

# Selected Milestones in the Evolution of Career Development Practices in the Twentieth Century

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This article briefly chronicles selected major events and personalities that have stimulated and shaped career development practices in the 20th century. In its headings by decades, the article seeks to contextualize major political, social, economic, and scientific themes that have influenced the evolution of models of career behavior, career interventions, and the preparation of counselors to engage in the practice of career development.

As suggested in the first article of this special issue "Career Development and Its Practice: A Historical Perspective" (Herr, 2001), there are many events and persons that have shaped the practice of career development in the twentieth century. The following compilation of such influences is not exhaustive, but it does provide a decade-by-decade chronicle of the selected social, political, and economic events and the responses to them that have affected the contemporary legacy on which career development practices will build during the twenty-first century.

## 1900–1920

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Significant questions about the focus of education; World War I; expansion of vocational education; rising concerns for mental hygiene

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Frank Parsons founded the Breadwinner's College in 1905 to provide vocational training and guidance.

The Vocation Bureau, founded by Frank Parsons, opened in Boston and is recognized as the first organization to provide a systematic process for providing vocational guidance and counseling. Its services were subsequently incorporated in the public schools of Boston.

Frank Parsons's book *Choosing a Vocation* was published posthumously in 1909. He provided the original conceptual and process elements of vocational guidance and vocational counseling.

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Jesse B. Davis organized a program of vocational and moral guidance in the schools of Grand Rapids, Michigan. The program included counseling with respect to courses and extracurricular activities.

Binet introduced his intelligence scales in the United States in 1907.

In 1910, delegates from a variety of organizations and institutions attended the first national conference on vocational guidance held in Boston under the leadership of David Snedden, Frank Thompson, and Meyer Bloomfield.

Meyer Bloomfield succeeded Parsons as head of the Vocational Bureau in Boston; he taught the first vocational-guidance course at Harvard University in 1911.

In 1913 the American edition of Hugo Munsterberg's work in Germany, *Psychological and Industrial Efficiency*, was published in which experimental psychology was applied to vocational choice.

The National Vocational Guidance Association (NVGA) was formed in 1913 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Its first publication, the *Vocational Guidance Bulletin*, was started in 1915.

The U.S. Bureau of Education published Bulletin No. 14, *Vocational Guidance*, which summarized the papers presented at the organizational meeting of NVGA in 1913.

The Army Committee on Classification of Personnel, in developing and administering the Army Alpha and Beta tests for use in World War I, laid a base for occupational classification and selection in the civilian sector and stimulated concern about guidance and counseling's growing emphasis on classification and selection.

The Smith Hughes Act of 1917 provided reimbursement for vocational guidance services.

The U.S. government instituted programs in 1918 for World War I veterans with disabilities, marking the beginning of vocational rehabilitation counseling.

In 1918 the National Education Association caused deterioration in the early partnership between vocational education and vocational guidance because it accepted a craft rather than a technical training emphasis in vocational education and a guidance-for-education rather than for-jobs conception of vocational guidance.

The U.S. Bureau of Education (the forerunner of the U.S. Office of Education) published the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* in 1918, in which were cited areas of student behavior to which many observers related guidance (e.g., vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure time, ethical character).

## 1920–1940

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Concern about the dignity and rights of children; psychometrics flourished; economic depression caused concern about job placement and unemployment

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Technological unemployment and worldwide depression were major social issues.

George-Reed (1920), George-Elizy (1934), and George-Dean (1936) Acts provided direct support to guidance by providing reimbursement for vocational-guidance activities.

The U.S. Employment Service was created by the Wagner-Peyser Act (1933).

The Occupational Information and Guidance Service was established under George-Dean Act funds in the Division of Vocational Education, U.S. Office of Education (1938).

In 1939, the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* was published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor; in 1940 the Occupational Outlook Service was established in the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

A major view of the period was that guidance had two major functions: distribution, helping students to find educational-vocational opportunities effectively, and adjustment, helping students adjust to environmental requirements. A contrasting view emphasized that guidance was a clinical process that rested on the work of applied psychologists concerned with the measurement of individual differences.

The depression emphasized a placement approach in vocational guidance.

## 1940–1950

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World War II; women entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers; higher education expanded to absorb veterans; postwar economic and industrial expansion; Cold War began with the Soviet Union

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Carl Rogers published *Counseling and Psychotherapy* (1942), which conceived of counseling as concerned with other than traditional medical models and disease entities and of the counselor as a directive authority.

During World War II, women successfully worked in manual and technical jobs previously reserved for men.

Experimental use of the General Aptitude Test Battery by the U.S. Employment Service was initiated in 1945.

Return of veterans to society spurred the use of classification tests and the importance of career guidance and counseling at secondary and postsecondary levels.

George Barden Act authorized salaries and travel expenses of vocational counselors and supported counselor-training courses. As such, it spurred certification of counselors, the definition of and provision of suitable content for appropriate courses at the graduate level, and the professionalization of counselors.

The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* was first published in 1948.

## 1950–1960

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Korean War; Sputnik launched, thus causing widespread debates about American education; education and guidance seen as instruments of national defense

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In 1951, the historic NVGA definition of vocational guidance is changed from an emphasis on what is to be chosen to the nature of the chooser.

Carl Rogers published *Client-Centered Therapy* (1951), which conceived the helping relationship in terms of the provision of specific ingredients of a therapeutic situation.

In 1951, the NVGA, the American College Personnel Association, the National Association of Guidance Supervisors and College Trainers, and the Student Personnel Association for Teacher Education merged to form the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA), the predecessor of the American Counseling Association (ACA).

In 1951, Donald Super launched the Career Pattern Study, introducing the concept of vocational development.

In 1952, *The Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, the predecessor to the *Career Guidance Quarterly*, began.

In 1956, for the first time a computer successfully completed a simulation of human problem solving.

Sputnik was launched (1957), thus initiating a reappraisal of the offerings and rigor of the American high school and of the need to identify and encourage students with potential to be scientists.

In 1957, Super published the *Psychology of Careers*, which laid out the rationale and the processes to view vocational guidance not only in terms of immediate choice but also in broader perspectives involving intermediate and future goals. The book applied the emerging perspectives of career development theory to choice behavior, presented a developmental-task concept of career development in different life stages, and emphasized the importance of the self-concept as the organizing mechanism of career behavior.

Titles V-A and V-B of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 required states to submit plans to test secondary school students so that academically talented students could be identified and encouraged to enter the hard sciences and other forms of higher education; funds were provided for extensive training of secondary school counselors. Title V-A provided funds for support and development of local school guidance and counseling programs. Title V-B appropriated funds for counseling and guidance institutes for the purpose of upgrading the qualifications of secondary school counselors. The act, which initiated an enormous increase in the number of school counselors across the nation in addition to the identification of academically tal-

ented students, also included provisions supporting the career development of students by counselors.

Career-development and vocational-development theories emerged in the works of Eli Ginzberg, Donald Super, Anne Roe, John Holland, and David Tiedeman

## 1960–1970

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Civil rights movement escalated; war in Vietnam caused major values upheavals and economic difficulties; major federal legislative outpouring to counteract unemployment, poverty, and other social ills; “Do your own thing” became a credo; rise in professionalism; computer-assisted career guidance systems begin to emerge as important complements to career guidance and career counseling

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Third edition of the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* was published.

Major expansion of vocational education occurred under the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the Amendments of 1968; the emerging notions of career development theory were apparent in the legislation.

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 specifically stated that vocational guidance and counseling were to be provided to students planning to enroll or enrolled in vocational-education courses.

Civil Rights Act passed in 1964. The civil rights movement accelerated the democratization of educational and occupational opportunities for those in minority groups.

In 1964, Henry Borow edited *Man in a World at Work*, the 50th anniversary volume of NVGA and the first NVGA decennial volume.

In 1966, John Holland authored *The Psychology of Vocational Choice*, the first book-length discussion of his theory.

The women’s rights movement heightened concerns about the need for guidance efforts to reduce effects of sex stereotyping and sex bias in student choice making and in access to occupations.

Vocational and career development theories began to be used as organizing content for guidance programs.

Vocational Education Act Amendment of 1968 advocated a need for career programs, responses to the disadvantaged and physically handicapped, and the expansion of a broadened concept of guidance and counseling, including its extension into the elementary schools. These pieces of legislation stimulated a large number of national and state conferences on vocational guidance, innovative projects in career guidance, counseling, and placement.

Counselor education programs mushroomed.

## 1970–1980

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International tensions rose; energy problems emerged; unemployment, particularly of youth, became a major issue; concerns about overeducation and a lack of technical education; concerns about survival skills

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In 1971 career education was introduced as a priority of the U.S. Office of Education. The Educational Amendments of 1974 made career education a law of the land and initiated the Office of Career Education in the U.S. Office of Education. Kenneth Hoyt became commissioner of career education.

In 1974, Herr edited *Vocational Guidance and Human Development*, the second NVGA decennial volume.

The Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 1975 was introduced into Congress under the leadership of APGA. Although it was not passed by the Congress, its language and concepts appeared in later pieces of legislation.

The Educational Amendments of 1976 included major support for guidance and counseling in Titles I, II, and III; Title II provided major support for vocational guidance.

Pressures for accountability in guidance and counseling mounted.

Fears of economic crisis and concerns about widespread unemployment among youth continued to spur career and vocational guidance emphases.

## 1980–2000

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Many political changes swept the world: the Cold War ended; apartheid ended in South Africa; many nations formerly under Communism moved to market economies; the global economy became a reality; the practice of career development became a worldwide phenomenon; computer-assisted career guidance systems grew in number and capability; women and minorities became major sources of new entrants to the workforce

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In 1982, the Joint Training Partnership Act (JTPA) replaced the Community Employment Training Act (CETA), providing career guidance for disadvantaged youth and for workers needing retraining.

In 1982, Carol Gilligan published *In a Different Voice*, stimulating renewed attention to the differential career behavior of women and men. Other women theorists advanced these perspectives in important conceptual and empirical work.

Comparative studies of the effects of computer-assisted career guidance systems with and without counselor assistance to users began to appear in the professional literature.

In 1984, Norman Gysbers edited *Designing Careers: Counseling to Enhance Education, Work, and Leisure*, the third NVGA decennial volume.

In 1984, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act advocated programs designed to improve, extend, and expand career guidance and counseling programs to meet the needs of vocational education students and potential students. Subsequent Perkins Acts in the 1990s (e.g., Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education and Applied Technology Acts) continued to provide major fiscal support for career guidance.

In 1984, the Report of the National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education, *The Unfinished Agenda*, advocated that comprehensive career guidance programs be available to all students and, in philosophy at least, reaffirmed the importance of strong career guidance programs to vocational education.

In 1984, the credentialing of nationally certified career counselors (NCCC) was initiated.

In 1985, the NVGA changed its name to the National Career Development Association.

In 1986, *The Vocational Guidance Quarterly* was renamed *The Career Development Quarterly*.

In 1992, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed, requiring employers to provide reasonable work accommodations to persons with disabilities.

The Internet grew rapidly throughout the 1990s, incorporating job search and career counseling Web sites. New ethical questions emerged concerning the preparation for and use of the Internet by career counselors

In 1994, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act provided funds for and advocated career exploration and counseling.

In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act provided career guidance and counseling for disadvantaged youth, adults, and dislocated workers.

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