons with disabilities or sole-support parents take specific measures, for example, using counselling services in order to re-enter the work force" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 5).

In Québec, there are the following coercive measures, which seem to be applied very carefully, at least in official documents.

"The *Québec Charter of Rights and Freedoms* states that every adult has the opportunity to make choices, unless he or she is in prison, under guardianship, or receiving medical care as an invalid. However, in social programming, those delivering the services may make some requirements mandatory, with some adults being required to participate in counselling or guidance activities in order to have access to, or to continue to participate in, particular programs. In the *Destination Emploi* program, clients under 55 years of age who do not have any severe employment

constraints are obliged to report for a group information session or an individual interview, as determined by management of the CLE [Centres local d'emploi]. Failure to comply with the requirements of these programs may result in a reduction of employment assistance benefits" (CMEC and HRDC, 2003, p. 52).

Moreover, in the implementation approaches, we take the view that special emphasis needs to be put on the establishment of incentives for the attainment of educational and vocational objectives.

The **financial question** is obviously major. We are thinking here of government policies offering financial support. It should be recalled that:

"Québec has established certain procedures to help persons likely to change career paths and to provide them with support in attaining their objectives in continuous learning and the ongoing acquisition of skills. Under Québec law, employers must devote 1 per cent of their payrolls to employee training. If they fail to do so, this amount is paid every year to the government. Some employers have had difficulty observing this 1 per cent ratio. Persons working in the area of professional development could collaborate with those in charge of the development of government policies and counsellors in the private sector in order to find ways of establishing within companies professional development services for employees who wish to change their career paths or who have to prepare for a career change. These costs could be covered under the 1 per cent rule" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 12).

On this topic, moreover, the FCDC study has made another important relevant observation, which should be taken into account.

"A growing number of clients have to find for themselves the means to pay the costs of assistance in vocational guidance and development. They often have to fall back on student loans, severance pay, their retirement savings and similar means to find the cash they need. The draining of personal resources to finance career changes or job preparation is now de facto public policy. It is urgent for practitioners and those responsible for the policy development to tackle this problem" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 12).

The financial question requires extensive reflection and thorough debate.

It is also important to consider the question of **partners** in the implementation approaches of a career management policy. It is obviously essential to respect, or to redefine, coordination with these partners,

according to the problems encountered. Many and very substantial efforts have already been made. "Quebec identifies the lack of coordination among the various levels of players as the major deterrent to acting in concert. To address this issue, the province's *Politique d'éducation des adultes et de formation continue* (policy on adult and continuing education) provides for the strengthening of a partnership approach as well as coordination mechanisms on various issues including IGCS [information, guidance, and counselling services]" (CMEC and HRDC, 2003, p. 21). Moreover, these partners are numerous. Because:

"other organizations involved with IGCS in Quebec [include]: the Carrefours Jeunesse-Emploi, which have the same goals as MESS [Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale]; La Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (Quebec automobile insurance corporation), which has goals for rehabilitation and labour market re-entry for clients; Commission de la Santé et de la Sécurité du Travail (CSST) (Occupational Health and Safety Board), which has goals for rehabilitation and labour market re-entry for clients" (CMEC and HRDC, 2003, p. 12).

In addition, there are other useful services including: The "creation of the Carrefours Jeunesse-Emploi . . . adoption of the 'single window' approach — an autonomous service unit to implement the measures and programs of the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale Quebec; creation of the Service public d'emploi (public employment service) with 150 Centres locaux d'emploi (local employment centres) offering financial assistance and employment assistance" (CMEC and HRDC, 2003, p. 31).

This question of partners requires a great deal of reflection and consultation.

Finally, pilot projects on the various implementation approaches could be defined.

In short, very extensive reflection is obviously necessary with respect to the delicate issue of implementation approaches, since they will constitute one of the most visible parts of the new policy on counselling and support services for adults.

### **Target Groups (a few suggestions)**

The principle of accessibility for everyone should be, in our view, one of the first principles of this policy on career counselling and career management for adults. Therefore a great deal of attention will need to be paid to:



1. the component of the action plan related to eco-guidance in the various (adult) school, organizational, vocational, community and recreational settings in order to reach, as much as possible, all the adults who are not involved in training
2. the preventive dimension of the implementation approaches in order to provide counselling and support services to all the adults who are not immediately facing specific major problems

One of the two major missions attributed to vocational guidance services by the OECD is precisely to considerably widen citizens' access to career counselling by making these services accessible throughout their lives. The OECD envisages "the possibility of widening access through a restructured role for public employment services . . . as well as ways of using more extended local partnerships" (2004, p. 145). In fact, career counselling:

"needs to shift from being largely available to selected groups, at particular points in life, to being much more widely available throughout the lifespan. And services need to shift from an approach largely focused upon helping people to make immediate decisions through face-to-face interviews, to a broader approach that also encompasses the development of career self-management skills such as the ability to make and implement effective career decisions" (OECD, 2004, p. 17).

In the policies on counselling and support services for adults, careful choices will have to be made regarding target groups, even while the principle of accessibility for all is maintained as one of the primary principles of this policy. Currently, "whilst in nearly all countries the public employment service plays a major role in providing career guidance to some adults, this is generally limited to the unemployed or other selected groups, and the career guidance needs of those who are either employed or not in the labour market are rarely well catered for" (OECD, 2004, p. 146).

Moreover, special attention should be paid to socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. "Career guidance can support the integration of the disadvantaged and the poorly qualified in education, and . . . in employment. [It] can address growing polarisation in the labour market" (OECD, 2004, p. 21). But "the focus on public employment services upon the unemployed limits their capacity to provide career guidance that can address longer-term career development needs, or provide career guidance to those who are employed" (p. 57). The OECD also stresses this point: "countries need to greatly expand access to career guidance so that it is available to people throughout their lives, and so that it can be available not just to selected groups such as school students or the employed, but to all" (p. 25). Moreover, these groups may also not be connected to the Internet as Rifkin points out (2000). In fact, "there is widespread

concern that the growth of the Internet is exacerbating inequalities between the information-rich and the information-poor" (Watts, 2001, p. 6).

More reflection on the issue of target groups is imperative.

### **Competencies Required (a few suggestions)**

Overall, the skills required are numerous; some are classic and others more recent.

Various sites provide interesting information on this topic, for example the site of the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners <[www.career-dev-guidelines.org](http://www.career-dev-guidelines.org)>, which proposes among other things a code of ethics and basic knowledge such as models and theories of career development, the process of change, the transition phases and cycles of careers, the components of the process of career planning, the main organizations and resources for career development and community services. There are also others, including those of the British National Advisory Council for Careers and Educational Guidance <[www.guidancecouncil.com](http://www.guidancecouncil.com)>, the Institute of Careers Guidance <[www.icg-uk.org](http://www.icg-uk.org)>, the National Career Development Guidelines of the United States <[www.noicc.gov](http://www.noicc.gov)> and the National Life / Work Centre of Canada <[www.lifework.ca](http://www.lifework.ca)>.

Furthermore, the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance has done a study on the competencies required. "Globalisation hits careers guidance: IAEVG develops a framework of competencies that career guidance practitioners need in order to offer quality guidance services" (Plant, 2003, p. 5). The international competencies are divided into two sections: basic competencies, which every supplier of services needs, and the specialized competencies required for each specific type of work. This list of competencies, very incomplete in our view, can be consulted at the following address: <<http://crccanada.org/crc/files/Competencies-English%20Druckversion2.doc>>.

This question of required competencies is partly illustrated here in two large excerpts of an OECD publication. "Career guidance . . . has important implications for the training and skills of all career guidance staff. Working in community settings, working with groups with special needs, and skills in telephone and ICT-based interventions are among the competencies that need to be more firmly embedded in initial training programmes" (OECD, 2003b, p. 53). Moreover, if we assume that the objective of career counselling is to instill abilities to make decisions in the area of career management

and not simply help make short-term decisions, there are significant consequences for the training of the personnel concerned. Their competencies should be in the area of:

“developing skills in ICT use in career guidance . . . providing an understanding of labour market changes, developing skills for curriculum-based delivery, teaching practitioners how to develop clients' career self-management skills; and teaching practitioners how to organise and manage career guidance resources” (OECD, 2004, p. 93).

These shortcomings are minimal in Québec. "In Canada (Quebec), anyone who wants to work as a guidance counsellor or career counsellor has to be a member of the *Ordre des Conseillers et Conseillères en orientation et des Psychoéducateurs et Psychoéducatrices du Québec (OCCOPPQ)*" (OECD, 2004, p. 100). "[In] Quebec . . . career guidance qualifications are strongly protected" (OECD, p. 98).

However, working professionals, like any other workers in the knowledge economy, will always require continuing education and training. In addition, the new policy on career management for adults should be very well known and understood by all these professionals, who will have a central role to play.

The relevant literature highlights another deficiency in the training of guidance professionals that is related to their social role.

"The main flaw in the preparation of professionals in career guidance and professional development is the lack of importance given to research and labour market studies. Characteristically, training programs in career counselling are not based on the study of policies. Neither practitioners nor researchers have been encouraged to consult documents on economic and social policy or to contribute to enriching this literature. This situation has to change. Practitioners and researchers in career guidance and professional development have to exercise their right to influence the development of public policies. They must take part actively in debates surrounding policy development, do basic research on the issues and questions they face, and propose solutions. They must not be content with pointing out the problems. Those responsible for policy development could help practitioners in career guidance and professional development integrate studies related to labour market policies into their training programs" [translation] (FCDC, 2001, p. 20).

It is essentially in the same vein that Riverin-Simard (1998b; 1999; 2001) talks about the role of the counsellor in the social orientation of work as being an essential role of guidance professionals. However,

this role is still performed very little in Québec; this may be mostly due to the lack of resources in various settings, since the programs in Québec universities offer useful training on this aspect.

We should also mention other competencies that recently have proved necessary in the area of multicultural counselling. Basing himself on a European Union study, McCarthy states that:

"the new/future skill needs of counsellors identified by national correspondents were: skills to respond to the increasing diversity in the student body, including diversity among EU students, i.e. multi-cultural and inter-cultural competencies in the broadest sense; skills in preparing clients to select and assess available information from ICT sources; skills to deal with increased numbers of students: brief interviews, brief therapy; a holistic approach in terms of guidance services to be provided to students" (2001, p. 4-5).

The whole question of multicultural counselling (Tsang et al., 2003; Locke et al., 1999) is raised here; this is an urgent issue, in particular in Québec urban settings, such as the metropolitan region of Montréal.

Additional reflection is obviously required on the question of the competencies of the staff working in counselling and support services for adults.

## CONCLUSION

The socioeconomic importance of establishing policies on adult vocational guidance is something that has been recognized internationally with the arrival of the knowledge economy. "The steps that many OECD countries are taking to implement lifelong approaches to learning pose particular challenges for career guidance policies and programmes. In broad terms, a commitment to continuing education and training sees learning taking place throughout the lifespan" (OECD, 2004, p. 22).

However, according to Plant, "in recent policy documents, both the EU Commission and the OECD have focused on career guidance and information as key policy areas in terms of life-long learning, and economic and social development" (2001, p.4). But, in 2003, Plant stated that we can now count on:

"the Guidance Policy Pentagon: The European Commission, CEDEFOP (*European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training*), the European Training Foundation, OECD, and the World Bank. Never before have such powerful organisations, simultaneously and globally, had the current intense interest in guidance policy and its links with practice. This is not by accident: Guidance is a pivotal part of lifelong and lifewide learning" (2003, p. 2).

This importance can be explained in particular as follows. "The selection of an appropriate occupation is valuable not only for individual purposes, as a way of increasing satisfaction at work, earnings, and stability of employment, but also for the social goals of efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness" (Grubb, 2002, p. 3). Moreover "labour economists have long recognized the role that career guidance can play in labour market efficiency" (OECD, 2004, p. 31). It should be recalled that career counselling "contribut[es] to higher educational access and course completion rates . . . better articulating community demand for learning and its supply . . . [and] this becomes more important as educational choices and alternatives increase" (p. 30). In addition, it "contribute[s] to the development of human capital, broadly defined" (p. 29). This intensifies social cohesion, a condition of economic growth (Putnam, 2002; 1996; Rifkin, 2000). "Support by public policy-makers for career guidance has traditionally rested upon a belief that it can approve the efficiency and effectiveness of labour markets and educational systems, as well as contribute to social equity" (OECD, 2004, p. 18).

But how can counselling and support services help adults improve their involvement in continuing education and training activities and increase their chances of entering or reentering the labour market? How can these services help adults go through the many periods of re-evaluating the evolution of their

career, and better participate, throughout their lives, in this knowledge economy? The various theoretical and practical considerations have been raised in this document. They constitute, under the term *Continuous Participation Model*, our proposal for the basis of a policy on adult career guidance and career management.

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