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Robert Shea, Founding Editor/Rédacteur en chef
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The Canadian Journal of Career Development is published by Memorial University of Newfoundland. It has a mandate to present articles in areas of career research and practice that are of interest to career development practitioners.

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CONTENTS

Number 1

EDITORIAL

ARTICLES

Assessing the Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies of Career Development Practitioners
Sandra Collins, Nancy Arthur, Mary McMahon, and Suzie Bisson 4

Career Writing: Creative, Expressive, and Reflective Approaches to Narrative Career Learning and Guidance
Reinekke Lengelle and Frans Meijers 19

The Effects of Hope on Student Engagement, Academic Performance, and Vocational Identity
Hyung Joon Yoon, Hyoyeon In, Spencer G. Niles, Norman E. Amundson, Barbara A. Smith, and Lauri Mills 34

From Hero to Zero
Stephanie M. Conn, Norman E. Amundson, William A. Borgen, and Lee D. Butterfield 48

Editorial

Welcome to volume fourteen, issue one of *The Canadian Journal of Career Development*. In this edition, we have four wonderful and contemplative articles for you to read and enjoy.

In *Assessing the Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies of Career Development Practitioners,* the reader is introduced to how important competencies are to the profession of career development. This article examines how career practitioners rate the importance of multicultural and social justice competencies to their field, the perception of practitioners' skill with these competencies, and where the dissimilarities between the two lie.

Our second article, by Reinekke Lengelle and Frans Meijers, argues for the use of narrative approaches in career guidance. They propose that career writing is a necessary tool used to provide meaning and direction to students developing career identity. The authors also present a model of writing for transformation, and exercise guidance professionals can use in practice.

Hope is a strong emotion that can lift you up when facing monumental challenges. In *The Effects of Hope on Student Engagement, Academic Performance, and Vocational Identity*, the implication and effect that hope has on student engagement, vocational identity and academic performance are scrutinized. Conducted with over fifteen hundred students from both Canada and the United States of America, the results give career practitioners another factor to incorporate when providing guidance to students and clients.

Emergency services personal are extremely important in society and those positions convey a great deal of respect and power. Many are proud to make it known that they belong to this service and tie it closely to their personal identity. However, what happens to these individuals mentally when it is time to retire and they can no longer say they are working in this field? This question is addressed in the article *From Hero to Zero*. The reader gets a window into which they can see just how important the identity of emergency services professional becomes to some individuals, and how it influences their decision to retire and coping with their retirement.

If you want to keep up to date with the Journal between publications, we now have two social media sites where you can find snapshots of upcoming articles, special edition announcements, publication announcements, ask questions and more. You can find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/cjcdonline and at our LinkedIn subgroup located through the CERIC Career Developer Network page https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3858255&trk=anet_ug_parent.

Finally, a call to the profession; career development is an important part of everyone's professional life. Career development practitioners need access to new and insightful research and information that will allow them to provide the finest counselling sessions to their clients. This Journal aims to distribute such research and information but we cannot do it without submissions from the profession. The Journal does not have set deadlines for submissions, so if you have a manuscript related to career development, we would like to hear from you.

Rob Shea
Founding Editor

The Canadian Journal
of Career Development

Revue canadienne de
développement de carrière

Etta St. John Wileman Award
for Lifetime Achievement in Career Development

Why develop this award?

This award is designed to recognize and celebrate individuals who have devoted their lives to furthering the profession of career development.

To celebrate individuals who have established themselves as leaders within our profession.

Leaders who combine the role of researcher, educator, author, practioner and career leader.

To encourage individuals in Canada and around the world to celebrate those around us who have contributed so much to our identity as career development professionals.

To establish a significant and uniquely Canadian award that recognizes those individuals who have devoted their lives to the enhancement of career development practice, administration, research and education.

Who can be nominated?

Individuals who have demonstrated significant and long term commitment to the principles and experience outlined above.

When is the award presented?

The award is presented at the annual Cannexus Conference in Canada. The award is presented on a less than annual basis as is determined by the selection committee.

Who comprises the selection committee?

The selection committee is comprised of the Founding Editor of *The Canadian Journal of Career Development*; a previous award winner; a career development professional; and the Board Chair of the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling.

What is awarded?

The award recipient will be presented with a handmade Innukshuk by an Inuit artisan from Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada. The Innukshuk is made from a precious stone called Labradorite native to the coast of Labrador. Each award will be presented at the annual Cannexus Conference.

Submissions

To ensure confidentiality and to minimize disappointment, it is requested that the nominee not know about the nomination in advance.

Submissions should attest to each of the principles outlined above in the section - Why develop this award? This is an award for significant and lifetime commitment to career development. Unsuccessful nominations will be considered for a period of two further years.

Nominations

Nomination packages should be sent to:

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Assessing the Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies of Career Development Practitioners

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Nancy Arthur, University of Calgary
Mary McMahon, The University of Queensland
Suzie Bisson, University of Calgary

Abstract

The current focus on social justice in career practice necessitates identification and prioritization of specific competencies for multicultural counseling and social justice action (Blustein, 2006; Watson, 2010). The *Multicultural Cultural and Social Justice Competencies* (MCSJC) scale was used to examine (a) the importance of various competency domains and their composite factors to the profession of career development and (b) the self-assessment of competence by career practitioners on these core domains and factors. The study confirms the importance of multicultural counselling and social justice competencies to career practice and suggests that educational programs are doing a better job of facilitating awareness, which focuses on attitudes and knowledge, than the skill development required to translate this awareness into culture-infused and social justice focused working alliances with clients. In particular, training in interventions at the organizational, community, and broader systems level is needed. Suggestions for curriculum development draw on the *Culture-Infused Counseling* model that undergirded the MCSJC scale.

Acknowledgement

Preparation of this manuscript was partially funded by a Standard Research Grant awarded to Arthur and Collins from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Vocational psychology has traditionally played an important role in advocating for social justice (SJ; Fouad, Gerstein, & Toporek, 2006). The shifting demographics of Western society and increased systemic barriers to career success are bringing SJ to the forefront, particularly in the area of career development (Sampson, Dozier, & Colvin, 2011). Both career practitioners and researchers have conceptualized SJ in a variety of ways (Arthur, Collins, McMahon, & Marshall, 2009; Watson, 2010). Arthur and colleagues (2009) synthesized the meaning of SJ as: "(a) fair and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, (b) direct action to ameliorate oppression and marginalization within society, and (c) full inclusion and participation of all members of society in a way that enables them to reach their potential" (p. 23). Multicultural counselling (MC) and SJ are inseparable, because clients with multiple nondominant identities are at increased risk to experience social injustices (Arthur, 2008; Arthur & Collins, 2011; Leong, 2010). In addition, MC without a SJ perspective risks locating both problems and solutions with the individual client, instead of the contexts and systems that shape client experiences, resources, and opportunities (Sinacore et al., 2011). SJ is a human rights issue that impacts career development and career counselling, because access to and attainment of education and work provide a central means for ensuring social equity (Fouad et al., 2006; Hargrove et al., 2003). To work competently with diverse clients, career practitioners need to be prepared to address issues of social injustice (Parra-Cardona, Kendal, & Cordova, 2005).

Current literature has focused on identifying the problems, from a SJ perspective, associated with approaches to career theory and practice. However, McWhirter, Blustein, and Perry (2005) called for a move from a denunciation approach to an annunciation approach, in which principles and processes for embracing SJ in vocational psychology are articulated. Discussions of SJ action have also been segregated from applied practice activities, which misses the important connection between the experiences of clients in the real world and counselling work (Parra-Cardona et al., 2005). Fassinger and Gallor (2006) suggested an expansion from the *scientist-practitioner* to the *scientist-practitioner-advocate* model to emphasize the inclusion of SJ roles in both pre-service and continued professional development training. The *scientist-practitioner-advocate* model necessitates increased competency of practitioners to address systemic-level change and to act as advocate, social activist, consultant, etc. (Arthur, 2008; Arthur et al., 2009; Toporek & Williams, 2006).

One question that remains unanswered is what competencies career practitioners require to sup-

port SJ action (Arthur, 2008; McMahon, Arthur, & Collins, 2008a). There has been considerable focus on the development of MC competencies over the past several decades (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b); however, the counselling psychology field is only beginning to define SJ competencies (Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysicar, & Israel, 2006; Toporek & Williams, 2006). In spite of its early roots in SJ, vocational psychology is also in the initial stages translating MC and SJ competence and competencies into practice (Arthur & Collins, 2011; Pope, 2011). Vespia, Fitzpatrick, Fouad, Kantamneni, and Chen (2010) conducted a national survey of MC competencies of US career counsellors; however, the California Brief Multicultural Competence Scale (CBMCS) was not designed specifically for career practitioners and derived from earlier instruments without a specific focus on SJ (Gamst et al., 2004).

The purpose of this study was to explore what competencies career practitioners require in order to work with culturally diverse clients, who are often most impacted by systemic social injustices (Arthur & Collins, 2011; Pope, 2011). The following research questions evolved from our intent to highlight the perspectives of career practitioners themselves in this discussion: (a) *Do career practitioners view MC and SJ competences as important to career practice, and, if so, what is the relative importance they place on specific competencies? and (b) How do career practitioners rate their own competence in relation to MC and SJ competencies?* The third research question was intended to inform career development education, by identifying potential learning objectives: *(c) Where are the most significant gaps between what career practitioners see as important and their self-assessed competency level?* Although SJ is not new to vocational psychology (Fouad et al., 2006), practitioners in the field may be less familiar with the current emphasis on systems level analysis and change (Arthur, Collins, Marshall, & McMahon, 2013). We, therefore, added two final research questions *(d) What is the relationship between the demographic background of participants and their familiarity with and training in SJ? and (e) How do demographic background and SJ awareness impact perspectives on importance of MC and SJ competencies and/or personal level of competence?*

We conducted a cross-national study of career practitioners' competencies related to MC and SJ in Canada and Australia. Other components of the study have been published elsewhere (Arthur et al., 2009; Arthur et al., 2013; McMahon et al., 2008a; 2008b). As part of the broader study, the *Multicultural Cultural and Social Justice Competencies* (MCSJC) scale was developed and validated (Collins, Arthur, McMahon, & Bisson, 2014). The structure of the MCSJC scale reflects its conceptual foundations in the *Culture-Infused Counselling* (CIC) model (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b; 2010c). The three core competency domains in the CIC model form the first order factors in the MCSJC scale: (*a) Cultural Self-Awareness:* Active awareness of personal assumptions, values, and biases; (b) *Awareness of Client Cultural Identities:* Understanding the worldview of the client; and (c) *Culturally-Sensitive Working Alliance*: Collaboration on counselling goals and processes. The CIC model offers a conceptual enhancement of the Sue et al. (1982) and Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) MC competencies framework based on: (a) an explicit focus on competencies for SJ; (b) a broader definition of culture, inclusive of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, socioeconomic status, and religion; (c) an emphasis on the working alliance as a more inclusive and pantheoretical construct than the original focus on skills and techniques for bridging the worldviews of counsellor and client and translating cultural sensitivity into practice (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b); as well as (d) an explicit adaptation of the competencies to career development practice (Collins et al., 2014; Arthur & Collins, 2011). A detailed critique of previous models and rationale for the CIC model is provided elsewhere (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b). Only the Canadian data is reported in this paper. We begin with a description of the methodology and then present the results in terms of the five core research questions. The paper concludes with discussion, overall implications, and limitations of the study.

Method

Ethics approval was obtained from the three universities where the researchers are affiliated. The notice for the study provided an invitation to participate in the study and the link to the consent form and the Social Justice and Career Practice Questionnaire©. The broader survey was divided into three sections: (a) demographic information and SJ background, (b) assessment of MC and SJ competencies using the MCSJC scale, and (c) submission of critical incident scenarios. Only data from the first two sections (demographic and the MCSJC scale) are reported in this paper. The survey was conducted online, and invitations to participate were extended through both national and provincial professional organizations and career development networks.

All 180 participants were Canadians, at least 18 years of age.

Seventy-five percent were female; 25% male. The majority of participants were from Alberta (28%), British Columbia (24%), and Ontario (20%), with the remaining from maritime provinces (16%), other prairie provinces (9%), northern territories (2%), and Quebec (2%). Most participants identified as Caucasian Canadian (86%); 3% were Chinese; 2% each were Aboriginal, African/Caribbean, Hispanic, and Metis; and 1% each were Arab, South Asian, and West Asian. The participants worked for non-profit organizations (21%) and career and employment centres (20%); 11% each at government departments, public secondary or high schools, and public universities; 6% each at private practices and public colleges; 4% in for-profit organizations; 3% each in community-based agencies, youth serving agencies, and private or alternative educational institutions; and 1% other work contexts. Participants' age, years of work experience, highest level of education, and their familiarity with SJ were assessed using the ordinal scales in column 2 of Table 1. In some cases, two or more values were collapsed to create statistically sound categories for the multivariate analyses. As a general rule, for each independent variable, the difference between lowest frequency and highest frequency did not exceed the lowest frequency. See column 3 of Table 1 for the frequency distributions and percentages for independent variables and corresponding values meeting this criteria. For example, the age categories of *29 years or less and 30 to 39 years* were collapsed, because neither of these age ranges on their own met the inclusion criteria. Gender was eliminated from the analyses because the distributions were skewed.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution for Demographic Variables Meeting Criteria for Inclusion in Multivariate Analyses of Variance

Independent Variable	Original Values	Final Values[b]	Frequency	Percent
Age	29 years or less 30 to 39 years	39 years or younger	57	32.4
		40 to 49 years	48	27.3
	50 to 59 years 60 to 69 years 70 or more years	50 years or older	71	40.3
Years of experience	0 to 2 years 3 to 5 years 6 to 10 years	10 or fewer years	103	58.2
	11 to 20 years more than 20 years	11 or more years	74	41.8
Highest level of education	High school Certificate or diploma College degree	College degree or less	38	21.5
	University undergrad Post-grad certificate or diploma	Undergrad with or without an post-grad diploma or certificate	70	39.5
	Masters degree PhD or other doctoral degree	Masters or doctoral degree	69	39.0
Familiarity with social justice[c]	Very unfamiliar Somewhat unfamiliar	Unfamiliar	55	33.7
	Somewhat familar Very familiar	Familiar	108	66.3
Personal experience(s) of discrimination	Age, ethnic or cultural group, gender, immigration status, language, physical or psychological disability, religion, sexual orientation, or social class	No discrimination	37	20.4
		1 type of discrimination	52	28.7
		2 types of discrimination	37	20.4
		3 or more types of discrimination	55	30.4
Number of barriers to social justice practice	Fear of challenging status quo, lack of financial resources/ interest/ influence or power/ time/ training opportunities/support from colleagues/supervisors, risk of losing funding/of losing job, other…	No barriers	67	37.0
		1 to 4 barriers	67	37.0
		5 or more barriers	47	26.0

[a]Only independent variables in which the difference between lowest frequency value and the largest did not exceed the frequency of the lowest were used for the MANOVAs. [b]In some cases, two or more values on a particular independent variable were collapsed to create workable categories for further analyses. [c]The category of 'Undecided' was eliminated from further analyses.

Participants were also asked to select personal experiences of discrimination from a checklist, based on the self-selected demographics of age, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, language, physical or psychological disability, religion, sexual orientation, and social class. In addition, they identified barriers to engaging in SJ practice from the following list, derived from on a review of current literature: fear of challenging status quo, lack of financial resources, lack of interest, lack of influence or power, lack of time, lack of training opportunities, lack of support from colleagues, lack of support from supervisors, risk of losing funding, risk of losing job, or other. For each of these variables, the responses were transformed into categorical data, using the guideline noted above to cluster the frequencies into categories (see column 3 of Table 1). Categorical data was required to conduct the multivariate analyses. In addition, we assumed that neither the number of bases for discrimination nor barriers encountered were continuous variables. Individuals with multiple nondominant identities, for example, are more vulnerable to cultural oppression; however, this relationship is assumed to be complex, idiosyncratic, contextualized, and, therefore, nonlinear (Collins, 2010a, 2010b).

Frequencies and means were calculated and, because all variables were now categorical rather than continuous, statistically significant relationships among demographic variables were assessed using Pearson chi-squares. The independent variables of gender and

SJ training failed the inclusion test and were eliminated from the MANOVAs. The frequency distribution for SJ training was 18% with no previous exposure to SJ, 35% with attendance at either a workshop or a course, and 47% with attendance at both a workshop and a course. The introduction to the survey acknowledged that SJ may be a new concept to some practitioners and provided the following conceptual framework, to assist participants in interpreting what exposure to SJ might mean, how it might differ from other forms of multicultural or diversity training, and what their own exposure to SJ training had been:

> Before you begin, we would like to explain what we mean by the term social justice as it relates to career practice. In a just society, opportunities, resources, and services are distributed equally and fairly. However, in most societies, some individuals or groups have greater access to educational, economic, and career success. This is because certain groups in society hold less power than others and may experience stereotyping, discrimination, or other forms of oppression. In this study, we recognize non-dominant (minority) groups by cultural factors such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, language, religion, and socioeconomic status. Career development clients from these groups may struggle with access to education and work or with reaching their full potential because of social justice issues. Social justice is a human rights issue and career practitioners have a role to play in ensuring social equity.

One of the unique features of the MCSJC instrument was that it contained two scales for each item: The first was designed to assess the importance of the item to the profession and the second to assess personal competency level. The inclusion of the Importance rating was intended to engage participants in determining direction for the profession, rather than simply lining their responses up against assumed professional standards. At the time of the data collection, the MCSJC scale consisted of 82 self-report statements, organized according to attitudes (20 items), knowledge (25 items), and skills (37 items). Each item was clearly worded as a learning objective, beginning with an active verb that reflected either an attitude, knowledge, or skill competency (AKS), drawing on Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of learning objectives, for example: Attitudes Q1: *Believe* in the equal worth of all people; Knowledge Q2: *Explain* how belonging to particular groups can lead to certain privileges in society; and Skills Q5: *Empower* clients to influence external factors affecting career development. The items were each rated on 5-point Likert scales (1 = *very low*, 2 = *moderately low*, 3 = *average*, 4 = *moderately high*, and 5 = *very high*) for both *Importance to Career Practice*, "to assess your personal perspective on the *importance* of SJ to career development practice generally," and *Current Competency Level*, "indicates the degree to which you personally feel *competent*."

The AKS foundation of the MCSJC instrument was intended to address the conceptual ambiguity of other MC assessment tools (Collins et al., 2014; Constantine et al., 2002). Most instruments draw on the original competency frameworks of Sue et al. (1982; 1992), but they do not reflect the evolution of this foundational model from a one-dimensional model (1982) to a three-by-three matrix of core competencies by AKS in the 1992 revision, nor do they carefully differentiate competency statements as AKS, making it difficult to compare outcomes across instruments or to link them accurately to conceptual frameworks (see, for example, Gamst et al., 2004; Kim, Cartwright, Asay, & D'Andrea, 2003; Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Rieger, & Austin, 2002; Worthington, Soth-McNett, & Moreno, 2007). What is important is that the AKS competencies are seen as components of larger constructs or themes that reflect the conceptual models they are built upon.

Based on factor analyses of both the importance and the competence data (see Collins et al., 2014), the number of items in the MCSJC instrument was reduced and clustered according to the factor structure in Table 2. Descriptive statistics were run to confirm the assumption of normal distribution for all factors that made up the MCJSC scale for both *Importance* and *Competence* dependent variable scores. Skewness and kurtosis values between +1 and -1 were required, and outliers were removed from the analysis, based on Box's M tests. For the Importance scale, no participants were removed from the *Cultural self-awareness factors*. The *Awareness of client cultural identities* domain had 6, 2, 2, 2, 3, and 1 participant responses removed from each of the factors respectively. The *Culturally-sensitive working alliance* domain had 1, 0, 1, 1, 2, and 2 removed. No participant scores were removed from the *Competence* scale. Mean scores for each factor were used in the MANOVAs reported in this study. Tests of internal consistency were run on the *Importance* scale and the *Competence* scale; Cronbach's Alpha values of .91 and .94 respectively suggested

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Importance and Competence Scores on Each Factor

Domain/Factor[c]	Importance			Competence			
	M[a]	SD	N	M	SD	N	R[b]
Cultural self-awareness							
Professional responsibility	4.36	.69	178	3.63	.79	168	.34*
Personal/professional privilege	4.33	.56	145	3.69	.71	140	.40*
Awareness of client cultural identities							
Equality of all people	4.80	.37	179	4.3	.70	171	.45*
Diverse values and resources	4.73	.42	176	4.26	.66	170	.41*
Impact of discrimination	4.40	.66	176	3.97	.73	167	.40*
Barriers and facilitators of social justice	4.38	.66	115	3.24	.88	113	-
Impact of cultural factors	4.37	.68	137	3.73	.79	139	.32*
Systemic perpetuation of inequities	4.35	.73	141	3.55	.83	139	.36*
Culturally-sensitive working alliance							
Commitment to client empowerment	4.60	.54	176	3.96	.76	168	.35*
Social injustice impact assessment	4.41	.56	114	3.31	.86	112	-
Expanded professional roles	4.27	.61	115	3.26	.86	114	-
Assessment, design, & evaluation of social justice interventions	4.20	.69	143	3.22	.87	136	-
Implementation of systems interventions	4.07	.83	115	2.97	.94	113	.25*
Raising social justice awareness	4.06	.88	114	2.82	.98	112	.26*

[a]M = Mean. SD = Standard deviation. N = number. R = Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient.
[b]Only statistically significant R scores are shown; *$p < .001$.
[c]The factors have been ordered based on the mean score for *Importance* of the factor.

strong internal reliability of these measures.

Results

Research Questions 1 and 2: Importance of MC and SJ Competencies and Competence Assessment

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for each factor across *Importance* and *Competence* scales. Participants rated all 14 factors between *moderately high* and *very high* in *Importance*, confirming that career practitioners sensed the need for and importance of multicultural and SJ competence. Means for the *Competence* on each factor showed a greater range between *average to moderately high.* The participants clearly viewed multicultural and SJ competency as important to career development practice; however, they saw themselves as not fully competent with respect to many of the core factors. A weighted mean was calculated for each of the three core domains. For both *Importance and Competence* scales, the weighted means were highest for the second domain, *Awareness of client cultural identities* (4.52 and 3.89 respectively); the first domain, *Cultural self-awareness*, received the next highest ratings (4.34 and 3.65 respectively); and the last domain, *Culturally-sensitive working alliance,* the lowest ratings (4.29 and 3.31 respectively). The standard deviations were higher for *Competence* than for *Importance* scores, indicating a greater range of ratings on personal competence scores.

Participants placed the most importance on attitudes, knowledge, and skills related to understanding the cultural identities, experiences, and context of clients' lives (Domain 2: *Awareness of client cultural identities*); they also perceived themselves as best prepared as practitioners in this area (*moderately high* on the self-assessment of competence). The specific competencies included: (a) Attitudes (5 items), such as awareness of the impact of discrimination and other forms of systemic oppression, foundational values like respect for diversity, and belief in the equality and worth of all people; (b) Knowledge (2 items) related to the impact of cultural factors on career decision-making, and the organizational, community, and broader systems that perpetuate inequities; and (c) Skills (2 items) in identifying barriers and facilitators to accessing resources, services, and opportunities. See Collins et al. (2014) for a full listing of the items in the MCSJC scale.

Participants rated themselves within the *moderately high* range in terms of awareness of their own cultural identities (*Cultural self-awareness* domain). This domain was also weighted towards attitudinal competencies: (a) Attitudes (4 items) focused on professional responsibility to challenge inequities and promote SJ, as well as practitioners' own personal and professional experiences of privilege; (b) Knowledge (3 items) focused on understanding the relationship of SJ and career, as well as the privileging of particular groups in society; and (c) Skills (1 item) involved self-assessment of competence for SJ activities.

The *Culturally-sensitive working alliance* domain had the greatest range of means on rating of both *Importance* and *Competence.* This is also the domain in which the percentage of MCSJC items shifts from a stronger emphasis on attitudes and knowledge competencies to applied practice skills competencies. The 21 items included: (a) Attitudes (2) both related to commitment to client empowerment, which received the highest competence rating; (b) Knowledge (5) focused predominantly on the assessment, design, and evaluation of SJ interventions; and (c) Skills (14) ranging from raising SJ awareness and advocacy to implementation of systemic interventions. Career practitioners placed the least importance and felt less personally competent in the skills competencies, with many rating at *average* competence (mid range on the 5-point Likert scale).

Research Question 3: Gaps Between Importance and Competence

A gap score was calculated for each of the three core domains

using the discrepancy between weighted means for the *Importance* and *Competence* scales to suggest general trends in training needs (Repetto, Ferrer-Sama, & Manzano, 2008). The gaps scores were lowest for *Awareness of client cultural identities* (.63) and *Cultural self-awareness* (.69); *Culturally-sensitive working alliance* had the highest gap score (.98). The last column in Table 2 provides Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between the *Importance* and *Competence* ratings on each of the factors. The pattern of factors with statistically significant correlations reflected the gap scores across the three core domains in the CIC model. There was a significant correlation for both factors in the C*ultural self-awareness* domain and for all but one factor in the *Awareness of client cultural identities* domain, indicating a closer relationship between assessment of importance and perception of personal competence in these areas. It is noteworthy that this one factor - barriers and facilitators of SJ - was composed of the only two skills items in the second domain. For the *Culturally-sensitive working alliance domain,* only half of the factors (3 out of 6) showed significant correlation between the importance and the competence ratings. The standard deviations were also generally highest in this domain, reflecting the wider range of responses, particularly in the self-assessment of personal competence.

Research Question 4: Demographic Background and SJ Familiarity and Training

The older the participants, the more experience they had as a career development practitioners (Pearson's chi-square = 34.152, degrees of freedom = .000). In addition, both older participants and those with more experience had higher levels of education (16.753, .002; 13.682, .002 respectively). Level of SJ training was also significantly related to familiarity with the concept of SJ (10.887, .028) and level of education (8.227, .016). More education meant increased familiarity with the concept of SJ. However, those participants with graduate education were more likely to have completed specific SJ training through either a course or a workshop; those with college or less or undergraduate education were more likely to have completed both a course and a workshop. There was also a significant relationship between participants' own experience of discrimination and the number of barriers to implementing SJ in practice that they encountered (23.095, .001). Those with experiences of discrimination based on multiple cultural factors also experienced more barriers to implementing SJ in their own practices.

Research Question 5: Relationship of Demographics and SJ Awareness to Importance and Competence

A total of 14 MANOVAs, using Wilk's Lambda, were conducted using the six independent variables in Table 1, across both importance and competence measures. The data from these analyses are summarized in Tables 3 and 4. There were many more relationships between the characteristics or backgrounds of participants (e.g., independent variables) and their self-assessment of *Competence* on the various factors in the MCSJC scale than on their rating of the *Importance* of these factors to the discipline. Where significant main effects were observed and more than two values existed for the independent variable, Tukey post hoc tests were performed.

In Table 3 related to *Importance* ratings, significant interactions occurred most often between highest level of education and the various MCSJC factors. Specifically, the mean for the category c*ollege degree or less* was significantly lower than that for the category *masters or doctoral degree.* This observation is consistent with the analyses of independent variables above that showed a relationship between level of education and familiarity with SJ. Familiarity with SJ interacted significantly with the only factor in the second domain with no significant correlation between the scales: *barriers and facilitators of social justice.* The experience of personal discrimination interacted significantly with *implementation of systems intervention*; specifically, the mean for *one type of discrimination* was significantly higher than that for *two types of discrimination*.

For the assessment of personal *Competence* (see Table 4), there were more factors positively associated with increased practitioner age and experience than with education. For age, all post hoc tests identified statistically significant differences between participants in the *39 years or younger* and both/either those in *40 to 49 years* and *50 years or more*. In each post hoc test, the means for *college degree or less* was significantly lower than for *masters or doctoral degree.* It is important to note the number of significant interactions between SJ familiarity and factors in all three domains of the MCSJC scale. Increased familiarity was associated with a higher sense of personal competence on each factor. Two other interactions are worth noting in the competency assessment. Participants who had experienced personal discrimination based on two cultural factors rated their competence in *client empowerment* lower than both those with no experience of discrim-

ination and those more experience of discrimination. Finally, participants who noted *1 to 4 barriers* to engaging in SJ practice rated their competence on *social justice impact assessment* significantly higher than those with *5 or more barriers*.

Discussion

One of the central questions raised in the vocational psychology literature is what SJ competencies do career practitioners require (Arthur & Collins, 2011; Pope, 2011). The high to moderately high ratings of factors in the MCSJC scale confirms that (a) career practitioners view SJ competencies as central to their practice and (b) each of the factors assessed in this study reflects a core SJ competency. The results also indicated that practitioners have not yet attained the level of competency they believe is important.

The relatively high proportion of attitudinal competencies in the *Awareness of client cultural identities and Cultural self-awareness* domains may be related to the higher self-rated competency of participants. Although traditionally, the focus in education programs has been on knowledge acquisition (Pope-Davis, Breaux, & Liu, 1997), there now tends to be more emphasis on awareness competencies, specifically targeting change in attitudes, beliefs, worldviews (Cates & Schaefle, 2009; Pieterse, 2009). Less attention has been paid to the enhancement of multicultural and SJ skills (Cates & Schaefle, 2009; Pieterse, 2009), which factor more prominently in the *Culturally-sensitive working alliance* domain. It appears that educational programs are providing a foundation in multicultural and SJ awareness for career practitioners (Cates & Schaefle, 2009; Pieterse, 2009); however, practitioners are not exiting those

Table 3

Multivariate Analyses of Variance on Importance Factors

Domain/Factor[a]	Level of Education	Social Justice Familiarity	Experience of Discrimination
Cultural self-awareness			
Professional responsibility			
Personal/professional privilege	$F(2,86)=5.71^{**}$ $\eta^2 = 0.117$		
Awareness of client cultural identities			
Impact of cultural factors		$F(1,84)=6.36^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.070$	
Barriers and facilitators of social justice			
Impact of discrimination			
Systemic perpetuation of inequities	$F(2,86)=3.87^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.083$		
Diverse values and resources			
Equality of all people	$F(2,86)=3.53^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.076$		
Culturally-sensitive working alliance			
Implementation of systems interventions			$F(3,87)=2.79^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.088$
Assessment, design, & evaluation of social justice interventions			
Raising social justice awareness			
Expanded professional roles	$F(2,86)=3.10^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.067$		
Social injustice impact assessment	$F(2.8)=3.56^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.076$		
Commitment to client empowerment			

[a] No statistically significant interactions were found for the following independent variables: age, experience, social justice training, or barriers encountered. $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$.

Table 4

Multivariate Analyses of Variance on Competence Factors

Domain/Factor[a]	Age	Experience	Education	Social Justice Familiarity	Discrimination	Barriers
Cultural self-awareness						
Professional responsibility	$F(2,99)=7.52^{***}$ $\eta^2 = 0.132$					
Personal/professional privilege			$F(2,99)=3.27^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.062$	$F(1,95)=0.40^{**}$ $\eta^2 = 0.090$		
Awareness of client cultural identities						
Impact of cultural factors		$F(1,100)=8.30^{**}$ $\eta^2 = 0.077$		$F(1,95)=7.12^{**}$ $\eta^2 = 0.070$		
Barriers and facilitators of social justice				$F(1,95)=12.05^{***}$ $\eta^2 = 0.113$		
Impact of discrimination	$F(2,99)=4.58^{**}$ $\eta^2 = 0.085$					
Systemic perpetuation of inequities	$F(2,99)=3.4^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.064$	$F(1,100)=5.84^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.055$	$F(2,99)=3.36^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.064$	$F(1,95)=14.32^{***}$ $\eta^2 = 0.131$		
Diverse values and resources	$F(2,99)=3.75^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.070$					
Equality of all people						
Culturally-sensitive working alliance						
Implementation of systems interventions		$F(1,100)=3.99^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.038$		$F(1,95)=8.59^{**}$ $\eta^2 = 0.038$		
Assessment, design, & evaluation of social justice interventions		$F(1,100)=4.55^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.043$		$F(1,95)13.82^{***}$ $\eta^2 = 0.127$		
Raising social justice awareness				$F(1,95)=11.36^{***}$ $\eta^2 = 0.107$		
Expanded professional roles				$F(1,95)=13.73^{***}$ $\eta^2 = 0.126$		
Social injustice impact assessment			$F(2,99)=4.19^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.078$	$F(1,95)=8.24^{**}$ $\eta^2 = 0.080$		$F(2,100)=4.71^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.086$
Commitment to client empowerment	$F(2,99)=7.01^{***}$ $\eta^2 = 0.124$	$F(1,100)=5.83^{*}$ $\eta^2 = 0.055$			$F(3,99)=4.87^{**}$ $\eta^2 = 0.129$	

[a]No statistically significant interactions were found for social justice training. $^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$

programs with a solid set of applied practice skills for developing effective working alliances and engaging in career development processes with culturally diverse clients or those whose challenges are impacted by systemic oppression (Fassinger & Gallor, 2006; Toporek & Williams, 2006).

It was in this third domain, *Culturally-sensitive working alliance*, that there were fewer significant correlations between the *Importance* and the *Competence* ratings. In the CIC model (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c), it is within a culturally-sensitive working alliance between counsellor and client that the following critical processes are possible: cultural inquiry and bridging of worldviews, client self-identification in relation to non-dominant cultural identities, shared understanding and/or consciousness raising in relation to the systemic factors that potentially impact client wellbeing, collaborative exploration of the salience of cultural and SJ factors to case conceptualization and intervention planning, and agreement on the career goals and processes (including level of intervention targeted). Cultural influences are increasingly recognized as foundational to career practice (Leong, 2010). Culture and context are both shaped and made meaningful through interaction (Knapik & Miloti, 2006), as co-constructions between counsellor and client (Pare, 2008; Young & Lalande, 2011). It is in the context of the working alliance that cultural identities and cultural contexts emerge, are defined, and become salient. The very meaning of work and career are culture and context-bound (Arthur & Collins, 2011; Blustein, 2006).

In the *Culturally-sensitive working alliance* domain, practitioners move from a predominant focus on attitudes and knowledge to applied practice skills in MC and SJ. It is in this *how to* of multicultural and SJ work that career practitioners had the largest gaps between what they see as important and their own personal competence. As noted above, applied practice skills generally have received less focus in educational programs than attitude and knowledge competencies (Cates & Schaefle, 2009; Pieterse, 2009). The lower overall ratings on *Importance* and *Competence* in this domain are not surprising; yet, they are of concern.

Wells, Delgado-Romero, and Shelton (2010) reviewed the *Career Development Quarterly, Journal of Career Assessment, Journal of Career Development, and Journal of Vocational Behavior* to analyze racial and ethnic characteristics of participants in research studies and noted an increase in representation of nondominant ethnic groups in 2000 to 2007 compared to 1990 to 1999. There has also been an increase in specific intervention strategies for career practice with clients of various ethnic backgrounds, ages, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, religions, and social classes; however, these tend to focus on micro level interventions with individual clients rather than change in the organizations, communities, or broader systems that impact the career development of these clients (Arthur, 2008; Arthur et al., 2009; Arthur & McMahon, 2005). The dominant vocational theories and practice models have been developed without sufficient attention to client-counsellor cultural differences or contextual factors influencing both career goals and change processes (Vespia et al., 2010), with the most glaring gaps in the area of SJ action (Toporek et al., 2006; Toporek & Williams, 2006). The available literature in this area is also primarily conceptual in nature rather than focusing on specific skills for incorporating SJ into practice (Arthur et al., 2009).

It was interesting to note the characteristics or backgrounds of participants (e.g., independent variables) exhibited more interactions overall with their self-assessment of *Competence* on the various MCSJC scale factors than with their rating of the *Importance* of these factors to the discipline. A logical explanation for this difference is that perceived competence is more directly connected to the individual, as person and professional, than to prioritization of the competences for the profession overall. Higher level of education most frequently interacted with participants' views of the *Importance* of multicultural and SJ competencies to the profession of career development. However, practitioner age and experiences interacted with more factors on the *Competence* scale than level of education. One possible explanation for this observation is that the educational experiences of practitioners raise their consciousness of the importance of multicultural and SJ competencies (Cates & Schaefle, 2009; Pieterse, 2009), but their actual practice experience either enables the development or supports the mastery of these competencies (Vespia et al., 2010). Other studies have shown a relationship between general counselling and MC competence (Constantine, 2002); it stands to reason that general counselling competence would increase with both age and experience. Vespia and colleagues also noted a small to moderate correlation between both amount of training and years of counselling experience and self-reported competence, although they used a different assessment tool that did not explicitly target SJ competence. In their regression analysis, both dependent variables contributed to the variance, but only years of experience accounted for

unique variance, and the overall effect size was small. More notably, in the current study, the highest number of interactions was noted between SJ familiarity and the *Competence* factors. Those most familiar with the concept rated themselves as more competent. Intuitively, this makes a great deal of sense, because it would be difficult to self-assess as competent in an area where one lacked conceptual familiarity. SJ familiarity offers a potentially robust independent variable, integrating experience or/and education, that warrants exploration in future studies.

Implications and Conclusions

Similar to Vespia and colleagues (2010), we were unable to find other studies that explicitly assessed the self-perceived multicultural competence of career practitioners. What this study adds is a more explicit focus on SJ competencies, using the MCSJC scale, and a comparative analysis of practitioners' ratings of the importance of the factors with self-assessed competence level. It is clear that practitioners view SJ competencies as important to career practice, supporting the broader range of competency assessment in this study.

Vespia and colleagues (2010) concluded that career counsellors rated themselves as *above average* in cultural competence. Career practitioners in this study rated themselves as *average to moderately high*, depending on the factor. Structuring the MCSJC instrument according to the CIC model (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c) enabled career practitioners to provide information on both the core competency domains for multicultural and SJ career practice, as well as differentiation among specific competencies (factors) clearly identified as attitudes, knowledge, or skills. This increased conceptual clarity, enables the recommendation that pre- and post-service training opportunities be developed that move beyond increasing awareness of counsellor and client cultural identities (which mainly involve attitude and knowledge competencies) to focus on the development of specific MC and SJ practice skills, in the context of a culturally-sensitive working alliance.

This study offers explicit learning objectives that could form the foundation for curriculum development focused on applied practices skills for MC and SJ. The complete conceptual foundations and full description of the items that compose the MCSJC factors are provided elsewhere (Collins et al., 2014). Career practitioners rated themselves increasing lower in competence as they moved down this list of competencies:

- Engage clients in self-exploration and assessment of the impact of social injustices on health and wellbeing.
- Engage in prevention, consciousness-raising, consultation, community capacity building, advocacy and other professional roles that target SJ issues.
- Describe how to ethically assess, design, implement, and evaluate change strategies for communities, organizations, and broader social, economic, and political systems.
- Implement interventions that target communities, organizations, and broader social, economic, and political systems.
- Advocate for the promotion of SJ through research, professional organizations, and media.

There was a stronger relationship to competence for both age and counselling experience in this study. Vespia and colleagues (2010) assessed, more specifically, experience working with cultural diverse clientele, concluding that one of the ways to increase the efficacy of education is to include more experiential or applied practice learning activities that engage students directly in skill development. Our study supports this conclusion through the call for more applied practice skills training. Unfortunately, there is no standardized curriculum for enhancing student competency for SJ practice in counselling psychology, generally, or in the area of career development, specifically (Singh et al., 2010). There is growing agreement, however, that experiential and practice-based learning is essential (Arthur & Collins, 2005; Hodge et al., 2011). The lack of relationship of level of education in this study to perceived competence may reflect the nature of current educational models. There is evidence that the traditional single course model is much less effective than infusing competencies related to MC and SJ throughout the curriculum, particularly into applied practice experiences (Arthur & Collins, 2005; Dickson & Jepsen, 2007).

Targeted learning experiences, based on various demographic variables, are not clearly indicated through this study. However, the lower overall ratings on both *Importance* and *Competence* for the *Culturally-sensitive working alliance* domain may suggest the need to educate practitioners about the relevance of these competencies to their practice. Other data, from the broader research project in which this study is embedded, suggests that practitioners face multiple barriers in implementing SJ interventions, many of which are related to organizational or other system restraints, organizational philosophies, or lack of human or financial supports (Arthur et al., 2009). It may

be important to the advancement of a SJ agenda in career development to invest energy in educating career organizations, funding agencies, and universities about the centrality of SJ, not only to case conceptualization but to multilevel systemic interventions.

There are a number of potential limitations to this study. The lower than anticipated number of responses to the online survey limited the statistical analyses, particularly because of fewer responses to factors associated with the *Culturally-sensitive working alliance* domain (Collins et al., 2014). The lack of ethnic diversity in this study is also a limitation: 97% of participants were Caucasian. It may be that practitioners from nondominant ethnic groups differ in terms of familiarity with and understanding of issues of SJ, which may, in turn, impact ratings of both importance and competence in relation to SJ competencies. The skewed frequencies on gender limited further examination of the impact of this independent variable. Although the inclusion of the *Importance* scale is one of the strengths of this study, in that it engaged career practitioners themselves in providing input on what is important to career practice, combining this measure with the assessment of *Competence* on the same questionnaire may have skewed the responses on the competence measure. There was no measure of social desirability included, and practitioners may have been inclined to overestimate their competence (Constantine & Ladany, 2000; Gamst et al., 2004; Vespia et al., 2010), particularly if they have just stated that an item was important to the profession. None-the-less, career practitioners in this study clearly indicated only moderate competence on many factors. The gap scores should be considered as exploratory, and further investigations are needed to draw conclusions (Repetto et al., 2008). All self-report instruments have potentially limited accuracy as measure of competence, in contrast to behavioural measures (Constantine, 2002). In fact, the study by Vespia et al. (2010) showed a discrepancy between participants' self-rated competence and external assessment of their competence, based on analysis of their responses to open-ended questions. However, neither of these studies provided a comparison of self-assessed competence to actual behaviour (Constantine & Ladany, 2000).

This study advanced the call within the field of career development to bring the focus on SJ back to the forefront (Arthur, 2013, McWhirter et al., 2005). It also supported the argument that SJ activities must be directly connected to applied practice (Parra-Cardona et al., 2005), and provided support for the recommendation that this connection be built from the outset in pre-service training to ensure competence in multicultural and SJ applied practice skills. Fassinger and Gallor's (2006) s*cientist-practitioner-advocate* model is an appropriate fit for the range of competencies that career practitioners identified as important in this study. The conceptual foundations of the MCSJC scale (Collins et al., 2014) within the CIC model, which was developed primarily as a framework for curriculum design within counsellor education (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b, 2010b), increases the ease of translation of the outcomes of this study to specific learning objectives that may form priorities for multicultural and SJ curriculum. We invite both career practitioners and educators to consider the outcomes of this study in terms of priorities for curriculum and program design, as well as continued competency development.

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Career Writing: Creative, Expressive, and Reflective Approaches to Narrative Career Learning and Guidance

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Abstract

Narrative approaches in careers guidance have been developed to address the increasing complexity, insecurity, and individualization of the career journey. Well-founded practical and creative approaches are needed to help students and guidance professionals construct narratives that provide both meaning and direction. The authors argue for career writing to promote career learning and distinguish three types: creative, expressive, and reflective writing. The necessity of developing a career identity (i.e. narrative) will be discussed and a model of writing for transformation will be presented along with exercises that can be used and examples from practice.

Resumé

Des approches narratives dans l'orientation professionnelle ont été développées pour répondre à la complexité croissante, l'insécurité et l'individualisation des parcours de carrière. Des approches pratiques et créatives sont nécessaires pour aider les étudiants et les professionnels de l'orientation à construire des récits qui donnent un sens et une direction. Les auteurs plaident pour une écriture professionnelle afin de promouvoir l'apprentissage et de distinguer trois types d'écriture : créative, expressive et réfléchie. La nécessité de développer une identité professionnelle (c-à-d narrative) sera discutée et un modèle d'écriture pour la transformation sera présenté avec des exercices qui peuvent être utilisés et des exemples tirés de la pratique.

Acknowledgments

We thank the Andrea, Edith, Kelly, and Margot who allowed us to use their stories to illustrate career writing. We also note that we have also used select pieces from earlier articles to describe and explain the theory and practice behind career writing.

As a result of the shifting economy and changing notions and arrangement of work (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005; Savickas, van Esbroeck, & Herr, 2005), schools are increasingly acknowledging a role in guiding students, not only in their academic growth, but also in their career development (Gysbers & Henderson, 2005; Jarvis & Keeley, 2003; Mittendorff, 2010). That said, (vocational) education infrequently provides effective career guidance, nor are career dialogues between teachers and students the start of career learning (Winters, Meijers, Kuijpers, & Baert, 2009; Winters, Meijers, Lengelle, & Baert, 2012). Although employers now expect new employees to have more knowledge and skills and be more intrinsically motivated than three decades ago (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004) there are serious doubts whether students have enough practical and theoretical knowledge (OECD, 2006), let alone the work habits and emotional skills necessary for success (Jarvis, 2013).

Studies indicate that most students are not intrinsically motivated to do their school work (Holt, 1995; Light, 2001; Gatto, 2009; Fecho, 2013) nor do the majority of them know what they want to do career wise. The latter fact leads to rather random educational selections and subsequent dropout rates of between 30 to 50% (Eurostat, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). A Dutch study (Borghans, Coenen, Golsteyn, Hijgen, & Sieben, 2008) estimated that the societal costs of students taking longer to complete their studies as a result of unsuitable choices was 5,7 billion euros a year. Similarly, a Canadian study found that the majority of high school graduates do not have career goals to which they are emotionally committed and that about a third of students enter university or college directly after high school without clear workplace goals, hoping to discover their calling through further study (Jarvis, 2013). It is therefore not surprising that more than a third of post-secondary students change programs or drop out by the end of their first year. "Considering how badly our workforce now needs the right talent in the right place at the right time, today's 'talent pipeline' has far too many leaks", Jarvis concludes (2013, p. 3). That said, there are also studies that show that the issues mentioned above can be addressed if youngsters are helped in developing a fuller picture of who they are and what their program and work options look like (Lewin & Colley, 2011; Kuijpers, Meijers & Gundy, 2013).

In this article we propose that 'career writing' a narrative and

dialogical guidance approach that uses creative, expressive, and reflective writing, can address the need for personal (and thereby professional) growth in the area of career. We already know that enabling students to face the career challenges of the 21st century – which requires the making of intrinsically motivated choices and being more luck ready (i.e. able to respond constructively in the face of uncertainty and unplanned change; Pryor & Bright, 2011) – is not merely a matter of providing more information nor focusing on matching skills to existing work (i.e. trait-and-factor model) (Savickas et al, 2010). Career learning now requires that students understand more deeply what is important to them personally (i.e. meaning), and what they would like to contribute to society (i.e. direction) (Wijers & Meijers, 1996; Savickas et al, 2010). Those who are preparing and re-preparing themselves for work must not only invest their knowledge and skill base and orient themselves on the labour market, but they must be helped to construct a career identity (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012).

Such self-construction is required precisely because of the increase in both the range and number of choices. Traditional patterns are losing hold as the 'cafeteria of options' (Guichard, 2009, p. 252) expands and the 'grand narratives' that used to dominate career choices no longer offer realistic models to emulate (Meijers, 2013). To illustrate this more concretely, one has only to consider that in 1976, in The Netherlands there were 5500 recognized professions and 2000 job titles that could be described as "nonspecific" (e.g. policy assistant; regional advisor; data worker). By 2010 the number of professions had dropped to 1073 and the "nonspecific positions" had grown to over 23,000 (CBS, 1993; CBS, 2012). In light of these issues, we argue for a more narrative and dialogical approach to career guidance, so that students are helped to construct a workable and meaningful career identity. Whereby a career identity is defined as an emotionally salient and flexible story, based on life themes, that explains, "how the self of yesterday became the self of today and will become the self of tomorrow" (Savickas, 2005, p. 58). Such a story is "not factual truth but narrative truth; meaningful to the individual in terms of experience, understanding of the world and of future possibilities" (Reid & West, 2011, p. 4). It takes into consideration the complex and fragmented nature of self and society, whereby the self (in relation to career) can be defined as a dynamic multiplicity of positions or voices regarding work (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012).

In introducing "career writing" and arguing for its use in career learning, we will begin by explaining this inherently narrative and dialogical approach in more detail. First we will present the model of writing for transformation, which describes the process an individual goes through in constructing a career story. With that we will present and explain the three types of writing, which can be distinguished and considered part of this approach and make going through the learning stages possible. Along with the three types of writing we will show – using partial case studies – how career writing works concretely and thereby illustrate how it contributes to career learning. We also explain why there is a need for dialogue in career learning, how it is lacking, and argue that writing is both cost and time effective dialogical approach. We will conclude with several reflections on the use of career writing in practice.

Career Writing Model

To make understandable how career writing facilitates the creation of a career identity, we have developed the *Model of Transformation through Writing* (Lengelle & Meijers, 2009; Meijers & Lengelle, 2012) or what we refer to in this context as the "Career Writing Model". This model shows the steps and elements by which people come to identity learning through a story-construction process and is useful to practitioners because it helps them understand the learning stages as well as the process as a whole. The model shows the learning here is intended to take us out of our story of chaos (e.g. I have no idea of my direction) or restitution (e.g. I will do what has always worked) towards a quest narrative (e.g. This is the new direction in which I can now take steps) (Sparkes & Smith, 2003). The overview the model provides is important for the career professional and allows him/her to identify which stage a student or client may be in and ease the discomfort or resistance a person might have, but without denying the insecurity which is part and parcel of this type of transformative learning process.

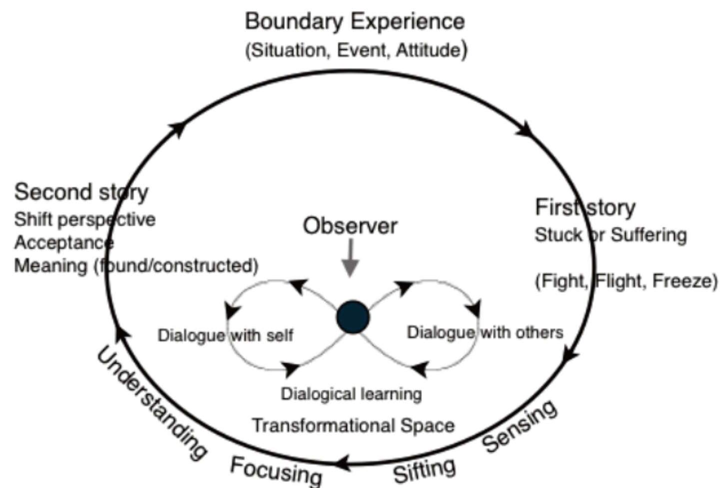
At the start of any new learning is what Bühler (1935; Bühler & Allen, 1972) refer to as a boundary experience, "an experience whereby an individual encounters the boundaries of his or her existing self-concept and cannot cope with a situation and its exigencies" (Meijers & Wardekker, 2002; Lengelle & Meijers, 2009, p. 58). It is a situation, event, or (outmoded or unhelpful) attitude where a person's default response so longer brings positive meaning or direction. In the career context, this crisis might be becoming suddenly unemployed or being uncertain about a career direction. The (first) story we tell ourselves about that experience triggers

the fight, flight, or freeze response of our limbic system (i.e. survival system), effectively blocking out our ability to use the neo-cortex and gain perceived (i.e. cognitive) control over the situation (Griffin and Tyrrell, 2002). The symptoms of a first story are summed up succinctly in Baker & Stauth (2002) useful acronym VERB – the signs are a sense of Victimization, or Entitlement, imaginings of needing Rescue, or resorting to Blame.

That said, a first story is not all bad – life themes emerge that have the potential to provide the unity in life (hi)stories (Savickas, 2002, 2005). Our habituated and negative responses to boundary experiences are "…the affective and cognitive representation of a problem or set of problems, perceived or experienced either consciously or unconsciously, which constituted a fundamental source of psychic stress for a person during childhood, for which that person wished resolution above all else, and which thereby triggered adaptive efforts, resulting in an attempted identification of the perceived problem, which in turn formed the basis for a fundamental interpretation of reality and ways of dealing with that reality." (Csikszentmihalyi & Beattie, 1979, p. 48).

Thus, a boundary experience, is a triggering event and relates not only to the situation or event at hand but connects with ways in which we have are used to coping (or not). The invitation to construct a more life-giving second story is what Savickas (2011) summarizes aptly when he says that in our careers we are in fact trying to "actively master what we have passively suffered" in youth. The aim of career writing then – like other narrative approaches – is to help those in a career crisis with the aim to develop a 'second story' (i.e. a narrative that provides both meaning and direction). This happens in four cognitive learning stages – though not always linearly – and includes: sensing, sifting, focusing, and understanding based on the Piagetan learning theory and developed by Law (1996, 2010). In order to move through the stages effectively, individuals require both a dialogue with self and others. Here a career narrative is an interaction (LaPointe, 2010) between an individual who is trying to understand his/her life via a story shared and an audience (e.g. career counsellor, coach, (imagined) reader). The various exercises that fall within the three types of writing, which we will describe below, constitute the practical tools that can be implemented in order to move through the transformational space in stages.

Figure 1



Three Types of Career Writing

Career writing as a narrative approach to career construction (Cochran 1997; Savickas 2005) draws its forms and practices primarily from the field of writing for personal and professional development (Bolton 1999, 2010; Hunt & Sampson, 2002). The three types of writing are creative, expressive, and reflective. Most, if not all, practical writing exercises and approaches fall within these categories. The table below shows generalized distinctions.

Creative Writing

Creative writing refers to the writing of fiction or (fictional) autobiography, with the potential of gaining self insight (Hunt & Sampson, 2002; Bolton 1999); the idea here is that one's deepest truths are often told in the form of lies made up to tell a story (Allende, 2013). One's creations are compelling and revealing not because they are true reflections of reality but because a story is psychically credible (Sonik, 2006) and symbolically salient. Academics and practitioners of writing for personal development have also found that fiction can be a way of exploring professional issues that are too problematic or not accessible enough to deal with by any other means (Bolton, 1994).

In creative writing, the one writing is encouraged to make up a story and find out what happens without preplanning the storyline too much (Sonik, 2006; Lengelle, 2002). This is contrary to what most

students are taught in school, but resembles that way in which many novelists work (King, 2000; Doctorow, 2013). All that is usually needed is a starting point: a character and a situation, which may come in the form of a prompt from existing (literary) fiction. A facilitator brings to the student(s) some knowledge of fiction writing (e.g. showing as opposed to telling) and encourages the student/client to use concrete, specific details so that characters and situations are brought alive. One might say that the self insight that emerges comes through the backdoor; the writer plays a trick on him/herself by letting the "inner writer" (or narrator) express some dimension of his/her multi-voiced self (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010) and then spies on him/herself to discover what it might reveal (Sonik, 2006, p. 5).

The stories used to illustrate the types of writing below are from students who engaged in the courses created and taught by one of the authors, Writing the Self (Lengelle, 2002), Narrative Possibilities (Lengelle, 2008) at Athabasca University, and finally "In Other Words" which was part of a research project on the efficacy of career writing at the Hague University of Applied Sciences in The Netherlands (Lengelle, Meijers, Poell & Post, 2013).

Table 1

Creative, Expressive, and Reflective/reflexive writing

Category	Creative	Expressive	Reflective/reflexive
Brief definition	The writing of fictional pieces for the purposes of personal and professional development.	Writing about one's deepest thoughts and emotions surrounding a painful experience for the purpose of processing life events.	Writing from life experience, reflecting to gain insight, constructing meaning and direction, and questioning pre-existing identifications.
Primary form	Fiction	Non-fiction	Non-fiction/Inquiry
Role or Archetype	Artist	Healer	Scientist/Philosopher
Chief qualities	creativity imagination	expressiveness	reflexivity/examination structure
Vital drive/goal	play exploration	pain/resolution	insight/a sense of order
Pitfall/dangers	superficiality flights of fancy	rumination VERB*	over-intellectualizing

*VERB: victimization, entitlement, rescue, blame (Baker & Stauth, 2003)

Andrea's creative writing

In response to a fiction-writing prompt, Andrea wrote the following piece:

> *My assistant pulls diarized files and brings them to me for review and instruction. We discuss payroll and sub-contracts that must be reviewed and I speak to her of her potential in business management and accounting and my excitement at her continuing education. She is a major part of my succession plan and I hope to groom her into taking over the majority of my duties in the months to follow. We, however, still need to deal with the situation with my partners. My assistant desires to please, and it appears that her desire to please my two male colleagues carries a much higher value to her than pleasing me. Ironically, if my colleagues wanted her removed, I would not let her go easily. But she doesn't seem to connect her future career to the only other woman in her employment world: a woman who is her senior, an owner, and her immediate supervisor.*

Upon reflection, Andrea made the following discoveries about herself:

> "My assistant is one version of a younger me: born into patriarchy in the early 1960s behind four older brothers, working in careers with only men for authority figures, understanding safety only when authority figures (men) were pleased, and always choosing peace over conflict, regardless of the personal cost. I recognize that I longed for a mentor; a woman who would teach me how to be confident in what I know to be true and still be feminine, how to stand firmly and not allow myself to engage in co-dependent behaviour, and how to not compromise myself for the sake of peace. I realize I was looking for a female role model; a pioneer from whom I could fashion my career and my relationships. I also realize that I see my older self as the mentor for whom I longed, and that through fiction, I could return to support and care for my lost younger self. (My reflection is entirely accurate (ouch)…"

It may be argued that Andrea could have discovered these things by talking to someone or through her own private journal writing. However, the power of writing fiction is that often the parts (or 'selves') that are hidden in the margins of our lives appear on the stage. And if we've shared and shown others, we project on those readers a witness of our self-discoveries and once that happens, we can no longer pretend we did not see what we saw. Such a piece and associated reflection can provide insight into the "self of yesterday" and how the self of today needs to be supported and nurtured.

Expressive Writing

Research has been done in the past three decades on the therapeutic effects of writing in the face of loss and trauma (for an overview see Pennebaker, 2011) and this type of writing has become known as expressive writing. The term *expressive writing* itself has been used to refer to a number of different practices, but in this context it refers to writing where an individual is encouraged to explore his/her deepest feelings and thoughts about an emotionally charged or negative life event.

A myriad of topics have been explored in expressive writing research, including college performance (Frattoroli et al, 2011), the alleviation of asthmatic and rheumatoid arthritis symptoms (Smyth et al, 1999), and whether professionals could be helped by writing in the wake of job loss (Spera et al., 1994). The job-loss study focused on the benefits of writing about one's deepest thoughts and feelings following a layoff and found that professionals who did so were much more likely to be reemployed within the months that followed the layoff than those who did not write or those who wrote about superficial topics.

Researchers concluded that it was the emotional as well as the cognitive processing that made the writing a successful intervention; "*having* a coherent story to explain a painful experience was not necessarily as useful as *constructing* a coherent story" (Pennebaker, 2011, p.11). Much like the "talking cure", the benefits of expressive writing (i.e. better college performance; reduced doctor's visits; fewer illness symptoms) have been attributed to the alleviation of the pent-up feelings of non-disclosure, the freeing of working memory, and the sense of gaining control over a situation (Pennebaker & Seagal, 1999; Pennebaker, 2002).

Expressive writing's most common prompt asks those writing to write about their deepest thoughts and feelings for a period of 20 minutes for 3-4 consecutive days. The writing about traumatic experiences is not ongoing because researchers noted certain pitfalls of revisiting painful life events for an extended period and noted the following drawbacks: over-intellectualizing, rumination, or substituting writing for action (Pennebaker, 1997). However, research has confirmed benefits in numerous studies (Lepore & Smyth, 2002, Pennebaker, 2013) and now the development of 'healthy writing' can be identified in part with the Linguistic Index Word Count (LIWC) program developed by Pennebaker, Booth, and Francis (2007) looking at for instance a shift in the use of pronoun words and the presence of both positive and negative emotions words.

Edith's expressive writing

Graduate student, Edith Robb, (2009) shared her experience of a sudden layoff; her story was used elsewhere as a more extensive case study (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012). Edith lost her job suddenly and unexpectedly after 38 years as a journalist and describes the pain associated with this event. Although her story happened at a stage later in her career, the challenges and insecurities she describes are comparable to those students face. In both cases, a person is challenged to ask questions like "what am I suited to do?" or "what kind of work is meaningful to me?" and "what must I do to enter (or re-enter) the labour market successfully?" The initial part of her writing to process this boundary experience included expressing her pain and frustration, as well as gaining a sense that she was not yet in a place to make a career decision.

> *"Each night my journal was full of questions about faith, and how I could have any, and how it can be betrayed. My quest became as spiritual as it was practical; I wasn't just looking for a replacement job now; I was looking for work that really mattered." (p. 9)*

Following the layoff, Edith was encouraged by others to send out resumes and look for new work immediately, but the expressive writing she did as part of her course work necessarily slowed her down, giving her time to grieve and not foreclose. With the guidance from the online course instructor and course peers, she began writing to uncover new meanings and directions.

> *"On cold winter nights that followed my lay-off, I wrote and wrote, for the first time not on a deadline, not determined to get from point A to point B, but to simply express my thoughts and penetrate those others I was exposed to in the course." (p.10)*

Besides getting out her pain, she also gained insight into why it might be useful to do so.

> *"At this point in my resurrection, I encountered the work of Charles M. Anderson and Marian MacCurdy in their book Writing & Healing. When they described trauma survivors, I could immediately identify, "We feel powerless, taken over by alien experiences we could not anticipate and did not choose. Healing depends upon gaining control over that which has engulfed us. We cannot go back and change the past." (p. 8)*

It is noteworthy that despite Edith having spent almost four decades as a journalist, she did not discover or know writing to be a transformational process until she took the Narrative Possibilities course (Lengelle, 2008). We anticipate that even for those working in careers that require writing competency or for whom journaling is a place of refuge, career writing will offer new ways to work with career challenges.

Reflective/Reflexive Writing

Reflective/reflexive writing refers to practices that are intended to "take us out of our own narrow range of experience and help us to perceive experiences from a range of viewpoints and potential scenarios" (Bolton, 2010, p. 10). Reflective writing can include memoir writing, list-making, poetry and is in principle non-fiction. It involves reliving, rerendering, and structuring experience by means of witnessing and reworking one's life experience, to gain, absorb, and integrate insight. It also requires the questioning of existing preoccupations and identifications that might stand in the way of one's agency (Lengelle & Meijers, 2009).

Reflexivity is not the same as reflection and involves '*doubling* the self' (Hunt & Sampson, 2006, p. 4) or working directly with the idea of the self as multi-voiced, "so that we are both 'inside' and 'outside' ourselves simultaneously and able to switch back and forth fluidly and playfully from one position to the other, giving ourselves up to the experience of 'self as other' whilst also retaining a grounding in our familiar sense of self" (Bolton, 2010, p.4). Although reflective practice and reflexivity differ, reflexivity can be seen as a broader and multi-dimensional form of reflection and therefore we use the term reflective writing to refer to either or both.

Kelly's reflective insight

In our most recent research into career writing (Lengelle et al, 2013) Kelly, a student in her early twenties wrote that she had always wanted to join the military. At the same time she was about to embark on a trip to Thailand to 'find peace'. In her writing she described herself as a 'down-to-earth' type with a fervent wish to become a helicopter pilot. As the course progressed she articulated an interesting discovery, "The military is a family…it is a family I want desperately to be a part of. Because my family has fallen apart completely, I think this is why the army is attracting me now." By the end of the course she reported having "more doubts" and "seeing how broken I am in places". Her career wish to join the military was still present, but she expressed it with the realization that it was not only the excitement of the work she sought but also a sense of family. We anticipate that, just as in successful career counselling, such discoveries may help students make suitable choices. Career writing may give them a chance to give more meaning to what they believe they should choose and discover what may underlie their directions and actions.

Margot's deconstruction

Another aspect of constructing a career identity – whether it is done in a counselling office or on paper as a reflective writing exercise – is de-construction (Savickas, 2011). Shifts in perspective and restorying require both gains and loss in the 'selves' and self-definitions that we cling to and gain strength from and therefore career writing must include this element. There are specific writing exercises that are particularly effective in this deconstruction process (Lengelle & Meijers, 2013) and "The Work" (Katie 2002) is such an exercise.

Margot, a graduate student in the final stages of her project felt gripped by a sense of fear and ineptitude as she embarked on her master's thesis. She had taken the MAIS (2008) course and, like the other students, had done the 4-question inquiry process called "The Work". Although she was being supervised by other professors, she asked one of the authors for support; we recommended that she try the process on the thought that seemed to be paralyzing her, which was, "I am not an academic."

The idea of this form of inquiry begins with the invitation to write down a host of fears and complaints on what is called the "Judge-your-neighbour" (JYN) worksheet. From that worksheet, one thought at a time can be worked through. The process can also be done if a single fear or thought is already clear as was the case with Margot.

While, in memory, going back to a concrete situation that seems to trigger or verify the belief (e.g. trying to write the thesis proposal), the person doing the work writes the thought out in full and then answers four questions about that statement.

Statement: *I am not an academic*

1. Is it true, I am not an academic? (Yes or No)
2. Can I absolutely know that it's true, I'm not an academic? (Yes or No)
3. How do I react when I believe the thought, I am not an academic (and have to write the thesis proposal now)?
4. Who would I be without the thought, I am not an academic (in this situation of embarking on the writing the thesis proposal)?

The first two questions allow the writer to consider the validity of her assumption and usually this loosens the sense of panic or certainty about a given story. However, even if the answer to question 1 and 2 are still firmly yes, the Work remains effective. This might be because the third question allows a person time to revisit the feelings of hopelessness and fear and notice what such a belief is costing him/her, while the fourth question provides a concrete contrast to that experience. At question four, a person can make the (temporary) leap into the imagination and re-experience the situation in memory without the limiting or fearful thought.

After the 4 questions are answered, the person questioning their thoughts is asked to formulate a "turnaround", the same statement worded in alternate ways. In this case, the student wrote, "I am an academic" and had to find three specific examples of how this statement applied to her and/or was just as true or truer than her initial statement. Margot named her course work, papers she had completed with success, and the fact she was greatly interested in academic readings on her subject matter. Later, after finishing her thesis with success, she wrote to say that she had attended a meeting in her field and felt like "the only academic in the room." When the irony of this statement was pointed out to her, she was both delighted and humoured by it.

Although there is overlap between creative, expressive, and reflective writing, it should be clear that each has a particular emphasis and starting point. We propose that actual writing exercises fall within the categories or combinations thereof. Poetry might more often be used for expressive and reflective purposes, while playwriting would be a creative approach that might morph into non-fiction as a reflective dialogue where various voices can be tried out on the page. The aims of all three types of career writing are essentially the same: to be the means by which a person constructs (and deconstructs) his/her career identity or story using narrative, poetic, dialogical, and inquiry-based exercises. The latter are the veritable tools that students or clients use to give body to their stories and move through the cognitive stages described below.

The Stages

Whether applied to the context of students and study choices or an employment crisis, an individual must be supported and encouraged to acknowledge the range of thoughts and feelings experienced, even if the content of what ends up on the page is not directly or fully shared. It is important to note also that effective career writing is not just about catharsis – writing out what is thought and felt about a particular situation, event, or attitude also promotes noticing (i.e. engaging the observer) and viewing the situation with some detachment (Griffin & Tyrrell, 2002) alongside space for emotional expression. This dual process of engaging with emotions and detaching from the stress or drama (i.e. V.E.R.B), supported by a writing teacher using specific writing exercises as shown above, allows a movement out of the 'first story' into the cognitive stages: sensing, sifting, focusing, and understanding.

Sensing is the stage in which information is gathered and put on the page – in particular aspects of a person's experience that are emotionally compelling, while no explanation or perspective is yet developed. Edith entered the sensing stage as she started to write out her hopelessness instead of trying to find other work right away. Had she done the latter, she would have been trying to 'jump' to a second story. Sensing is the stage that sets the tone for a second story that will eventually be felt by the person writing, instead of an attempt to reach for a comforting affirmation. The Work's third question, "how do I react when I believe (stressful thought)" is also a way to sensing, as is the JYN worksheet that is used to capture a fuller picture of one's first story at the start of the process (Katie, 2002).

Sifting is a sorting process, which moves a person "towards the issue of causality" (Law, 1996, p.55). One compares one's circumstances with those of others and starts to develop analogies and from those analogies, constructs and concepts start to emerge. Andrea did this as she looked at the themes in her fictional piece and compared them with those in her personal reflection. Sifting also occurs when a person does the Work and has started to identify and articulate specific stressful thoughts to put through the four-question inquiry process.

Focusing allows actual viewpoints to be formulated. These viewpoints are still fragmented, but they are an attempt to string together feelings and ideas that arose during the sensing and sifting stages. This stage ideally segues into the final or understanding stage, where felt insights become a second story. We see this in Margot's story, where focusing on the question, "who would I be without the thought, I am not an academic" and turning it to "I am an academic" and finding evidence in support of such a statement led her to a supported viewpoint.

The four stages taken together are referred to as episodic learning and involve a combination of expressing thoughts and feelings, ordering one's thoughts, uncovering

key themes, and articulating insights that are also felt (Law, 2008).

Discussion

The learning stages described by Law do not clarify how the macro-narrative takes shape; the model assumes that processing an experience leads necessarily to clarity (i.e. understanding) and the development of a coherent reflective narrative of lived experience. However, evidence shows that developing a coherent reflective narrative is anything but an automatic process. Because emotional reactions happen before thoughts (Damasio, 2000; Pinker, 1997; Stuss & Anderson, 2003), feelings of fear, sadness, and anger dominate (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995) when processing a boundary experiencing and that usually results in avoidance and irrational behaviour (Tversky & Kahneman, 2000). The tendency to remain stuck in a first story is very tempting, despite the accompanying symptoms.

What then, makes for successful career learning (i.e. a learning process resulting in a second story) possible? To understand this, the development of a career story must not only be understood as an emotional-cognitive learning process but as a dialogical learning one as well (see Figure). A story can only be developed when its episodes are tested by reality and the only way to do so is by telling the story to relevant others (Cochran, 1997). The 'motivational engine' that drives career learning is dialogical in nature because the "I" is actually a kind of "polyphonic novel"– it entails a combination of various voices embodied as one person (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). Although written by one person, the polyphonic novel is spoken by many 'sub-personalities' (i.e. inner authors of the story), characters or I-positions. "As different voices these characters exchange information about their respective Me's and their world, resulting in a complex, narratively structured self" (Hermans, Kempen, & Van Loon, 1992, p. 28-29). The dialogical self is not static and is inherently transformed by the exchanges amongst I-positions (the internal dialogue with ourselves) or with other individuals (the external dialogue).

A career identity, therefore, is co-constructed, socially situated, and performed in interactions. According to Hermans & Hermans-Konopka (2010) this co-construction is a practice of positioning, whereby 'master narratives' (Davies & Harré, 1990) and discourses – as LaPointe (2010, p.2) puts it - "position individuals and construct their identities in the interaction between narrator and audience. (…) Positioning refers to the process through which people can adopt, resist and offer the subject positions made available in discourses and master narratives". In short, second stories take shape through emotional-cognitive learning stages that are driven by an internal and external dialogue and social forces shape our stories. As Bakhtin (1981, p.345) puts it "the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else's". The construction of career identity is a dialogical learning process.

Dialogue as it stands

It is clear that career stories are not constructed in isolation (even if a person is writing alone at a desk) and courageous conversations (Whyte, 2001) are needed to give them shape, whether in the context of narrative counselling or not, however the necessary dialogue isn't happening in most career-learning settings. Research in Dutch vocational education shows that students are frequently spoken about and spoken to, but that they are rarely spoken *with*. Researchers found that 65% of conversations were directed at students, 21% were about students, and a mere 9% were *with* students (Winters et al. 2011). Guidance counsellors also rarely have enough time to spend with students (Kuijpers, Meijers & Gundy, 2011) even though the two resources considered "most helpful" to students are one-on-one time with a guidance counsellor and practical work experiences (Dietsche, 2013), where a combination of the latter two proved to be most effective (Kuipers & Meijers, 2012a). Studies continue to show that guidance counsellors spend most of their time focusing on academic achievement. And even when career topics are addressed, students frequently consider these conversations unhelpful (Meijers, Kuijpers, & Gundy, 2013).

Narrative and dialogical counselling approaches, though more effective in career learning and promising to remedy the issues of a lack of dialogue, pose a considerable problem in that they are time consuming and have hitherto depended largely on focused verbal exchanges. To be truly effective, this time must also be spent with someone who has well-developed narrative and dialogical counselling skills, including compassion and an understanding of the self-construction processes. A skilled career counsellor within schools infrequently has enough time to spend with each student, let alone use a narrative approach, and such services outside of schools are unaffordable for most. Studies have shown that unless career counselling is publically funded or heavily subsidized, the use of such services drops sharply (Meijers, 2001). We argue that career writing is a dialogical career guidance approach and addresses – at least in part – the issue of time investment, cost, and the need for professional skill.

Career Writing as a Viable Career Narrative Approach

There are several reasons why writing is a dialogical learning process. First, the moment one puts pen to paper, the writer is in the company of two (or more) selves. Anne Frank wrote to "Kitty" – the name of her inanimate diary and although she would never know she would be read by millions, she wrote for herself but also for that imagined audience. Her writing is a conversation between various parts of herself and the world: the teenage school girl, the house-bound prisoner, the child dreaming of fame and the future. Everything is entrusted to the witness Kitty and the conversation goes on between the selves and the imagined reader.

Indeed, writing is innately suited for expressing the self as "a dynamic multiplicity of positions" or voices. Also, as the reader of one's own work, the writer becomes the observer of his/her life and the words constructed about a life and self – which consciously or inadvertently reveals things about social, cultural, psychological, and biological influences – become the object of conversation. Not only are these inner characters or selves at the table ready for conversation, but the text itself becomes the basis for exchange and dialogue (Bolton, 2010).

Besides dialogical, writing is also time and cost effective; it can be done independently or in a group setting where more students or clients are helped at the same time. It is also cost saving because few resources are needed to begin and pursue the process. Students can work with pen and paper or on a mobile device or computer. Writing can also be done in an online classroom environment where pieces are posted and can become part of a greater dialogue, which might include teachers, peers, and even mentors. Additionally, a lot of the work that might otherwise be done in the classroom or with a teacher one-on-one, can be worked on further by the student once he/she has become intrinsically motivated (i.e. inspired) to do writing outside of class time. It is precisely the 'internal' dialogue that can get underway if a student tries various approaches on his/her own. A teacher can also have a whole group of students working during class in this way and turn the products into fodder for group discussion (and/or performance), instead of scheduling one-on-one meetings. The added advantage here is that in a group setting, the conversation is no longer only between student and teacher, but between students, teachers, and peers; the workload of reflection and dialogue is spread out among more individuals.

Career writing is also cost and time effective because a teacher or counsellor working effectively with students' written pieces can provide more tailor-made feedback, instead of more general information or guidance. An oft-cited issue, out of research done with students, is that teachers frequently provide "answers" to questions students have never asked and don't consider relevant to them. If teachers are to make more effective use of their time, they would benefit from responding with "just enough" information and they would do so "just in time" (Hargreaves, 2003; Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004). Responding to students' written work is useful because it is the student him/herself who has effectively 'set the agenda' for the conversation. Writing is also cost effective because approaches and exercises can be taught to students, teachers, counsellors, and mentors with relative ease. We have found that interested teachers, actively engaged with the exercises themselves, can learn a lot with an experienced facilitator in two days.

Facilitating Career Writing

In foundational skills a facilitator of career writing requires needs are much the same as those a career counsellor or teacher uses in careers guidance (Lengelle & Meijers, 2013). Those in the guiding role must create a safe enough holding space for the expression and sharing of emotions, encourage clients and students to express themselves, and in steps help the client to reflect and construct a story (or career identity) that provides both meaning and direction.

In the context of career writing, it is also important for a facilitator to have actual experiences with writing creatively, expressively, and reflectively and thereby access in themselves the inner "artist, healer, and philosopher". This is only possible if a teacher or guidance counsellor is open to the experience of writing for the purpose of personal (and professional) development as describe in this article. It is not enough to 'teach' writing exercises and hope students will gain something from doing so.

An advantage of career writing is that the approaches are intuitive for those who already work in a narrative or dialogical way and learned by career professionals with a modest time investment, again, assuming there is genuine interest and a willingness to try the approaches out for themselves (Kuijpers & Meijers, 2012b). In addition, a wide range of writing activities for personal and professional development already exist and can be modified and applied to the career context (Bolton, Field & Thompson, 2006, 2010; Bolton, 2010); there are examples of such exercises applied to career learning already (Hunt, 2010).

Once facilitators have their own developing experience of career writing, they can begin to facilitate others successfully. The authors advise a simple 'test' in evaluating whether a career professional or teacher is indeed becoming equipped to teach career writing:

1. Safe space: can he/she create a safe space for students/clients to share personal material?
2. Personal experience: has he/she tried the process and noticed a sense of 'reconnection'; a development of an internal dialogue in the face of personal stressors (i.e. boundary experiences
3. Curiosity and Inspiration: does she/he want to learn more about the writing exercises that are possible to use. One might start by exploring existing creative, expressive, and reflective approaches and eventually find oneself improvising and adding one's own ideas.

A first and key piece of advice on guiding others is that when writing work shared (e.g. read aloud in class or handed in), feedback is given on the text and is not directed at the writer (Bolton, 2010). Two helpful prompting lines to achieve this and give and receive feedback are "I like the sound of…" and "I want to hear more about" (E. Scarfe, June 1993, personal communication).

Conclusion

Career writing can serve as an adjunct to existing career learning practices (Taylor, 2013) or be used as an approach unto itself, addressing in part the issue of the lack of "structures, techniques and tangible products" in the field of narrative career's guidance (Reid, 2005). The examples and ideas presented here may help career professionals see a use for this creative, expressive, and reflective form of narrative guidance and they may even reduce the fear and trepidation practitioners face when they do not yet have extensive experience with narrative methods (Reid & West, 2011). The career-writing model presented here also provides a theoretical foundation for those methods; a way to view what learning process is at work in the "quest" towards career construction.

The oft-quoted William Arthur Ward's (2013) insight that, "The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails" is an apt description of how different people respond to the current world of work. The world of the boundaryless career serves up a host of boundary experiences, which individuals have to navigate. Those who stay in their first story might be considered the pessimists; the optimists are those who wish to jump immediately to second stories without consideration for their feelings and the circumstances that challenge them, while realists are people who know where to go to get sailing lessons and counselling to tackle fears of drowning.

To translate the metaphor: those who would set a successful course on today's rough and changeable labour market will require opportunities to define themselves in ways that provide meaning and direction. Young people must receive support during their education from career professionals who have approaches, tools, and ideas to share and do so in a truly dialogical way. Career writing in this context may be a viable and promising addition to narrative career guidance approaches, one in which "poetic creativity" (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012) is at the heart of identity construction.

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The Effects of Hope on Student Engagement, Academic Performance, and Vocational Identity

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Abstract

This study examines (1) the baseline measure of the Hope Centred Career Inventory (HCCI) in Canada and the United States and (2) the relationships among hope, student engagement, academic performance, and vocational identity, having hope as a primary predictor. The sample consisted of 1685 students at two universities in Canada and two universities in the United States. Normative scores of the HCCI for Canadian and U.S. students were derived from the data. The results indicate that hope has effects on both vocational identity and academic performance (GPA) via student engagement as a mediator. The effects of hope on GPA were found to be weak. Student engagement fully mediated the relationship with GPA and partially mediated the relationship with vocational identity.

Résumé de recherche

Cette étude porte sur la mesure de référence du répertoire des carrières axées sur l'espoir (HCCI/RCAE) au Canada et aux États-Unis et sur le lien qu'il peut exister entre espoir, engagement des élèves, résultats académiques et identité professionnelle, avec l'espoir comme principal indicateur. L'échantillon se composait de 1685 étudiants issus de deux universités au Canada et de deux universités aux États-Unis. On a ainsi pu déterminer à partir des données rassemblées, des scores normatifs du HCCI/RCAE concernant les étudiants canadiens et américains. Les résultats révèlent que l'espoir a un impact à la fois sur l'identité professionnelle et la performance académique (moyenne pondérée cumulative des notes/MPC) et se manifeste par un facteur décisif, l'engagement des étudiants. Il a en revanche été établi que l'espoir influait faiblement sur la moyenne. L'engagement des étudiants, quant à lui a un impact direct sur le rapport à la moyenne des notes et un impact relatif sur le rapport à l'identité professionnelle.

Author Note

This research was conducted by a hope-centered research team at The University of British Columbia and The Pennsylvania State University with financial support from the Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC).

The construct of hope has received growing attention given its linkages with positive outcomes in life domains such as work and education (Snyder, 2002). More recently, Niles, Amundson, and Yoon (in Niles, Amundson & Neault, 2011) developed and presented the hope-centred model of career development (HCMCD) using hope as a central construct. The model consists of seven competencies: hope, self-reflection, self-clarity, visioning, goal setting and planning, implementing, and adapting. In this model, hope is a necessary precondition for the use of other competencies. Niles, Amundson, and Yoon integrated and synthesized three theories to create the HCMCD: Snyder's (2002) hope theory, Bandura's (2001) human agency theory, and Hall's (1996) career metacompetencies. As the central construct in the HCMCD, hope aligns with Snyder's hope theory comprised of goals, agency, and pathways. Self-clarity and adapting correspond to Hall's career metacompetencies of self-awareness and adaptability, respectively. Lastly, Bandura's human agency constructs of selflectiveness (labeled self-reflection in HCMCD), forethought (visioning in HCMCD), self-reactiveness (goal-setting in HCMCD), and intentionality (planning and implementing in HCMCD) represent the remaining HCMCD components. People with high hope-centred career competencies tend to be successful in their career planning (Niles et al., 2011).

Niles, Yoon, and Amundson (2010) created the Hope-Centered Career Inventory (HCCI) based on the HCMCD to measure the seven hope-centered career competences. The HCCI has been piloted in a number of countries: Bermuda, Canada, Germany, Turkey, South Korea, and the United States. HCCI reliability and validity information has been accumulated and analyzed, confirming its structural soundness (Niles, Yoon, Balin, & Amundson, 2010). Additionally, norm scores on target populations are critical for

HCCI score interpretation as the norms scores provide a peer group context for the individual student or client's scores. Scores from the HCCI can be used to identify strengths and areas for growth to enable HCCI users to develop their personal career self-management plans. The HCCI has also been used to explore the relationships among career and academic outcome variables associated with hope within a university population. Researchers have found that highly hopeful individuals seem to achieve positive outcomes in both their studies and their careers, and yet, the role of hope in students' career success has not been fully explored (Niles, In, Chen, Su, deShield, &Yoon, 2013).

In the current study, we chose vocational identity as one of student outcome variables from the perspective of career development. According to Holland, Daiger, and Power (1980), vocational identity indicates one's clear sense of interests, talents, and personality that are related to career choice. We also used grade point averages (GPAs) to indicate academic success. In addition, we selected student engagement as a mediator between hope and outcome variables to further analyze the relationships. In post-secondary settings, student engagement has been used as a predictor for academic performance (e.g., Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006; Gordon, Ludlum, & Hoey, 2007). There is, however, no study investigating the relationship between hope and school engagement in the prediction of career and academic outcomes among college students. Thus, this study is meaningful as it examines how hope links to school engagement, and how student engagement, in turn, links to academic and career outcomes.

Literature Review

The Effects of Hope

Snyder, Irving, and Anderson (1991) defined hope as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (p.287). In this definition, goals offer the targets toward which one's energy and actions are directed. Agency and pathways are equally important components for reaching desired goals. More specifically, agency thinking refers to the motivational element that allows a person to begin and continue to move towards pursuing goals. Pathways thinking indicates a person's perceived capability to formulate a variety of plans to achieve their goals (Snyder, 2002). These agency and pathways components of hope enable people to persist in their goal-pursuit and to generate alterative pathways when they encounter obstacles to their goals.

Hope is associated with desired outcomes in various domains of life such as physical and mental health, athletics, and academics (Snyder, 2002). In particular, researchers have found that hope predicts positive outcomes in work and academic lives. With regard to workplace behaviours, studies have revealed that workers with higher hope are likely to demonstrate better job performance (Combs, Clapp-Smith, & Nadkarni, 2010; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005; Peterson & Byron, 2008), higher job satisfaction (Tombaugh, Mayfield, & Wooten, 2011; Youssef & Luthans, 2007), higher workplace happiness (Youssef & Luthans, 2007), and lower absenteeism (Avey, Patera, & West, 2006) than workers with lower hope.

Despite the considerable amount of attention given to the relationships between hope and workplace outcomes, few studies have examined the role of hope in the career development process of post-secondary students. Those studies support associations between high hope and positive career development variables. For example, several studies have found significant and positive correlations between hope and vocational identity (Jackson & Neville, 1998; Niles, Yoon, Balin, & Amundson, 2010). Juntunen and Wettersten (2006) proposed the concept of work-domain specific hope based on Snyder's hope theory. They also found strong relationships between work hope and vocational identity as well as career decision self-efficacy among diverse adolescent and adult populations in the United States. Another study found that the agency component of hope predicted, and was predicted by, adaptive educational and career development skills and outcomes among students at a public American university (Sung, Turner, & Kaewchinda, 2012). Collectively, these research findings suggest that hope plays an important role in students' career development. Relatively few studies have addressed this topic, however, and the samples have focused on students in the United States. Therefore, further studies are needed to examine the linkages between hope and career development among diverse university students beyond those in the United States.

Furthermore, hope has been found to contribute to academic success. Researchers have found that higher hope is associated with greater academic achievement (Curry et al., 1997; Day, Hanson, Maltby, Proctor, & Wood, 2010; Rand, 2009; Seirup & Rose, 2011; Snyder, Shorey, Cheavens, Pulvers, Adams III, & Wiklund, 2002) as

well as higher university completion rates (Snyder, Shorey et al., 2002). Moreover, results from several studies indicate that hope predicts student GPAs beyond the effects of previous academic achievement and related personal characteristics such as intelligence (Curry et al., 1997; Day et al., 2010; Seirup & Rose, 2011; Snyder, Shorey et al, 2002). For instance, hope positively predicted semester GPAs among university athletes, while controlling for their cumulative GPAs and sense of self-worth (Curry et al., 1997). Likewise, Seirup and Rose (2011) found that higher hope of university students on academic probation was associated with higher end of semester GPAs even after controlling for students' previous GPAs. Furthermore, Day et al.'s (2010) three-year longitudinal study revealed that hope was predictive of the academic achievement of college students over and above their prior academic performance, intelligence, and personality.

Overall, research evidence supports the importance of hope for university students' seeking to achieve their career and academic aspirations. However, little is known about how the positive links between hope and career and academic outcomes are mediated. In other words, the mechanism through which hope exerts its influence on students' career development and academic achievement has not been examined.

Precursors and Outcomes of Student Engagement

Engagement in an educational setting has been referred to using such terms as engagement, academic engagement, school engagement, and student engagement with at least 19 different definitions (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008). However, according to Kuh (2003), "the engagement premise is deceptively simple, even self-evident: the more students study a subject, the more they learn about it" (p. 25). Engagement is further specified to emotional, behavioural, and cognitive engagement (Appleton et al., 2008; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Fredricks et al. (2004) found that emotional engagement does not correlate as strongly with dropping out as does behavioural engagement, and evidence involving cognitive engagement is insufficient. Appleton et al. (2008) add that cognitive engagement is considered less observable, as it has been measured with such internal indicators as value of learning, self-regulation, and relevance of school experience to future possibilities. Therefore, choosing a behaviourally oriented approach to engagement would be desirable when exploring the effects of engagement.

In order for students to be motivated to engage in learning, they must feel and believe that they belong to the community, that they are respected, and that the lessons of the post-secondary institution are relevant to their own situations (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004). Environmental variables such as family, culture, community, and educational context influence engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004). These findings suggest the importance of maintaining supportive surroundings to facilitate feelings of hopefulness within the learning context. Theoretically, according to HCMCD (Niles, Amundson, & Neault, 2011), hope is influenced by the environment. For example, if one is in a supportive environment, he or she is more likely to experience a higher level of hope than others who are in a detrimental environment. Thus, it makes sense to suppose that a high level of hope would positively influence one's engagement, and in turn it would induce one to deliver desired outcomes in a given setting.

Outcomes of student engagement have been associated with test scores and GPA. Gordon et al. (2007) conducted a study at a large university in the United States using multiple years of National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data and found that student engagement is positively and significantly correlated with academic performance (GPA), retention, and post-graduation job attainment. Gordon et al. used each item of the NSSE to investigate the relationships. For example, tutoring experience explained 2.6% of the variance in first-year students' GPA and 2.7% of the variance in senior students' GPA; and community service or volunteering work explained 10.3% of the variance associated with job attainment for senior-year students. Although some items predicted the student outcomes, overall results indicated that the NSSE benchmarks offer marginal predictive power of the outcomes (Gordon et al., 2007). Carini et al. (2006) also conducted an extensive study of the effects of NSSE scores on learning outcomes, using two standardized tests, the RAND and the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), and GPA, at 14 four-year colleges and universities. Although they found some positive correlations between student engagement and these standardized test results, it is important to note that the strength of the relationships between student engagement and GPA was weak.

Other student outcome measures should be explored. According to the National Research Council & Institute of Medicine (2004), the majority of 100,000 7th through 11th grade students in the United States responded that their main reason to actively engage in school work is to achieve good grades to enter university. The fact

that some studies in higher education settings (e.g., Carini et al., 2006; Gordon et al., 2007) still focus on test results seems to reflect expectations established in secondary schools. In contrast, Astin's study confirmed that student engagement increases learning, retention, and cognitive and affective development, in addition to academic performance in a post-secondary setting (as cited in Saenz et al., 2011). Although the setting is different from higher education, job and organizational engagement predicted job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour, and intentions to quit (Saks, 2006). It is imperative to find other outcome variables of student engagement in higher education settings than academic performance.

Student engagement could be used as a mediator between antecedents and outcomes. Fredricks et al. (2004) argued that there is limited evidence concerning the mediating role of engagement between context and achievement, and engagement has been used as an outcome variable rather than a mediator leading to student achievement. More recently, scholars such as Appleton et al. (2008) have discussed the need to use student engagement as a mediator between contextual factors and outcome variables. Perry, Liu, and Pabian (2009) examined the mediating role of student engagement between career preparation and academic performance in a high school setting. It seems, however, that there is still limited evidence related to the role of student engagement as a mediator in a higher education setting.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore how the hopefulness (as measured by the hope subscale of the HCCI) of college/university students intersects with critical variables such as student engagement, academic performance, and vocational identity. We used the HCCI and other measures with groups of post-secondary students in Canada and the United States 1) to establish the baseline scores of the HCCI, 2) to examine how hope positively effects student engagement, vocational identity, and academic performance, and 3) to investigate to what extent student engagement mediates the relationships in hope predicting vocational identity and academic performance. Accordingly, we developed two questions to guide this research: Research Question 1 (RQ1): How do students in Canada and the United States score on the HCCI? Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are the relationships among hope, student engagement, academic performance, and vocational identity?

Method

Participants

Using an online survey consisting of 101 items, we collected responses from 1756 participants from the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Thompson Rivers University (TRU) in Canada and from The Pennsylvania State University (PSU) and The Pennsylvania College of Technology (PCT) in the United States. Seventy-one responses were excluded, accounting for 4% of the participants, in order to insure the integrity of the data. The exclusion criteria included participants' responses that took less than 4.3 minutes representing 2% or responses that took over 63.1 minutes, also representing 2% of the total respondents. The 2% with the fastest completion times had extremely high intercorrelations among the HCCI variables (≥ .90), which suggests that the respondents may have not responded sincerely to the survey questions. We excluded the slowest 2% for similar reasons, based on comparisons between the correlation patterns of the majority group and the slowest group. After the exclusion process, we analyzed 1685 cases, that had an average survey completion time of 11.6 minutes (see Table 1 for the demographics of the participants).

The 1685 participants were comprised of 676 students attending Canadian institutions and 1009 students attending U.S. institutions. Female participants made up 64.9% of the sample, while males comprised 35.1% of the sample. The mean age of the participants was 21.55 years (SD = 5.88). The sample consisted of 68.8% first and second year students, while third year and higher students represented 31.2%. Interestingly, the demographic profiles of the institutions varied; for example, visible minority students accounted for 65.1% of the UBC responses, whereas Caucasians accounted for 94.3% of the PCT responses. Furthermore, 94.6% of the PSU responses came from first and second year students, while the UBC and PCT dataset did not show the skewness in the academic standing.

Measures

The Hope-Centred Career Inventory (HCCI). Niles, Yoon, and Amundson (2010) developed the HCCI with 28 items with an aim to measure individuals' levels of hope-centred career competencies. A 4-point Likert scale (4 = *definitely true*; 3 = *somewhat true*; 2 = *somewhat false*; 1 = *definitely false*) was used for the HCCI response options. A subscale with a high score indicates that the individual has a significant level of its respective hope-centred career competency. The following items are a sample of the seven HCCI subscales:

- Hope: I try to stay hopeful even when I face difficulties in my life.
- Self-reflection: I take time to think about my thoughts and feelings.
- Self-clarity: I can clearly describe my strengths.
- Visioning: I spend time thinking about what will happen in my future.
- Goal setting and planning: I make a list of things that I want to complete.
- Implementing: I take the next steps to meet my goals.
- Adapting: I am open to change that might improve my chance to reach my goals.

Niles et al. (2010) reported that the HCCI's overall scale had a coefficient alpha of .92, indicating strong internal consistency reliability. The coefficient alphas for the subscales ranged between .74 and .86. For the current study, the coefficient alpha of the overall HCCI was .91, and the coefficient alphas of the subscales were .81 (hope), .61(self-reflection), .73(self-clarity), .77(visioning), .74 (goal setting and planning), .77 (implementing), and .74 (adapting).

The HCCI has sound internal validity with seven distinct factors tested by confirmatory factor analysis for the factor structure (Niles et al., 2010). The HCCI's convergent validity was tested by examining the correlations between relevant constructs. According to Niles et al. (2010), the total scores of the HCCI and the Assessment of Human Agency (Yoon, 2011) correlated highly at .82, because both measures used human agency as one of core theoretical backgrounds. Similarly, the total scores of HCCI and the Adult Hope Scale (Snyder, Harris, et al., 1991) correlated highly at .74, perhaps due to the fact that the the central concept of both scales is hope. These results confirm that the HCCI has strong convergent validity.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

School	Total (n)	Gender (%)		Race (%)		Year in School (%)	
		Female	Male	Caucasian	Visible Minorities	1st, 2nd year	Above 2nd year
UBC(CA)	447	74.3	25.7	34.9	65.1	41.2	58.8
TRU(CA)	229	71.2	28.8	84.7	15.3	70.3	29.7
PSU(US)	643	64.1	35.9	79.8	20.2	94.6	5.4
PCT(US)	366	50.8	49.2	94.3	5.7	56.6	43.4
Total	1685	64.9	35.1	71.7s	28.3	68.8	31.2

In this study, Research Question 1 examined the scores of all seven HCCI subscales of among college/university students in Canada and the United States. For Research Question 2, the 4-item hope subscale was used to measure respondents' degree of general hope.

Student engagement. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE; Kuh, 2003) is the most widely used measure among post-secondary institutions in the United States. The NSSE is designed to be used at four-year institutions, while its companion version, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE; Angell, 2009) is designed for use at two-year institutions. We identified 14 items with behavioural indicators that are commonly used between NSSE and CCSSE, because one of the institutions (PCT) participated in this research offers two-year programs. The items represent three domains: student-faculty interaction (SFI; 5 items), level of academic challenge (LAC; 3 items), and active and collaborative learning (ACL; 6 items). We excluded two domains, enriching educational experiences (EEE) and supportive campus environment (SCE), because they do not directly measure students' engagement in academic activities. Out of the 16 items, we deleted two items that exhibited low factor loadings for intended factors. Sample items include "Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions" (ACL), "Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations" (LAC), and "Ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class" (SFI).

After that, we parceled the remaining 14 items using the domain-representative parceling technique (Kishton & Widaman, 1994), and it resulted in three parceled items for the student engagement construct. We used parceling because our primary interest was to use the overall construct of student engagement without further exploring its sub-constructs (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). For the current study, the student engagement scale with three parceled items was .85. Although the reliability and validity of the NSSE has been challenged due to its low internal consistency for individual subscales and lack of theoretical background for the formation of them (see Porter, 2011), this reliability result with one latent variable avoids the concern.

Vocational Identity Scale (VIS). The Vocational Identity Scale (VIS) of the My Vocational Situation (MVS; Holland et al., 1980) was utilized to measure participants' vocational identity. VIS consists of 18 items measuring respondents' sense of clarity as to their career interests, talents, and goals (0= *true*; 1

= *false*). Sample items include "I need reassurance that I have made the right choice of occupation," and "I am confused about the whole problem of deciding on a career." Higher scores of VIS reflect higher vocational identity.

According to Holland et al. (1980), VIS's coefficient alphas ranged from .86 to .89. Scott and Ciani (2008) also observed the coefficient alphas in the similar range, between .84 and .86 with U.S. undergraduate students in the Midwest region. In terms of test-retest reliability, Holland, Johnston, and Asama (1993) reported an average correlation coefficient of approximately .75 with 1- to 3- month intervals. Holland et al. (1993) found significant correlations between the VIS and various career outcomes. On the Career Indecision Scale (Osipow, Carney, & Barak, 1976), for example, the *certainty* subscale positively correlated with VIS (r = .60), while the *indecision* subscale negatively correlated with VIS (r = -.78) in a study with college students (Wanberg & Muchinsky, 1992). The internal consistency for the VIS in the current study was .89 using the Kuder-Richardson formula 20 (KR-20).

In this study, in order to analyze structural equation models, the original 18 items were parcelled to three 6-item parcels based on the single factor method. That is, after items were forced into the one-factor solution using exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the highest and lowest loading items were grouped in the first parcel, the second highest and second lowest loading items were grouped in the second parcel, and this continued until the ninth highest and ninth lowest loading items were grouped in the ninth parcel (Landis, Beal, & Tesluk, 2000). The nine parcels were forced into the one-factor solution again and grouped into five parcels, and finally these five parcels were grouped into the final three parcels using the single factor method.

Students' self-reported GPA. We used the participants' cumulative GPA to measure their academic performance. Participants were requested to report their cumulative GPAs using a 4-point scale (1 = *mostly Ds or lower*; 2 = *mostly Cs*; 3 = *mostly Bs*; 4 = *mostly As*).

Data Analysis

SPSS 19.0 was used to analyze the data relating to RQ1 and generate descriptive statistics for each HCCI subscale and the total scale. In addition, we calculated t-test results for the differences in HCCI scores between the data from Canada and the United States. We used Lisrel 8.80 to answer RQ2 and tested a structural equation model with the variables of hope, student engagement, and vocational identity, academic performance, and vocational identity.

Results

RQ 1. Baseline Measure of the HCCI

First, we produced percentile scores for hope-centred career competencies of samples in Canada and the United States (see Table 2 & 3). These tables can be used when counsellors interpret students' HCCI results. Second, we checked whether significant differences exist in the mean scores of the samples from Canada and the United States using a t-test (see Table 4). Interestingly, the U.S. data exhibited higher scores on all hope-centred career competencies at a statistically significant level. However, cautions need to be given when interpreting these significant differences between the two samples, because the samples represent only two institutions in each country and their demographic compositions, particularly around culture, are different. Further investigation is necessary to interpret this finding. In both countries, the HCCI subscale with the lowest mean score was *goal-setting and planning* (M = 3.08, SD = .59 in Canada and M = 3.19, SD = .59 in the Unites States). In terms of highest mean scores, *adapting* was highest in the Canadian sample (M = 3.39, SD = .45), whereas *visioning* was highest in the U.S sample (M = 3.52, SD = .50).

RQ 2. Role of Hope in Student Engagement, Vocational Identity, and Academic Performance

Figure 1 depicts a hypothesized model to answer RQ2. We hypothesized that a higher sense of hopefulness contributes to higher academic performance (GPA) and clearer vocational identity via enhanced student engagement. We used student engagement as a mediator between hope and two outcome variables. In other words, we hypothesized that hope predicts academic performance and vocational identity through student engagement in a postsecondary education setting.

Table 5 exhibits the means and standard deviations of hope, student engagement, GPA, and vocational identity and the correlations between the variables. All of them were significantly correlated with each other at the .01 levels.

We tested the hypothesized mediation model using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) after controlling for country, race, parental educational level, and age with the maximum likelihood method of parameter estimation. We excluded the effects of these demographic variables in order to test pure relationships among hope, student engagement, academic performance (GPA), and vocational

identity. The test results of the model fit revealed that the chi-square test was significant, χ2 (df = 67) = 241.252, which indicates the lack of model fit. The chi-square, however, is very sensitive to sample size and almost always rejects the model with large samples (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The sample size in this study (N = 1685) is considered as very large; therefore, three practical fit indices were used to determine the degree of model fit: CFI (Bentler, 1990), NNFI (Tucker & Lewis, 1973), and RMSEA (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). The fit indices of the hypothesized model include CFI = .974, NNFI = .960, and RMSEA = .056. This model was found to be good based on the overall pattern of fit indices (Hu & Bentler, 1999), demonstrating that the hypothesized mediation model is well supported by the sample of this study. This led us to further examine regression coefficients within the model. Figure 2 exhibits the standardized regression weights of our hypothesized mediation model.

Hope predicts both GPA and vocational identity among college/university students. Hope had total effects on both GPA (β = .078, p < .05) and vocational Identity (β = .407, p < .001) at statistically significant levels. This denotes that hope had significant effects on GPA and vocational identity when the mediator, student engagement, was not considered in the model.

Hope predicts student engagement. When controlling for GPA and vocational identity, hope had a significant effect on student engagement (β = .377, p < .001). This indicates that one standard deviation of hope increase results in the increase of .377 standard deviation of student engagement.

School engagement fully mediates the effect of hope on GPA. When controlling for hope, the effect of school engagement on GPA was statistically significant (β = .127, p < .01). However, the residual direct effect of hope on GPA was not statistically significant when student engagement was considered (β =.031, p > .05). These results in addition to the significant effect of hope on student engagement indicate the effect of hope on GPA was totally mediated by student engagement, based on the joint significance rules for mediation (MacKinnon et al., 2002).

School engagement partially mediates the effect of hope on vocational identity. When controlling for hope, the effect of school engagement on vocational identity was also statistically significant (β = .100, p < .05). This result in conjunction with the significant effect of hope on student engagement indicates that school engagement mediated the effect of hope on vocational identity. However, the residual direct effect of hope on vocational identity (β = .370, p < .001) was significant, indicating that school engagement was a partial mediator between hope and vocational identity.

Table 2

Percentile scores of HCCI in Canadian Institutions

	Hope	Self-reflection	Self-clarity	Visioning	Goal setting/ planning	Implementing	Adapting	Overall
Percentiles								
10	2.50	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.25	2.43	2.75	2.75
25	3.00	3.00	2.75	3.00	2.75	2.75	3.00	2.96
50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.25
75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.50
90	4.00	3.75	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.75	4.00	3.75

Table 3

Percentile scores of HCCI in United States Institutions

	Hope	Self-reflection	Self-clarity	Visioning	Goal setting/ planning	Implementing	Adapting	Overall
Percentiles								
10	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.25	2.50	3.00	2.89
25	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.25	2.75	3.00	3.25	3.18
50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.43
75	4.00	3.75	3.75	4.00	3.75	3.75	4.00	3.68
90	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.86

Discussion

With regard to RQ1, the norm scores in each country could be used as a useful reference when interpreting HCCI results, because the tables allow career practitioners to locate percentile scores of individuals. However, career practitioners needs to be cautions when using the norm scores due to its limited geographical representation in each country. Furthermore, the mean scores of HCCI results of students in Canada and the United States significantly differed from each other, but we are unsure about what accounts for the differences. Therefore, we need to gather more data from across both countries with more geographic representations in order to draw any meaningful conclusions. Despite of the varying results between the two countries, the mean

Table 4

Comparison between Canadian Sample and the United States Sample

	Canada (n = 676)		US (n = 1009)		T
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
HCCI (Overall)	3.23	.38	3.40	.36	-9.12
Hope	3.25	.59	3.50	.49	-8.95
Self-reflection	3.27	.46	3.35	.44	-3.39
Self-clarity	3.19	.55	3.43	.48	-9.18
Visioning	3.34	.55	3.52	.50	-6.66
Goal setting and planning	3.08	.59	3.19	.59	-3.76
Implementing	3.10	.53	3.32	.51	-8.58
Adapting	3.39	.45	3.50	.44	-4.78

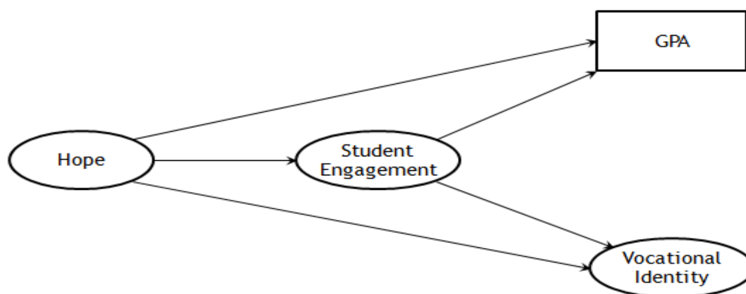

Figure 1. Hypothesized mediation model

scores of the all subscales of the HCCI were above 3.0 in both Canadian and U.S. samples. Considering the response options of the HCCI (4 = *definitely true*; 3 = *somewhat true*; 2 = *somewhat false*; 1 = *definitely false*), it appears that the participants in both countries reported positive views on their levels of hope-centred career competencies on average. In addition, it appears that students in both countries scored lowest on goal setting and planning. This might indicate the need for curriculum around *goal setting and planning* to provide students with additional opportunities to develop these skills.

The findings from RQ2 expand the hope-related research in the context of career development by exploring a mechanism (i.e., student engagement) through which hope predicts GPA and vocational identity among post-secondary students. The results of structural equation modeling confirmed the hypothesis that hope predicts academic performance and vocational identity via student engagement. First of all, the significant total effects of hope on both GPA and vocational identity indicate that high levels of hope are linked to high GPA and clear vocational identity. Specifically, each standard deviation increase in hope produced a 0.078 standard deviation increase in GPA, indicating a weak but still significant relationship between hope and GPA. These results are consistent with previous findings of the significant associations between hope and academic achievement (Curry et al., 1997; Rand, 2009; Seirup & Rose, 2011) and hope and vocational identity (Jackson & Neville, 1998; Juntunen & Wettersten, 2006; Niles et al., 2010).

Second, the results suggest that student engagement fully mediated the effect of hope on GPA, given 1) the significant effect of hope on student engagement, 2) the significant effect of student engagement on GPA, and 3) non-significant effect of hope on GPA in the hypothesized mediation model. This finding suggests that hope indirectly affects students' GPA through enhancing students' school engagement activities. In other words, it appears that positive expectations about students' futures should accompany with students' engagement in their academic work in order to achieve higher GPAs. Specifically, student engagement mediated 61.4% of the total effect of hope on GPA. Appleton et al. (2008) and Perry, Liu, and Pabian (2009) addressed the need for employing school engagement as a mediator, and this finding confirmed that school engagement can be used as a mediator in the particular relationship between hope and GPA.

Third, the results indicated that school engagement partially mediates the effect of hope on vocational identity. This assumes three significant path relationships: 1) effect of hope on school engagement, 2) effect of school engagement on vocational identity, and 3) effect of hope of vocational identity. The findings suggest that post-secondary students with higher hope are more likely to engage in meaningful school activities; those students, in turn, are more likely to develop a

Table 5

Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

	Hope	Student Engagement	Vocational Identity	GPA	*M*	*SD*
Hope	-				3.40	.54
Student Engagement	.336	-			2.39	.51
Vocational Identity	.417	.271	-		.59	.29
GPA	.123	.148	.143	-	3.36	.67

Note. All correlations significant at $p < .01$.

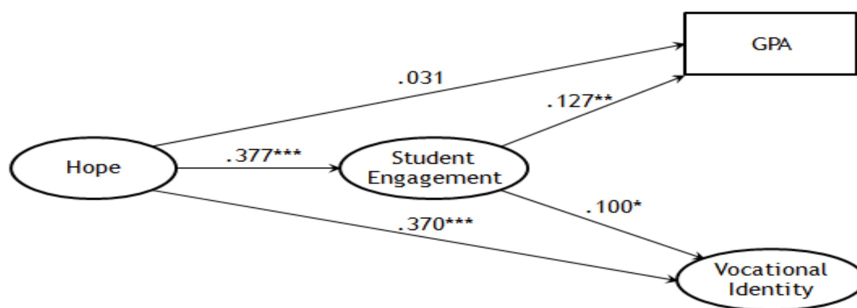

Figure 2. Standardized Parameter Estimates for Mediation Model
Note. $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

better understanding of their vocational interests, strengths, or goals. More specifically, it appears that having hope about one's future motivates post-secondary students to actively interact with faculty, work collaboratively with peers on academic work, and invest more time on class preparation and assignments. As students engage in these academic activities, they will likely learn more about their talents, interests, and/or values, as well as some career possibilities, which may eventually contribute their vocational identity development.

Interestingly, when the mediator, student engagement, was considered, the direct effect of hope on vocational identity remained substantial and statistically significant ($\beta = .370$). Student engagement mediated only 9.3% of the total effect of hope on vocational identity. This finding implies that there may be another process by which hope influence vocational identity. Thus, further research is needed to examine other potential mediating variables. Another possible mediating variable is career exploration activities such as job shadowing, participating in experiential learning opportunities, or attending job fairs. Studies have supported that career exploration activities allow students to refine and solidify their vocational identity (Gushue, Scanlan, Pantzer, & Clarke, 2006; Robitschek & Cook, 1999). In demonstrating that more hopeful students are likely to engage in meaningful school activities, it is possible that being hopeful prompts students to participate in career exploration activities such as attending career fairs, participating in co-operative education or internship programs, and taking vocational inventories. These activities, in turn, may facilitate students' vocational identity development.

In summary, results of the present study suggest that hope plays an important role in the development of vocational identity and, to a lesser degree, academic performance among college and university students in Canada and the United States. In addition, the analyses suggest that the mediating role of student engagement was confirmed in the relationships between hope and two outcome variables—academic performance and vocational identity.

The findings from this study have important implications for career counsellors and educators who work with students. When hope is lacking, students may not actively engage in academic activities such as completing homework, communicating with faculty, and engaging in discussions relevant to course topics. Furthermore, students who lack hope may be less likely to achieve high GPAs and to have solid vocational identities. Thus, it is critical for career counsellors and educators to promote hope in their students. Career and school counsellors are encouraged to assess and address students' hope as an integral part of the career counselling and education process. In order to effectively foster hope in students, it is necessary to identify strategies and resources that can enhance hope. By doing so, counsellors can assist students to actively engage in academic activities, which in turn, aid students in improving academic performance and developing a strong sense of vocational identity.

Limitations and Recommendations

This study holds several limitations. We acknowledge that cross-sectional data was used in this study, so it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding causal relationships. Future research needs to adopt causal research designs (e.g., experimental research, longitudinal research) to rule out confounding factors and draw causal conclusions. Some studies have shown the reciprocal relationships between hope and student engagement (Van Ryzin, 2011) as well as hope and vocational competency (Wandeler & Bundick, 2011). Future researchers may want to examine the possible reciprocal relationships among hope, student engagement, and career/academic variables using longitudinal data. Additionally, this study used self-report measures to assess each variable, which may introduce potential limitations of social desirability and common method bias. Future researchers could use methods of measurement other than self-report, such as actual GPA data, attrition rates, or observations in order to examine various academic and career-related variables in relation to hope.

Furthermore, the participants were limited to the four institutions in Canada and the United States. For the Canadian portion of the samples, participants were recruited using a list of students who had previously accessed career services at their respective universities. The majority of participants were

Caucasian, female, and first- and second- year students. As a result, the generalizability of the findings to other populations and institutions is limited. Replicating this study with diverse populations is necessary, such as undergraduate students with high barriers and low hope, older workers, graduate students, and people who are unemployed. Thus, using more sites for data collection is recommended.

Conclusions

This study provides empirical evidence that hope significantly predicts academic performance and vocational identity using student engagement as a mediator. Student engagement served as a full mediator between hope and GPA and as a partial mediator between hope and vocational identity. The significant total effects of hope on both GPA and vocational identity suggest that high levels of hope are linked to high GPA and clear vocational identity. Taken together, career practitioners and educators are encouraged to provide necessary interventions based on assessment considering the roles of hope and student engagement in students' vocational identity development and academic performance.

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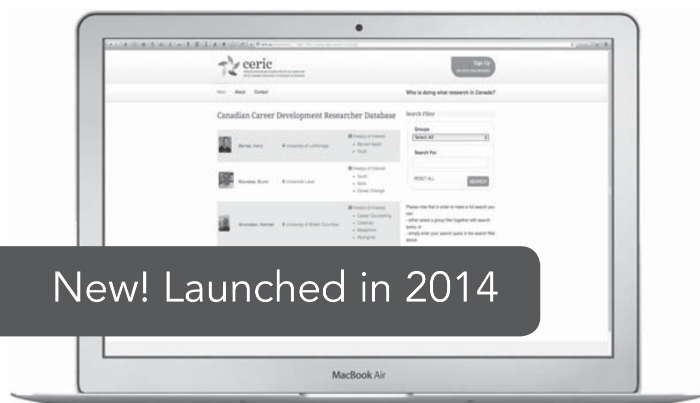

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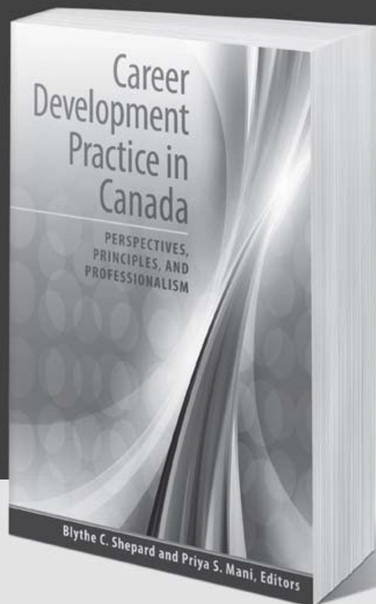

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From Hero to Zero

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Abstract

This article discusses the identity processes involved in the transition to retirement for emergency service workers, which includes police officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical personnel. The author conducted a study using the Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) to determine what helped, hindered and might have helped emergency service workers in making decisions regarding retirement. One of the factors participants identified as hindering their ability to retire was the loss of their professional identity. This loss was discussed and compared to theories that explain the processes of identity role assimilation and identity role salience. Theory and research regarding the accumulation, maintenance and narrowing of the number of identity roles is discussed. The tendency of emergency service workers to narrow their identity role to the singular professional role is examined for its impact on coping and for its subsequent impact on retirement. Future directions in research and practice are suggested. There's some that have offed themselves.

> There's some that just wither and die. I'm at a very high level of influence and all of a sudden you go from a hero to a zero. So you think about those things too. You should. (57-year old firefighter)

The preceding quote captures the sentiment of a firefighter discussing his reasons for not retiring from emergency services. His concerns were echoed by police and emergency medical personnel in a Enhanced Critical Incident Technique (ECIT) (Butterfield, Borgen, Maglio, & Amundson, 2009; Flanagan, 1954) study conducted by the author examining the factors older emergency service personnel consider in making decisions regarding retirement. The author conducted a semi-structured interview with police, fire, and emergency medical personnel in the Vancouver Lower Mainland area of British Columbia regarding their decision to continue working despite having reached eligibility status for retirement. The study participants included seven police officers, three firefighters, and three emergency medical personnel and consisted of 11 males and 2 females. The average age of the participants was 57 and the average number of years of experience was 27. The excerpts included in this article represent a portion of the data from this study. They are included here to illustrate a salient aspect that emerged from the data. A full report of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council funded study (Grant #410-2009-0952) being conducted by Dr. William Borgen, Dr. Norm Amundson and Dr. Lee Butterfield study will be provided in a publication that is under development.* (*Contact the first author for questions regarding this study.)

The concept of assimilating the police, fire, or emergency medical role has been well-documented in emergency services (Gilmartin, 2002; Kirschman, 1983, 1997, 2004; Paton, Violanti, Burke & Gehrke, 2009) and in work roles in general (Bandura, 1977; Becker & Carper, 1956; Hall, 1976; Schein, 1978; Hill 1992). Yet very little research has been directed at how the process of separating from emergency service work impacts the identity of the worker. To go from *hero to zero* by retiring from the profession appears to require the assimilation of the retiree role, which seems to have a strong negative connotation in the profession. The retiree role appears to have been equated with the absence of meaning due to a lack of other identity roles that give the worker a sense of meaning. An emerging body of research demonstrates that there is a tendency over time for emergency service workers to narrow their identities to the singular role of police officer, firefighter, or paramedic (Gilmartin, 2002). Other roles that would ordinarily comprise the worker's identity and, consequently, add to the worker's sense of meaning are diminished by the functional role of the profession. One (identity role) minus one (identity role) equals zero. As evidenced by the opening quote, this can be a very problematic occurrence. Violanti (1995; 1997) has found that suicide risk is ele-

vated for those who separate from emergency service work. Therefore, based on the reasons outlined above (the assimilation of the role, the lack of other roles, the unique nature of emergency work, and the life-threatening quality of this transition for some), the process of transitioning from the emergency service worker identity role to the retiree role merits examination.

This purpose of this article is to discuss foundational literature pertaining to professional identity, apply this knowledge to the emergency service profession, and discuss potential implications from this application. This article will begin by familiarizing readers with commonly-used terms such as identity, role and professional identity followed by a discussion of theories relating to the salience of identity roles and the social processes of role assimilation. Thoits' (1983) *identity accumulation hypothesis* is discussed next as a resilience factor in a section regarding the tendency for emergency service workers to constrict their role identities. The next section concerns the difficulties emergency service workers experience in the transition from work to retirement. The article concludes with practical implications and suggestions for possible future research to further explore emergency service workers' retirement concerns.

Role and Identity

It is important to delineate between role and identity and to discuss the relationship between the two. Burke and Tully (1977) refer to role as the interactional setting where the identity is enacted. They refer to role and identity as role/identity because they propose the relationship between the two concepts renders them inseparable, stating "We may think of role/identities as the meanings a person attributes to the self as an object in a social situation or social role" (Burke & Tully, 1977, p. 883). Thoits (1995) proposes a definition for identity that echoes the social aspect proposed by Burke and Tully, stating that identities are "positions occupied in the social structure, which are enacted in role relationships with others *and* viewed as descriptive of oneself " (p. 72). Role-identity is part of the self-concept because it is self-descriptive and internalized by individuals, informing how they operate in their everyday lives, especially in their social lives (Owens, Robinson, & Smith-Lovin, 2010). Identity also includes personal characteristics that the individual displays, such as race, gender, and age (Gecas, 1982).

Professional Identity

Another concept that requires elaboration is *professional identity*. "Professional identity refers to one's sense of his or her professional role, and the message he or she conveys about herself to others" (Khapova, Arthur, Wilderom & Svensson, 2006, p. 585). Professional identity may be differentiated from the emergency service worker's workplace identity where they identify more with being a police officer, firefighter, emergency medical technician or paramedic instead of assuming their identity from the agency they work for. This differentiation has been noted in other careers (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996; Weick, 1996). The differentiation between professional identity and work place identity may make it even more difficult for the emergency service worker to retire because they may leave the agency through retirement but maintain their professional identity as a police officer, firefighter, or emergency medical technician or paramedic.

Khapova and colleagues proposed a relationship between professional identity and Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior. The theory of planned behavior states that human behavior is guided by considerations of 1) beliefs about the likely consequences of a behavior, 2) beliefs about the expectations of other people, and 3) beliefs about the presence of factors that may further or hinder performance of the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Professional identity was predicted to moderate the strength of the relationship between the three factors of Ajzen' theory and the worker's intent toward career change (Khapova, et al., 2006). Khapova and colleagues found that professional identity and career self-efficacy were significantly related to career change intention. They conducted additional analyses, using professional identity as a predictor instead of as a moderator, and found it to be the only significant predictor of intention to change careers. They pointed to research that proposed self-efficacy as a component of identity (Svejenova, 2005) or suggested that identity and self-efficacy were interdependent concepts (Sargent, Allen, & Bradley, 2005). These findings might explain the study participants' responses regarding their thoughts about retiring. Participants spoke of their loss of identity and also reported varying degrees of career self-efficacy. The mandatory retirement age in emergency service professions has been contested with varying degrees of success. One participant stated he did not want to retire at 60 years of age but would be required to due to mandatory retirement at his agency. Some indicated that they felt they had developed a skill set that allowed them to continue to contribute at work, while others lamented that they did not feel that they were able to do the same tasks they could when joining the profession. Still

others felt their skill set restricted their options to their current employment. One officer talked about feeling she did not have other career options, stating

> I don't think that I'm that marketable. It just looks crazy to apply for jobs now, the kind of information that you need and what's expected and the courses and the competition and the interviewing. I think I'm a bit scared to go out into the job market and feel like I'm very ill prepared.

Identity Salience

Identity theories also seek to explain how and when various identities are activated. According to Stryker's Identity Theory, individuals organize their identities into a salience structure. Identity salience is based on two elements: interactional commitment and affective commitment (1968, 1980). Interactional commitment involves the extent of interactions individuals have with their social network in the particular identity category. Emergency service workers have constant interaction with members of their crew/squad/shift, elevating the interactional commitment to this identity. The second element, affective commitment, refers to individuals' emotional investments in relationships in this identity. The connectivity of relationships in emergency services can be quite intense due to the nature of the work, oftentimes referred to as the "trauma membrane" (Lindy, Grace & Green, 1981). Relationships with others in this profession are built upon trust because oftentimes their lives are literally in the hands of those with whom they work.

Similar to Stryker's theory, McCall and Simmons' Role-Identity Theory proposes a hierarchy of roles within individuals' identities (1978). Roles that are considered more valuable to individuals' self-concepts, that promote their self-esteem, are more prominent in defining individuals' identities. In addition to the individuals' valuation of their roles, the valuation of others also contributes to role-identity prominence. Lastly, the rewards that accompany a given role also promote its salience. The firefighter referred to his professional identity as a "hero" in the opening quote. One paramedic who participated in the study relayed

> I often say to my fiancé, even if we won \$30 million dollars, I'd still want to be something. I wouldn't want to be that guy that won the lottery or that retired guy. I'd still want to be a paramedic.

Emergency service work is typically also publicly regarded as an honorable profession. The high regard for these professions can be deduced from the prevalence of toys such as fire trucks, ambulances, and police cars for children who dream of being a hero when they grow up. These professions also come with a high degree of authority. Few professions grant people the right to drive at high speed, run red lights, carry a weapon, take away people's freedom, and make emergency decisions about people's medical care without their consent. The same paramedic relayed his feelings about his professional identity:

> It's quite gratifying. I don't have to do anything and I'd stand out. I wear my uniform or I drive in my ambulance and I stand out, so it's a rather shallow ego thing where itfeels good to be you.

As evidenced from these quotes, and the literature demonstrating the internal and external valuation of and authority that comes with these professions, the emergency service worker identity may appreciate a high degree of salience.

Assimilation of the Emergency Service Role-Identity

Entrance to the policing profession has been referred to as a "process of abrupt resocialization" (Paton, Violanti, Burke & Gehrke, 2009). A similar process occurs with firefighters and emergency medical workers (Kirschman, 2004. Gilmartin (2002) suggests a physiological and social dependency on the police role, called the "*brotherhood of biochemistry*." Van der Kolk (1987) also suggested a physiological dependence on the police role due to the physiological "high" that tends to accompany their exposure to traumatic events. Adherence to the emergency services role is encouraged by emergency service agencies to promote conformity in the paramilitary structure (Paton, et al., 2009). Harris (1973) contended that police officers' identities are constricted because they are forced to behave in ways that may be contrary to their true feelings and identities, a concept referred to as *false personalization*. The organizational culture is transmitted to the emergency service worker throughout the hiring, training, and daily work processes and affects the worker's beliefs and behaviours, which are key aspects of the worker's identity (Paton, et al., 2009).

Fine (1996) noted a variation in how people construct a sense of self in a role, referring to it as *situated differentiation*. Variations in role acquisition are due to historical, organizational, and personal factors. In emergency service work, *situated differentiation* could be understood as the varying influence on role acquisition that would occur due to

being assigned to various ranks and/or assignments, department size, and the impact of historical events. For instance, newly-hired emergency service workers in New York City around the time of the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 would likely have a different experience of assimilating into their emergency services worker roles than those who started working ten years earlier. This differentiation concept may explain the difference noted by some of the participants who related that younger workers' attitudes regarding their obligations to work are different. In regards to these differences in younger officers, one police officer participant relayed that

> . . .the expectations and the sense of entitlement in some of the younger people. (They) are going "Well, I've worked a year and a half on shift work. I need a day shift job now" and I'm going "You've got to be kidding me!"

Ibarra (1999) suggested that the process of role assimilation is experimenting with *provisional selves*. Provisional selves evolve into a professional identity, which she contends are more mutable early in one's career. Ibarra states "These 'provisional selves' are temporary solutions people use to bridge the gap between their current capacities and self-conceptions and the representations they hold about what attitudes and behaviors are expected in the new role" (1999, p. 765). The evolution into the new role is not fully understood but involves negotiated adaptations of their existing identity to accommodate the new role demands and expectations.

Constriction of Role-Identities

Gilmartin (2002) proposes that, over time, police officers fall prey to what he refers to as the "*I Usta" Syndrome*", where they notice that they *used* to participate in more activities than they do now. Gilmartin suggests

> The nonpolice dimensions of officer's lives, such as spirituality, cultural and ethnic identification, core values, family, friends, hobbies, and other perceptual sets or ways of viewing the world, reduce if not disappear. . . Because of the "I usta" syndrome, officers can begin distancing themselves from core aspects of their sense of self. The officer's identity becomes tied only to the police role (p. 73).

This tendency to narrow one's identity and reduce interaction with others is problematic for emergency service workers for two primary reasons: 1) it narrows their social support network and 2) they do not have autonomous control over their work identity. They may be forced out of this role, and consequently the source of their identity, through injury or voluntary or involuntary resignation. Gilmartin (2002) warns "As some force outside of their control affects the cop role, officers who overidentify with the police role find the impact on their personal lives not far behind. The sense of self also takes a hit" (p. 83). Gilmartin (2002) suggests that the once-powerful officer becomes more of a victim due to the loss of control. One police officer spoke about how his social circle had narrowed, stating

> Well, a huge portion of my life revolves around policing and my associates and my friends and everything else revolve around policing. A lot of people probably, once the door hits my ass, won't remember who I was. The contact sometimes after you leave a job or not even a long-term job, any job, the friendships and things you've developed along… are not always gonna' stay intact once you leave the job or retire. Other people that I've worked with have retired and our contact is not as good as it could be.

The accumulation of multiple identities is suggested to promote individual well-being (Gilmartin, 2002; Thoits, 1983, 1986; Paton et al., 2009). Thoits' (1983, 1986) *identity accumulation hypothesis*, a reformulation of Faris'(1934) *social isolation hypothesis*, proposes that psychological well-being is related to multiple identities through identity enactment. Identity enactment takes place through the interplay of role relationships. According to Thoits (1983),

> Role relationships are governed by behavioural expectations; the rights and duties of each interactant are normatively prescribed. Thus, if one knows who one is (in a social sense), then one knows how to behave. Role requirements give purpose, meaning, direction and guidance to one's life. The greater the number of identities held, the stronger one's sense of meaningful, guided existence. The more identities, the more "existential security", so to speak (p. 175).

Accordingly, if one lacks an identity or loses his or her identity, the prescribed behaviours are also lost. The process has been likened to Durkheim's views on egoistic and anomic suicide (Thoits, 1983). Durkheim (1951) proposed that members embedded in groups are given a sense of purpose, norms, and stability. Therefore, members who are accepted and enacting in their roles are psychologically protected.

Paton et al (2009) suggest that when officers retire, the structure of work is lost which may lead to more difficulties. Furthermore, they contend that police officers who retire and withdraw their emotional investment in their work but do not reinvest it in their retired lives may soon experience depression. This is troubling as Violanti et al (2008) found depression and suicidal ideation to be correlated in police officers. For each standard deviation increase in depressive symptoms reported the prevalence ratio of suicidal ideation was increased 73% for female officers and 67% for male officers.

Thoits (1983) contends that the relationship between the accumulation of identities and well-being is not additive but may be curvilinear. Having too many identities may result in role conflict or role strain while having too few will not promote well-being through having an integrated identity. In addition to the number of identities, several other factors must be considered when weighing the interplay between identities and well-being. Identity salience is one factor that must be considered. Thoits (1983) contended that roles are differentially valued and those that are valued more will have more impact if they are lost or gained. Thoits also theorized that the more identities one has the commitment levels to any one identity will decrease. Conversely, the fewer identities one has the commitment levels to the remaining few identities will increase. Thoits (1983) suggested the terms "isolated" and "integrated" refer to those with few identities and those with many identities, respectively. An isolated individual who loses an identity is believed to suffer more, as he or she has likely been very invested in the lost role and does not have another identity to turn to. An isolated person who acquires an identity should also have a stronger gain than an integrated person, since the isolated person will perceive a new sense of purpose. To apply the concepts of isolated and integrated roles to emergency service workers would be to say that an integrated hero would still have value in retirement because the individual would turn to other roles. On the other hand, an isolated hero, upon retirement, would lack value because there were no or few other roles to turn to, essentially becoming a "zero."

Another argument for multiple identity roles can be made in the research regarding career transitions and *possible selves* (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Yost, Strube, & Bailey, 1992). Ibarra (1999) found in a study of work role socialization that the availability of diverse models for observation resulted in workers generating a broader set of possible selves and an increased chance of gaining self and role knowledge. These gains, in turn, resulted in broader repertories and, consequently, more opportunities for innovations. These findings seem quite consistent with Thoit's contention that maintaining a broad identity allows for more resources for coping with trauma.

Sieber (1974) and Marks (1977) also proposed that multiple roles conferred more energy and resources to individuals Marks'(1977) energy-expansion theory suggests that time and energy are resources that can be shared, integrated, and expanded using creative strategies employed across multiple roles. Sieber (1974) contended that having multiple identity roles offered four benefits: 1) role privileges, 2) overall status security, 3) resources for status enhancement, and 4) enrichment of the personality and ego gratification. These benefits, Sieber suggested, might outweigh the stress of managing multiple roles.

Separating from Emergency Services (From Hero to Zero)

Ibarra (1999) contends that career transitions provide opportunities for renegotiating one's identity. As individuals face a career transition, such as retirement, there is a consideration of what one might become, would like to become, or would fear becoming. This process has been referred to as considering *possible selves* (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Yost, Strube, & Bailey, 1992). In approaching retirement emergency service workers, like all workers, consider who they will be following separation from their work. It is clear from the study conducted by the author that many of the participants feared a possible self without meaning. Another participant, a police officer, relayed concern regarding identity upon separating from police work

> You lose a little bit of your identity I suppose. You're just a regular person again, you're not a police officer, you're not carrying a badge. People aren't really interested in how many times you had to cut your lawn last month. Everybody likes to hear the stories of cops.

Assimilation into emergency services work roles is facilitated by an abundance of role models who provide opportunities for observational learning and external evaluation feedback. Retirement, on the other hand, typically does not offer role models to assist emergency service retirees in developing a guide for behaviours and making sense of their retirement status. They tend to be "out of the loop" if they are not working shift rotations with their colleagues and tend to lose regular contact. Fear of this loss was communicated by several study participants. Ordinarily, an individual

entering retirement could use age peers retiring from various professions as a reference for comparison. Comparison with others of non-emergency service professions would prove rather difficult for the emergency service worker based upon a pervasive culture of "us and them" that divides them from the general public. This dilemma is exacerbated by the documented tendency for emergency service workers to exclude non-emergency service workers from their social group during their career (Gilmartin, 2002; Kirschman, 1997, 2004; Paton, et al., 2009).

Retiring emergency service workers who have narrowed their identity and, consequently, their social group, will lose their sources of external evaluation, which is also their support network. Emergency service workers who have maintained a broad identity and diverse social group will be less likely to return to the workplace because they will be engaged in various activities related to their other roles. As such they will not be role models for what a positive retirement experience looks like. This would limit the variety of models that workers observe to those who are not doing well with retirement. One police officer participant relayed her sentiment regarding her exposure to a retiree who was not doing well

> There's one guy who worked in traffic and he found it very difficult, because he so identified with this job. He'd been a police officer since he was like 19 and when he went to retire, he was having a really hard time with it, because he said "I don't know how to do anything else and I don't want to do anything else" and I was like "That's kind of sad."

Ibarra (1999) found that individuals rely on external and internal evaluations to determine which possible selves to keep and which ones to discard. Internal evaluations are the individuals' determination of the match between their self-concept and beliefs and how they present themselves through their actions. Paton et al (2009) suggest that officers may have difficulty understanding their new role as a civilian. Rafaeli and Sutton (1989) suggested that emotive dissonance occurs when individuals experience discrepancies between what they feel and what they must display as an occupant of their role. The author noted emotive dissonance throughout her research interviews as participants expressed their discomfort with the idea of becoming a retiree. Many of the participants relayed that they did not feel like they were psychologically ready to accept the role of a retiree. One police officer in the study stated

> Retirement seems like an old person thing. I can't believe how time has flown and I'm at that point where I have to think about retiring. I guess I thought when you retired you would feel old and tired. I got to sip my cup of tea in a rocking chair and I certainly do not feel anything remotely like that. I still feel like I have a lot of energy and a lot to contribute.

Emotive dissonance is well-documented in the emergency services field (Gilmartin, 2002; Kirschman, 1997, 2004; Paton et al., 2009) and may explain why so many continue to work until they are forced out of the profession due to injury or mandatory retirement policies. Mandatory retirement policies are complex and relate to the concept of *bona fide occupational requirements* where the employer must demonstrate 1) a rational connection to the performance of the job, 2) an honest and good faith belief that the requirement or standard is necessary and 3) the reasonable necessity of the standard (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2003). Therefore, the option to remain working is not always available, depending on each agency's ability to demonstrate bona fide occupational requirements for the job.

External evaluation of the retiree role also influences individuals' negotiated possible selves. Ibarra (1999) suggests that one's identity is shaped in interaction with external evaluation sources in two primary ways: by validation (or failure to endorse) new behaviours and through feedback on how to improve. When individuals receive positive feedback regarding their new role behaviours they tend to repeat these behaviours. The impact of negative feedback is a more complicated process. Negative feedback involves more identification processes and depends on the affective bond between the person receiving the feedback and the person giving the feedback (Foote, 1951; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). For instance, if the person receiving feedback does not identify with or respect the person giving feedback, he or she will be less likely to accept the feedback and make changes based upon it.

Two additional concepts that may explain the difficulty of shedding the emergency service worker identity is the concept of *self-verification* (Burke & Stets, 1999) and *self-categorization* (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wethrell, 1987). Self-verification appears to promote self-esteem and self-efficacy (Burke & Stets, 1999) and may be motivated by the person's desire for self-consistency and self-regulation (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 1999; Stets, 1997). Transitioning to the

new role of retiree may disrupt the emergency service worker's sense of self-consistency, lowering his or her self-esteem and self-efficacy as a retiree. According to social identity theory, the process of seeing the self reflexively whereby one categorizes, classifies, and name itself is referred to as *self-categorization* (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). There is an awareness that one belongs to a social category or a group. An increase in self-worth from receiving the group's acceptance may be a motivating factor to maintain the group-based identity (Ellison, 1993). Transitioning from the group of "us" to the group of "them" may threaten the emergency service worker's desire for group acceptance.

Implications for Emergency Service Personnel

Several implications can be drawn from the application of our knowledge on professional identity to emergency service personnel. These implication can be divided into individual and organizational changes.

Individual changes. At the individual level, emergency service personnel could greatly benefit from having positive role models for their career life as well as their retirement life. Emergency service personnel might find it helpful to have a senior peer to observe as they are developing their professional identity through consideration of their *possible selves*. This might be accomplished by developing a mentor-mentee program where new employees can be paired with senior employees who have demonstrated successful work-life balance.

Just as emergency services workers need role models for assimilating their role, meaning making, and identifying appropriate behaviours, they also need role models that portray what successful retirement from emergency services looks like. One firefighter spoke of the cultural shift in transitioning to the retiree role, stating

> It's a cultural change. You're looked at differently and you can't come back. So, basically, are you ready for that change? There's not enough information, so you're just seeing what you see at a retirement dinner. The other retirees show up and you're thinking "Do I want to do that?"

One possible option for providing positive role models in retirement is a retiree peer support team. Typically, peer support teams members are active-duty police, fire, and emergency medical workers that offer support services to other active-duty emergency service workers. These services tend to end when the worker leaves the department. Some departments have added a peer support team specifically for retirees comprised of and for retired employees. For instance, the author participated in a peer support team for a police agency that had three separate teams: one for police officers, one for police retirees, and one for police family members. All three teams work in concert to support officers in their work and thereafter. This is a win-win situation because the retirees can serve as positive role models for other workers who are transitioning into retirement. The valuable career experience of retired peer support team members is not lost when they retire, but is able to be shared with those still working. A retiree peer support team also helps retired peer members and retiring workers to maintain their social network, and, if desired, ease the transition of retiring workers into full retirement.

Having a peer support team for family members also contributes to the employees' ability to maintain multiple identity roles as it can reduce friction between work and family roles by facilitating behaviours such as better communication and understanding of worker and non-worker roles. Creating a family peer support team can highlight the importance of a life outside of the job. A team sanctioned by the organization signifies the importance of employees' roles as family members, and contributes to their social resources.

Organizational changes. Promoting the maintenance of a multiple identity roles also calls for a widespread cultural change in the emergency service profession. Currently, emergency service organizations promote unwavering dedication to the job by rewarding promotions and desirable assignments to employees who do not use their annual vacation leave or sick time. Making matters worse, overtime is rarely restricted and is even regarded as evidence of employees' commitment to their work. If, instead, the organization made annual vacation leave compulsory, and limited the amount of overtime allowed per employee, hopefully this would contribute to their employees' abilities to build and enjoy their personal lives.

Shift work is an unavoidable part of the emergency service profession. However, there are ways shift work can be coordinated to be more accommodating to employees and their families. For instance, several agencies rotate shifts weekly. The constant rotation of shifts prevents employees from participating in sporting teams, volunteer opportunities, and other regularly-scheduled activities outside of work due to varying hours and days off. When employees can-

not participate in these activities outside of work, it serves to disconnect them from social networks outside of their profession.

Organizations can also offer education regarding the psychological aspects of the work and how maintaining multiple life roles can benefit employees in mitigating the negative psychological impact. Beginning in the academy, emergency service personnel could learn about the tendency to narrow their life roles by excluding friends, interests, and activities located outside of their profession. Employees could learn to monitor for the signs of identity constriction and take proactive measures to counter this tendency as it is occurring, instead of working to reverse this trend after it has already happened. During a mandatory annual health check-up employees could be challenged to perform an annual review of their lifestyle and health.

The study participants also indicated that they wished that early in their careers their agencies had provided them with information regarding the psychological aspect of retiring. They reported receiving information regarding the financial aspect of retirement in the beginning of their career and they neared their retirement date. They felt that it would have been helpful if they had been encouraged and supported in maintaining interests and hobbies outside of work. Participants stated that they felt this would have better prepared them for the difficulties they were facing as they prepared to leave their professions.

Future Directions

It is important to examine the circumstances that lead some emergency service workers to maintain multiple identities despite the documented tendency to narrow identities. Studying those who have maintained multiple identity roles may aid in generating strategies to promote identity maintenance in all emergency service workers. It might also reveal personality characteristics that could be used in the hiring process for emergency service workers. The influence of culture on the maintenance of multiple identity roles should also be explored. For instance, do those from a collectivist culture maintain identity roles differently than persons from an individualistic culture? How do gender roles affect identity role maintenance? These are important questions that may generate explanations for variations in role maintenance observed in emergency service workers.

Emergency service workers give so much throughout their careers, putting their lives on the line in the service of their communities. They deserve to retire as heroes, not zeroes.

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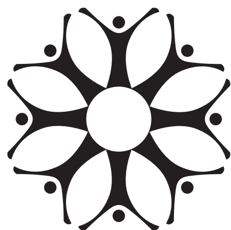

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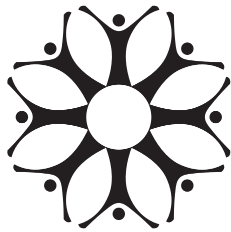

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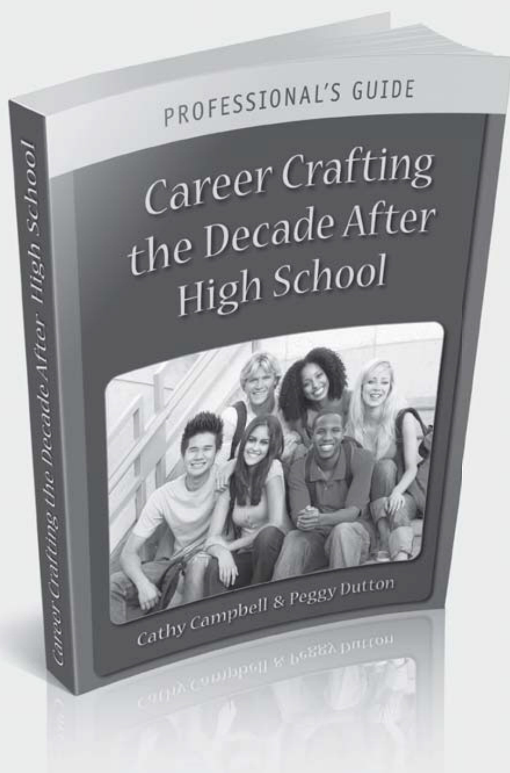
Career Crafting the Decade After High School: A Professional's Guide

AUTHORS: CATHY CAMPBELL AND PEGGY DUTTON



This is the newly enhanced and updated edition of the popular *The Decade After High School* guide!

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I absolutely love this book! It combines up-to-date scholarship with practical examples and a great layout. The metaphors used throughout are insightful and bring energy and vitality. The concept of 'career craft' fits well as an overarching strategy for change in a context where complexity and uncertainly are paramount. While the focus of this book is on youth, the information and practical strategies have application to career counsellors working with clients of all ages. This book deserves to be read and reread.

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NOTES

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In this Issue / Dans ce numéro

15

Vol. 14 / No. 1

4 Assessing the Multicultural and Social Justice Competencies of Career Development Practitioners
Sandra Collins, Nancy Arthur, Mary McMahon, and Suzie Bisson

19 Career Writing: Creative, Expressive, and Reflective Approches to Narrative Career Learning and Guidance
Reinekke Lengelle and Frans Meijers

34 The Effects of Hope on Student Engagement, Academic Performance, and Vocational Identity
Hyung Joon Yoon, Hyoyeon In, Spencer G. Niles, Norman E. Amundson, Barbara A. Smith, and Lauri Mills

48 From Hero to Zero
Stephanie M. Conn, Norman E. Amundson, William A. Borgen, and Lee D. Butterfield

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