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Career Learning

RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN EDUCATION

M. Kuijpers & F. Meijers (Eds.)



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Career learning

Research and practice in education

Marinka Kuijpers & Frans Meijers (ed.)

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Preface

"One year lost means pure profit if it leads to 40 years of job satisfaction." Saskia Kunnen

This book is the result of a successful and oversubscribed conference held at The Hague University, April 24th 2008. The title of the conference was intriguing: "Career development between old and new learning". It raises the question as to what is old, and what is new. According to Gerard Wijers (see elsewhere in this volume), old learning is typical of an industrial society while new learning emerged in our postmodern service society. To him, this seems to mean that the first is of a categorising nature and the second has an individualising character, as demonstrated in his interpretation of a poem by Martinus Nijhoff.

In the framework of this work, however, do 'old' and 'new' constitute something other than umbrella phrases with little content? Does 'old' translate as worn-out and fit for the scrap heap, and does 'new' mean 'good' by definition? In my book about developmentally supportive schools, I claimed that *the* new learning practice does not exist, nor does *the* old one.

I believe that it has mainly to do with the position from which one is observing development: from an objectifying/categorising or a subjectifying/individualising point of view. The first point of view was exemplified during the conference by researcher Saskia Kunnen. Career counsellor Gerard Wijers as well as researcher Hubert Hermans, whose research focuses on the two basic motives in human existence, self-affirmation and solidarity with something or someone else, provided examples of the second point of view. The basic metaphor (Vroon) on which the work of a researcher is based, gives direction to the type of research conducted and to the results emerging from it. English researcher Bill Law posed a fundamental question at the very beginning of the conference: "Which way is forward?"

In my opinion, this book could equally be titled 'Career development between generalisation and individualisation'. Generalised knowledge helps provide structure to the counselling process. However, the counselling process is subservient to the development of an individual that is unique and personal, as demonstrated by Hermans. This is possibly best expressed in Wijers' analysis of Nijhoff's poem "The Child and I", which is included in this work.

Amidst the diversity of this book, one will find a great sense of coherence, which makes it so much more than a mere conference report.

Nathan Deen,
Professor Emeritus 'Theory and Practice in Student Counselling'

Literature

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1 Career guidance: a complex learning process

Frans Meijers

The entire education system (and vocational education in particular) is experiencing a widespread need for an improved guidance practice for students who are shaping their learning and life careers. There are three main reasons for this. First, a great number of students lack motivation. Not only is there a high drop-out rate in VMBO (primary vocational education), MBO (secondary vocational education) and HBO (tertiary/higher vocational education) (up to 50% in some disciplines), but many who *do* decide to continue their education, only do so to obtain their degree and not because they are interested in the subject matter they are studying. Zijlstra & Meijers (2006) have demonstrated that motivation among students in HBO decreases with every enrolment year. The second reason has to do with the limited efficiency and effectiveness of learning processes: on average, a mere 15% of all theory taught throughout a course will actually be put into practice by students (Caravaglia, 1993; in the Netherlands, see Den Ouden, 1992). This transfer problem is in part due to the fact that students have no solid career vision and are therefore unable to formulate clear learning requests (Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker, 2006). The result is a lack of intrinsic motivation towards lessons and subject matter (Den Boer, Mittendorff & Sjenitzer, 2004). Finally, a general need for more and better career guidance has emerged because individualisation within our society (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1994) as well as flexibilisation within employment relations (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999) have put the need for more self-directedness in (life) careers at the top of the agenda. We define career “self-guidance” as the ability to discover one’s own life theme (Van Maanen, 1977; also see Wijers’ contribution to this volume) and to identify with a particular social role (Wijers & Meijers, 1996; Law, Meijers & Wijers, 2002).

1.1 Career guidance on the political agenda

In 2000, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science decided to establish the *Commissie Doorstroomagenda Beroepsonderwijs* (also referred to by the chairman as the Boekhoud Committee). In 2001 the committee published its report titled ‘*De loopbaan centraal*’ (Career in focus). The report is seen as a major plea for increased and improved counselling, not only with regards to the ever growing social-emotional problems among today’s youth, but also as a means to improve the learning results of students and their capacity for self-directedness. Although the report from the Boekhoud Committee has been well received, hardly any investment has been made, until recently, to increase or to improve career orientation and counselling services. More recently, however, this does seem to be changing. More than half the number of innovation projects, for which an application was submitted with the vocational education platform (*HPBO*) in 2007, relate to learning career guidance. A number of these projects have initiated so-called ‘comprehensive career guidance’, which has been slowly introduced in HBO (see contributions to this volume by Mittendorff and by Den Boer & Bakker). Comprehensive career guidance aims at being both a cure and a prevention for the issues mentioned above, mainly because students are prompted via a number of sequenced instruments to reflect on their learning career and on their employment and by extension, on their life careers.

However, does this method truly prompt students to reflect and act on their career? Will the use of a number of instruments taken from practical HRD and counselling practices suffice to instigate reflection and self-guidance, or will it require more than that? Are career reflection and self-guidance

to be understood as learning processes, and if so, is it possible to turn 'career learning' into an integrated part of other learning processes? In that case, what will career learning look like for different groups of students? Are teachers in today's education system prepared *and* capable of utilising the available career instruments and interventions in the best possible way? And, last but not least, is the education system, as an organisation, capable of creating the appropriate setting for career learning?

1.2 Career guidance in an industrial society

Up until about 1975, vocational education considered itself to be a source of 'professional training' and was regarded as such by all parties concerned (politicians, employers, parents and students). This was possible at the time because the education system was operating within the stable employment structure of an industrial economy (Meijers, 1983). The rate at which technological changes occurred was relatively low and it only affected the form and content of professions in minor ways (Van Hoof & Dronkers, 1980; Van Hoof, 1990). Thus, it was possible to qualify students through the education system for real-life occupations. At that time, the education system was also focused on supplying knowledge that was undisputed and considered essential for a specific occupation.

In this context, career guidance is primarily about counselling on course selection (Meijers, 1995, 2001). This type of counselling is not integrated into the daily teaching and learning processes, but focuses on institutionally determined moments of choice or crisis and is provided on the sideline of school happenings. Counsellors focus strongly on the individual; the counselling process pays little attention to the internal and external environments of the school, despite the fact that they influence career development to a great extent, as shown in the discussion on equal opportunities within and by the education system. The focal point of these discussions on the quality of course selection counselling is the concept of 'an informed choice' (Pere, 1986; Meijers, 1995). The objective of course selection counselling is intended to enable students to select a type of continued education which closely connects with their capabilities and their interests. For this purpose, students are given insight – sometimes aided by psychometric tests – into their own capabilities and (career) preferences. After that as much information as possible is provided about the courses that correspond with those capabilities and preferences. Course selection advisors were considered ethical because they provided objective information and did not base their advice on the interests of continued education or on that of ambitious parents, but on the desires of the student (preferably measured through benchmark testing and other tests).

The premise that it is possible to 'get the right man for the right job' by offering objective information has resulted in these counselling methods; input from the student was hardly taken into account until about 1970. After 1970, partly influenced by the work of influential American authors such as Super and Rogers, a different approach slowly took hold that made clients more and more responsible for their own training and course selection. "The advisory role now includes a non-directive aspect stimulated by the counselling thought which is anchored in assistance services" (Pere, 1986, p. 109). New ways to integrate tests in a counselling methodology were actively being searched for (Goldman, 1967, 1971). The focus has shifted from counselling towards consultation and is aimed at stimulating the student's personal development in such a way that he or she will start to identify with a particular professional image. During these consultations, tests still play a major role but they are no longer considered an instrument that delivers the correct diagnosis. Instead, they are rather a means through which some insight on one's self can be achieved. However, the quality issue and the related discussion on professional ethics still centre around the sincerity and reliability of the information provided and about the independence of the dean.

Starting at the end of the sixties, a new form of counselling emerged alongside course selection counselling, which focused mainly on removing obstacles that impeded a student from obtaining a degree. This counselling method is known as “student counselling” and is aimed at providing assistance in the event of family problems, psychological issues, truancy, conflicts at school or it focuses on remedial learning and developmental issues (such as training sessions on fear of failure, dyslexia and social skills). This form of assistance therefore emerged as an answer to problems of individual students who were likely to disrupt the ‘standard’ teaching and learning process (Kleijnen & Van den Broeck, 2004, 2005). The implemented measures are therefore – according to Ponte, Huijgevoort & Vloet (2006) – geared towards immediate assistance in crisis situations and are often done on an ad hoc basis. Initially, this type of assistance was provided by teachers in addition to their daily task of teaching; the result was that student counselling initially occupied a marginal position within schools. However, training courses for student counselling are rapidly emerging and student counselling has now become the exclusive domain of specialised counsellors. This results, again, in the ‘therapeutic’ nature of this type of counselling. Deen (1990: 12), one of the founders of student counselling in the Netherlands, concludes the following: “I find it hard not to get the impression that some counsellors are so fascinated by the therapeutic approach, that they are starting to believe *that* is where the heart of student counselling lies.” The ethics in student counselling are, not surprisingly, increasingly modelled on the ethics of long-time socially recognised assistance services like the services offered by doctors and psychologists.

1.3 Career guidance in a post-industrial society

Around 1975, it became clear that the industrial sector in the Netherlands was giving way to the services sector, which is a knowledge-intensive sector of the economy (Korbijn, 2003). It gradually became clear that education could only provide an initial qualification at best, which then needed to be ‘completed’ through day-to-day practice (Geurts & Meijers, 2007). A knowledge-based economy no longer focuses on transferring fixed units of knowledge through hierarchical/vertical organisations (the ‘degree factory’ of an industrial economy) but on realising professional formation processes in network-like/horizontal structures (Meijers, 2004). Furthermore, adequate preparation for functioning within a service economy not only requires a developed mind (theory) and developed hands (skill), but also a developed heart (Doorewaard, 2000). In a service economy, one’s personality is becoming increasingly important because work entails transforming semi-finished products into custom products in consultation with a customer or client. In addition, certain fields require higher degrees of ‘emotional labour’ (i.e. labour which requires a conscious input of emotions; see Hochschild, 1979, 1983; Doorewaard, 2000). Developing one’s personality during training requires both motivational and learning-technical reasons and one’s active involvement in a dynamic conversation. Competence-led learning is unthinkable without the learner being actively involved in the formation, the implementation, and the assessment stages of his or her own professional development and professionalisation. This implies that the education system itself will need to develop from a ‘factory for industrial training’ into a ‘career centre’ that sees itself as a service provider. What constitutes qualitatively good career guidance within this context then becomes a complex issue as the quality seems to be determined less and less by solid factors (such as complete and objective information) and more and more by the quality of both the learning environment and of the interactions that take place in that learning environment.

Vocational schools in the Netherlands, however, are (currently) far from being career centres. Recent studies (De Bruijn et al., 2005, 2006) demonstrate that today’s schools are mainly investing in structural changes (more practical education, more flexible teaching schedules, a wider range of choice options

for students, etc.) while they are not yet addressing cultural changes. In other words, they are not yet working on the realisation of different relationships between teachers and students and within the groups of teachers and students (also see Meijers, 2007; Mittendorff, Jochems, Meijers & Den Brok, 2007). Geurts recently concluded: "We could say that the current interpretation of career learning threatens to individualise the problem too much (...). Schools should not want to have a career centre, they should *be* one." (Geurts, 2007: 1)

In a school which sees itself as a career centre, student counselling is not primarily of a 'therapeutic' nature and/or aimed at transferring information, but is instead aimed at facilitating identity learning (also see the contribution to this volume by Vloet) and developing the abilities students need to guide their own (learning) careers. This type of learning, which in this volume is referred to as "career learning", is only possible when students are taught and able to hold an internal and external dialogue at the same time (see the contribution to this volume by Hermans & DiMaggio). The purpose of both – closely related – dialogues is to discover one's own life theme and to establish a relationship between this life theme and the specific demand for professional skills. This relationship can only exist when it is based on actual work experiences (Simons, Van der Linden & Duffy, 2000). Consequently, counselling is not marginal and must be fully integrated in all learning processes (Law, Meijers & Wijers, 2002).

1.4 Career learning in the current education system

How should learning processes and related counselling sessions be organised to transform a school into a career centre? This was the core question during a study into career learning conducted among (V)MBO schools in which 3,505 students from 236 classrooms in 34 schools participated. They completed a questionnaire (Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker, 2006) and qualitative research was conducted among ten classrooms/groups where the quantitative portion of the research had shown they were surrounded by a reasonable to good career learning environment (Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006). In order to map out the learning environment with regard to career orientation and counselling of students, 163 teachers were asked to complete an additional questionnaire. The research results revealed that a career learning environment does not correlate with the deployment of instruments and techniques, nor – though surprisingly – with the presence of a career counselor (whom half of the students deal with at one time or another). Also, organising classroom discussions on training and career choices, conducting career choice tests and conducting individual interviews with a counselor or mentor do not appear to contribute to the development of career competences and a work identity either. In brief, acquiring career competences and a work identity is not about using certain means or techniques. It is about creating a career dialogue at school and in practice.

We define a career dialogue as a conversation between the student and a trusted adult (ideally, this would be an teacher, dean and/or mentor from the school), who explicitly discusses the meaning of experiences acquired by the student during practical assignments and during work placements at school and outside of school. This discussion then focuses on the explicit relationship between relevant experiences students have had on the professional/job market and their developing self-image and work identity. In this process, it is essential to promote an internal dialogue (focusing on their personal construction of meaning) as well as an external dialogue (focusing on the social meaning of work; see Van de Loo, 2001). The study demonstrates that a career dialogue at school and practical discussions, do contribute to the formation of the three career competences, which are: career reflection (i.e. reflection on qualities and motivation), career formation (i.e. job exploration and career guidance) and networking, and also contribute to the use of these competences in learning

experiences and in making concrete choices. Promoting and facilitating a career dialogue has an even stronger effect on the development of career competences and of a work identity than personal traits.

It seems that one's work identity is developed primarily through the exploration of employment opportunities and, based thereon, through well-balanced decisions regarding one's (training) career: career formation. Once more, the dialogue in which students are able to participate at school and during their work placement appears to be of central importance. Students participating in this dialogue demonstrate a more-developed work identity than students who are unable to do so. There seems to be a distinct relationship between possessing career competences and a work identity on the one hand, and the experienced quality of choices students make on the other.

1.5 Different perspectives from teachers and students

Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker (2006) asked both students and teachers what effective counselling looks like with regards to both career reflection (i.e. identifying one's own capabilities and motive)) and career formation (i.e. exploring employment opportunities through work placements, for example, and guiding one's own schooling based on the experiences acquired through jobs and labour). Table 1 indicates that in response to the question about what the school is doing to enable students to discover the type of work that would suit them (career reflection), 59.3% of the teachers responded that this competence is developed primarily through one-on-one discussions held with students in which the student's opinion carries the most weight. Nearly half the number of students (46.9%), however, believe that (almost) nothing is being done to address this matter. The opinion from both teachers and students with regards to tests, assignments, and advice do not vary greatly.

Table 1. Counselling on career reflection according to teachers and students

Counselling on career reflection	According to teachers (in terms of percentage of completed questionnaires)	According to students (in terms of percentage of completed questionnaires)
None	7.6	46.9
Tests	13.4	11.2
Assignments	14.4	15.1
Advice	5.2	4.7
Career discussion	59.3	22.2

Table 2 shows how, according to teachers, career formation consists primarily of providing information to students (34.2%). According to 26.3%, another important counselling instrument is the career discussion in which the student's opinion will weigh heavily. However, almost one-third of students believe that they are left to their own devices when it comes to career formation (31.9%). The students also disagree with the teachers' about how effective the career discussions are in career formation. Only 9.4% indicate that they are being guided in career formation through career discussions. It is furthermore striking that 22.6% of teachers and 28.8% of students believe that students are not really offered a true choice within the framework of their training.

Table 2. Counselling on career formation according to teachers and students

Counselling on career formation	According to teachers (in terms of percentage of completed questionnaires)	According to students (in terms of percentage of completed questionnaires)
No choice in learning	22.6	28.8
Students left to their own devices	12.0	31.9
Information	34.2	26.6
Advice	5.0	3.3
Career dialogue	26.3	9.4

The findings from Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker about students experiencing little counselling in the framework of their career, is confirmed by results from JOB Monitor 2005 (*Jongerenorganisatie Beroepsopleiding*, 2005). Table 3 demonstrates how students assess the counselling they receive. Only 30% appear to be (very) satisfied with the counselling they receive, 24% are (very) dissatisfied, and 46% of students entered a neutral rating. MBO students appear to be more satisfied about the counselling they receive around their training and about the counselling they receive in the event of personal problems.

Table 3. Opinion about counselling on training, counselling in the event of personal problems and counselling on course/career selection (in %)

	Very poor	2	3	4	Very good	Total (=100%)
Counselling on training	5	14	43	31	7	133.321
Counselling in the event of personal problems	5	11	43	30	11	127.775
Counselling on course/career selection	7	17	46	24	6	126.846

Source: JOB Monitor 2005, page 89 (own adaptation)

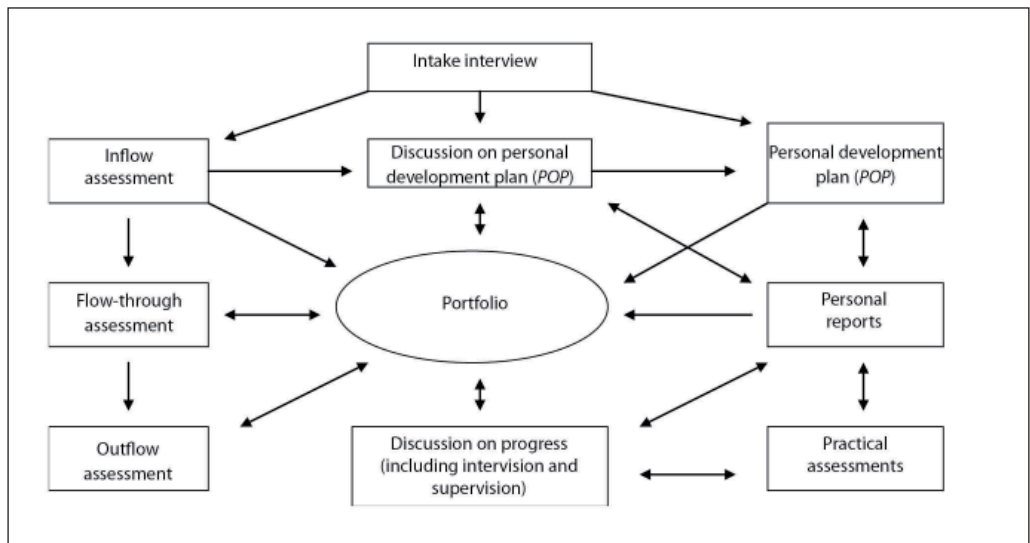
Schools are increasingly aware of the fact that the counselling services they offer are inadequate. Establishing student and career guidance is becoming much more of a focal point in their attempt to provide adequate vocational education for the service/knowledge-based economy (so-called competence-based education). This is also demonstrated by the notable fact that more than half of the innovation projects for which an application was submitted in 2007 with the vocational education platform (*HPBO*) were associated with career guidance or career learning. Striking is the explicit emphasis on ‘integrated career guidance’.

1.6 Integrated career guidance in a non-dialogical environment

Integrated career guidance is about sequencing a large number of counselling instruments from HRD and assistance services, such as assessments, intake interviews, personal development plans (*POP*) and reflection reports. Figure 1 demonstrates what this type of sequencing often looks like in practice. The several types of tests are listed on the left; these are often referred to within competence-based education as ‘assessments’. On the right are the instruments that are geared towards promoting

reflection in students: personal development plans, reflection reports and reports on intervention and/or supervision. The middle section in the diagram lists the discussions held between the student and various school representatives involved with his or her training. The student's intake, personal development plan, and his or her development as a person and as a future professional are included here. The portfolio is the axis around which integrated career guidance revolves. The results from every intervention are included in the portfolio, which then provides a current overview of, and insight into the student's development with regard to the mind, hands, and heart. The (rather implicit) reasoning is that the portfolio qualitate qua – as it provides an updated overview of the student's development – engages the student in self-reflection and thus enables him or her to make the right career decisions, while it allows the teacher or training counsellor to support the student during this process (also see Mittendorff's contribution to this volume).

Figure 1: Integrated career guidance



Integrated career guidance runs the risk of becoming a purpose in and of itself or becoming 'instrumental' and therefore lacking a career dialogue. As noted previously, research into career learning and into the development of competence-led education indicates that today's vocational education remains non-dialogical to a large extent (also see the contributions to this volume by Den Boer & Bakker and by Winters). In recent years, many investments have been made to facilitate structural changes (and the transformation into more practice-oriented education in particular) yet little investment has been made into changes of school culture (De Bruijn et al., 2006). One of the consequences is that in practice, integrated career guidance is not implemented by the entire group of teachers, but only by a handful of specialised 'training counsellors'. Due to financial considerations these 'training counsellors' are rarely teachers

1.7 Task distribution in counselling

The prime reason for this task distribution lies in the fact that many teachers are not (or are not considered) competent in student counselling. Management staff in nearly all vocational education establishments differentiate between a number of roles and these are selectively assigned to the

current staff. The quote below is from an interview held with teachers and managers from a regional training centre (ROC) that is certainly on the right track; it is representative for what is happening in (V) MBO (Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006):

"We differentiate between a number of professional roles. First and foremost there is a trainer. This would be the subject teacher of previous times who provides instruction, skill, knowledge and theory. Then there is the project manager: someone who is responsible for the proper implementation of external projects by students. The third role is that of the assessor, who evaluates the formal conclusion of a core task or a skills test. This person, who is appointed by the school, also conducts the discussions on reflection in the triangle consisting of the student, the business supplying the projects, and the school. Then there is a work-experience counsellor. Work experience places are areas within the school grounds where projects can be carried out. Work experience counsellors are the day-to-day stimulators and supporters. And finally, there is a tutor (also referred to as coach) who displays a genuine interest in the students and in their personal development. We are slowly discovering that the role of tutor/coach in particular, is not for everyone. When we look at the competences of our staff, we notice a separation between roles."

The main reason why the school management chooses the option of 'matching' roles with existing competences of the teachers is that this process is much easier to manage than creating a learning environment in which essentially all teachers develop into all-round experts (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). The consequences for students are rather disheartening. The unrelated co-existence of various teacher roles almost always results in the rise of various strategies which tend to become more and more distinct due to being unrelated from the very primary process. Concretely, this often brings about an increased workload for students as they are also made responsible for creating synergies (Te Riele, 2006).

This can be observed very clearly in the use of a portfolio. Teachers as well as training counsellors frequently indicate that they lack the time required to (thoroughly) examine the students' portfolios (see Mittendorff's contribution to this volume). Therefore, they assume that students are able to draw 'career lessons' from their portfolio autonomously. In such a non-dialogical situation, however, students will treat their portfolios strictly as an instrument: they will ensure that the portfolio meets all the requirements imposed by the course but they will rarely or never look at their portfolio and neither do they expect something from it in terms of career planning/guidance (Mittendorff, Jochems, Meijers & Den Brok, 2008). A similar pattern is revealed with regard to reflection, which is getting a lot of attention in integrated career guidance. Throughout the entire vocational education, in HBO as well, reflection seems to be a goal in and of itself rather than a means to guide the students' (learning) careers. Based on research data from the so-called HBO inflow monitor, Zijlstra & Meijers (2006) demonstrate that a large number of first-year students in higher vocational education have a particularly negative attitude towards the various forms of reflection to which they are being 'submitted'.

Figure 2: Opinions about first-year aspects: positives/negatives per aspect in percentages

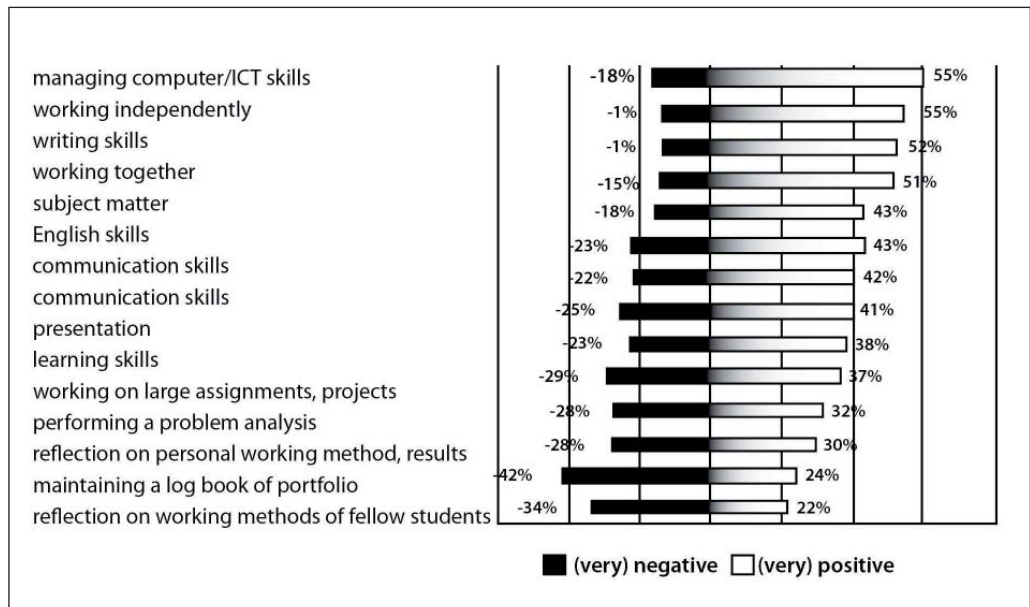


Figure 2 shows how 42% of first-year students have a negative or very negative opinion about the obligation to keep a logbook or portfolio (as opposed to 24% who consider this a positive thing). One third (34%) of first-year students have a (very) negative attitude about the obligation to reflect with their fellow students on group functioning; 22% are (very) positive about this. Finally, 28% are (very) negative towards the obligation to reflect on their own working methods; 30% are (very) positive towards this. Figure 5 also indicates that from all the researched aspects, of the first-year students' curriculum, maintaining a log or portfolio received by far the most negative response, followed closely by the obligation to reflect on group processes.

1.8 Forced reflection

According to Zijlstra & Meijers (2006), first-year students often indicate that the standards in higher vocational education with regard to reflection are set too high. The reason for this may be explained by current brain research (see the contributions to this volume by Luken, Kunnen and Hermans & Dimaggio): youngsters may not (yet) be able of reflective thinking as their brains are insufficiently developed for this purpose. These research results, however, do not yet play a role in management policies of schools and colleges. In recent years, students in HBO and MBO experienced an increased pressure to reflect. In many different ways, students are practically obligated to reflect from their very first day of training onwards (as part of training career guidance, for instance). Qualitative research among first-year students at The Hague University reveals that many students do not know what reflection truly entails (Zijlstra & Ter Steeg, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004). A great number of students do not relate reflection to their personal lives, while education activities associated with reflection are not taken seriously and are considered a 'mandatory task'. Many students respond similarly to the increased demand for reflection as they do to the remainder of the curriculum: they try to get through while putting in the least amount of effort (Holt, 1995). Teachers respond to the students' lack of engagement by forcing the desired reflection through the deployment of instruments such as 'reflection guides' and portfolios.

1.9 Integrated career guidance: a panopticon?

Mandatory reflection in a non-dialogical context appears to rapidly transform into what is referred to by historian and philosopher Foucault (1975) as a 'panopticon' – following the theory of English philosopher and politician Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). At the end of the 18th century, Foucault stated that our thinking about crime and punishment had changed. It had been viewed as retaliation against the criminal, but now the criminal was being seen as an individual and gradually, a social consensus emerged that the criminal could and should be rehabilitated. Thus, they should not be 'locked away' in a dungeon but instead be made as 'visible' as possible. This would allow 'experts' to interpret their behaviour and, on the basis thereof, intervene effectively resulting in changes of behaviour and attitude.

Furthermore, complete visibility to the guards and to fellow prisoners, it was believed, would encourage prisoners to adapt to group standards and thus become self-discipline. This thought process resulted in the construction of – in some places still existing – panopticons where prisoners could easily be observed day and night. However, the construction of panopticons hardly resulted in decreased recidivism or in changes to the values and standards of the prisoners. The prisoners did, however, learn to *display* the type of behaviour that was considered positive by those who would decide on their (early) release.

It seems that students respond to integrated career guidance in a non-dialogical context in much the same way as most prisoners respond to a panopticon: they transition into 'survival mode' and indeed display the desired behaviour but do not adopt or learn it. They learn a great deal about how the education system operates and little about themselves. In a non-dialogical context, both the student and the career counsellor end up in a position in which neither of them are learning but are instead forced to 'survive'. In other words, something goes wrong in two related areas. First, nearly all teachers and managers completely ignore the fact that trust is not automatically present in a relationship between teachers and students, while it is essential in creating a dialogue about sense and meaning (Law, Meijers & Wijers, 2002; Meijers & Wardekker, 2002). In the current education system, trust is largely absent, partly because education is still viewed as an 'exchange of knowledge for order' (Willis, 1977; Dieleman & Meijers, 2005). Trust can be built when a student feels known, recognised and acknowledged by a person whom he or she regards as an authority in the field. Yet many teachers are employed in the education system so long, that they do not know the actual skill requirements that are considered essential by employers.

Teachers realise their lack of knowledge as soon as students start doing work placements. The problem of lack of expertise worsens when school managers decide to appoint only those teachers who are 'good with students' to carry out career guidance; (an estimated 20-30% of teachers; see Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006) because then the majority or remaining teachers never have to establish a dialogue with students about personal meaning and the social relevance of what they are teaching. These teachers simply restrict themselves to the role to which they have become accustomed: that of 'subject teacher'. To make matters worse, the career counsellor does not gain first-hand knowledge about the experiences of students during their assignments and work placements, as those take place under the supervision of subject teachers. As a consequence, the career counsellor is unable to discuss concrete experiences with the student and is forced to approach the life theme and career wishes of the student separately from a concrete and shared context. Given the lack of trust *and* given the fact that a discussion 'without context' forces the student to exercise a high level of abstraction (which many students are not capable of doing by themselves; see Luken's contribution to this volume), the students lack motivation. When confronted with the inability and the unwillingness of the student to

reflect, the career counsellor – in order to cope – is forced to shape the counselling session by utilising the available range of instruments, which unavoidably transforms the session into instrumental counselling in the most literal sense of the term.

1.10 This volume

Acquiring the competence for career self-guidance is a complex learning process that requires a learning environment (i.e. a combination of teachers and organisation), which is mostly absent in today's education system. In short, career learning is 'new learning'. In the above paragraphs, I have tried to demonstrate that despite the fact that many schools are beginning to realise this, they are organising and implementing (probably unintentionally) career guidance in terms of 'old learning'. To get away from this situation and to assist schools in enabling their students/students to exercise self-guidance, a conference called 'Career development between old and new learning' was held in April 2008. The book in front of you is the result of this conference. It includes contributions from all keynote speakers (Law, Hermans and Kunnen) and from a group of researchers who have had a 'community of practice' for quite some time; their research is aimed at theory development with regards to career learning -- the conference was organised by this group as well.

The book commences with a chapter written by Bill Law, an internationally recognised expert in the field of career guidance, titled 'Career guidance: which way is forward?' Law talks about the dilemmas currently faced by career counsellors and he discusses how these dilemmas may be solved. Next, there is a chapter by Hubert J. Hermans & Giancarlo Dimaggio, titled 'Self, identity, and globalization in times of uncertainty: A dialogical analysis'. Hermans is primarily known for his Self Confrontation Method; Dimaggio is a psychiatrist based in Rome. Their text offers an extraordinarily rich and broad overview of scientific knowledge in relation to the question of how self and identity are developed within an uncertain context. Kara Vloet, teacher at Fontys Hogescholen, examines the role of the teacher more deeply, departing from a theoretical framework derived from Hermans. Her chapter, titled 'Career learning and professional identity in teachers: narratives in dialogue' explains exactly what influences the professional self-knowledge of teachers. Kara Vloet further demonstrates the importance of career learning for teachers.

Learning aimed at career self-directedness must be 'new learning'. However, this new learning has been heavily criticised in recent times. Based on research into the development and the functioning of the brain and based on developmental psychological research, the question has been raised whether youngsters are even truly capable of reflecting – a prerequisite for the type of 'new learning' we are proposing.. In his chapter 'The (im)possibility of new learning and self-guidance', Tom Luken, lecturer in Career Development at Fontys Hogescholen, provides a thorough overview of the knowledge in this area and from that he formulates the lessons we could learn from it as it relates to career guidance. In 'Problems with course selection in adolescents and young adults', Saskia Kunnen and Harke Bosma, well-known researchers in the field of identity development, report their findings in conjunction with Master student Nynke Holwerda, about a study on a course selection counselling project at the University of Groningen. They reveal a clear connection between identity development and course-selection counselling and further explore the limitations of career learning.

The following two chapters report on a study into career learning in secondary vocational education. In her chapter 'Quality of career guidance in vocational education and the role of personal development plans and portfolios', Kariene Mittendorff, Ph.D. student at the Eindhoven University of Technology and at Fontys Hogescholen, first addresses the question whether personal development

plans and portfolios have a positive impact on career self-guidance. She points out that the effectiveness of these instruments greatly depends on the context in which they are implemented. When there is an environment where students are invited to discuss their career (and from that perspective also their personal development plan and portfolio), the instruments will be effective. However, if a dialogue about (learning) careers is practically non-existent, the instruments will have no positive impact (and most likely a negative one, because the personal development plan and portfolio will then be perceived by the students as needless and additional work). Annemie Winters, Ph.D. student at the Catholic University of Leuven draws the same conclusion in her chapter 'How to be inquiry-based? Career learning in professional practice training at the secondary vocational education level (MBO)'. She demonstrates that discussions on professional practice training (work experience) between the student, teacher, and practical training teacher (from the business offering the work experience), currently remain non-dialogical to a large extent, despite the rhetoric about the importance of career learning. They therefore hardly contribute to career self-directedness in students.

In 'Career learning and schools', Peter den Boer and Jantiene Bakker, both affiliated researchers at *IVA Beleidsonderzoek en Advies*, explain the current career learning situation in Zeeland. They conclude that the schools find it particularly difficult to really give shape to inquiry-based education. Next, they examine the question about how the education system as an organisation will need to change in order to become more inquiry-based.

The book ends with two contributions about the methodology of career learning. In a surprising manner, Gerard Wijers, director at the Institute for career guidance and Career Psychology, offers insight into the function of life themes prior to and during the career learning process in 'Life themes and career learning'. Marinka Kuijpers, affiliated lecturer in Pedagogics of Career Formation at The Hague University, completes this work with her contribution 'Career dialogue: About learning to choose (and) learning to talk'. In a concrete and enlightening manner, she demonstrates how career dialogues can be shaped.

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2 Careers work - which way is forward?^{1*}

Bill Law

UK careers workers are entitled to be surprised by the relatively low levels of policy support and media attention they get for their work. That disappointment may well be shared by Dutch colleagues. After all, careers work is about who gets to do what in society; and there is no more important question in social administration. You might think that we would have attracted a favourable attention for that work, and been awarded enough resources to help with its processes. But that has not happened in the UK. And this article argues that there is something that we can do about it. However, to succeed, we'll need to loosen our grip on some habits-of-mind – mindsets which, from now on, would cramp our style. This article suggests three focuses for new thinking:

- We have learned how to defend our work in terms that may have worked well-enough for much of the twentieth century, but we need to do better than that. We can make more use of our appreciation of the different ways in which people now live, work and – most of all – how they now learn.
- This means thinking first about the people we help least well, because that is where we most pointedly understand what is and is not going well in our work. When we can enable the most vulnerable to take sustainable command of their own career-management, then we can help everybody.
- All of this calls for more scope for curriculum, certainly more than can be squeezed into current provision for careers-education. We need a deeper and wider engagement with the whole curriculum, and one which will locate at its centre our contemporary concerns for useful learning.

This article argues that enabling people to manage their careers has become a bigger task than can be taken on by conventionally understood careers-education-and-guidance. We need to take more account of eight developing features of the way people manage their career. The article points to how we need to understand new ways of understanding how contemporary career management is...

1. continuing - developing from episodes scenes and turning points in an experience-based story;
2. social worked out - with, for and in response to other people;
3. informal - drawing on other-than-professional sources of information and impression especially in social networking and street-level gossip;
4. pressurised - with social, commercial and cultural influences on the way information and impressions are shaped;
5. conflicted – with to-and-fro pressures in people's attempts to reconcile feelings, attachments and allegiances;
6. life-wide – linked into a life-work balance, which is a concern with personal, social, physical, spiritual, civil and environmental well-being;
7. life-long – though thought of as individually fulfilling, having consequences for people I do and will care for (not just 'me-now' but also 'them-later');
8. changing – where global economic and technological dynamics bring about accelerating change in all of these ways.

1 *This article is an edited abstract of Law (2008a).

The list is not a new one: we have long understood career in terms like these. But the dynamics are intensifying: we are astride seismic shifts in the way in which career is managed. The ground is shifting to the point where we need to re-examine conventional thinking. In all eight areas there are assumptions to re-examine, givens that can no longer be taken for granted, mind-sets that must be disturbed. At time it means repositioning the reference points for the questions we pose:

- **the ‘what’ question** – what do people now need to learn?
- **the ‘who’ question** – who gets to access to what opportunities?
- **the ‘how’ question** – how do they learn and how do we best help?

Repositioning sometimes turn familiar questions into awkward questions. This article starts with ‘the who?’ question – and wonders about their experience.

2.1 The growing importance of changing experience

There has always been plenty to think about concerning careers. We need to know about the economy, its technologies, and what that means for people’s employability. We need also to know about how people experience all of this – in terms of personal fulfilments and commitment of abilities. And we need to work out what we can helpfully do and say about all of this. There are three lines of thinking here – career development, career management and careers work.

1. *understanding career development* requires knowledge of facts, factors and trends in the working world, and what happens as people are ushered into it. That expertise sets out demands made and rewards offered by working life. It produces an analysis of the requirements for employability and what people must do to position themselves for career advancement.
2. *appreciating career management* calls for a grasp of the meaning that people give to all this. It is about how they respond to career demands and offers – calling on a sense of feeling-laden experience. That experience is located less in schooling than in family, neighbourhood and social networking. It is a continuing narrative which shapes everything that people learn and much of what they do.
3. *offering careers work* engages planning what careers workers can do to help. Some of that thinking is immediate – for example concerning how to move on with a client or in a class. But much of this thinking is wider – about the schemes we need to design, the teams we need to support in making them work, and the networks into which we need to link that programme.

Not all career-management experience is developed on the basis of facts and factors which shape career development; and not all people who manage their career well do so with help from careers work. And so the experience of career management is a distinct domain for enquiry – and calling for its own distinctive line of thought, different from career development and different from careers work. Furthermore career management gives the understanding of career much of its dynamics. There is always more than one thing going on, and what happens in one way influences what can happen in another (Law, 2006a). But all is changing. And at the heart of our present concerns for the future of careers work is an appreciation of how the cultures of family, neighbourhood and social networking are changing. And how their influence on what people do is intensifying (Law, 2006b). These dynamics mean that there can be no straight line from career-development expertise to careers-work planning. If changing experience is changing the way people learn then we must change the way we help.

2.2 Changing the way we help

The case for change is three-fold. We need to do more on enabling people: (1) to gather the knowledge they need; (2) to escape the traps that entrenched knowledge lays for them; and (3) to take control of the whirligig dynamics of contemporary knowledge.

1. *needed knowledge*. We live in increasingly demanding times. Across-the-board – from global warming, through working life, to diet – people need answers to questions: ‘what is going on?’, and ‘what can I usefully do about it?’. The need for these answers is deeply embedded in the human condition. Knowing how to answer them has survival value. And there was never a time when people have so-much needed to find out what is going on, and to work out what they can do about it (Bauman, 2000). All is work related, and few services offer more help with questions like these than careers work.
2. *entrenched knowledge*. Communities are becoming more isolated from one another. People increasingly live in enclaves. Neighbourhoods are becoming more socially and culturally separated – their people insulated from knowledge of others. And so their ideas about what to believe, to value and to expect are different in different localities. Those narratives, their media, and their use of the net, are increasingly shaped by familiar experience. The bases for action are fragmenting – sometimes for the advantage of their people, sometimes for their disadvantage (Dench 2003). And so, that locally-entrenched knowledge encloses life chances. There is no bigger challenge to careers work.
3. *knowledge and control*. Rate of change means that knowledge can easily be out-of-date by the end of the day on which it is released. To keep up, people must continuously update themselves. Furthermore, knowledge comes with commercial, cultural and religious spin. And that means claims for attention are – at the extreme – demands for allegiance. So people need to know who is trustworthy, what is useful, and whether it is worthwhile (O’Neil 2002). Keeping up and knowing who to trust are demands for learning-to-learn. And that search for credibility is as important to career management as to anything.

All three issues a life-wide and life-long challenge. People need to know what to do about working life and wages, fun and parenthood, substances and obesity, spending and debt, bullying and allegiances, crumbling communities and website disclosures, sweatshops and shopping, the planet and carbon footprinting. And what people learn in any of these areas has consequences for how they stand in relation to work. They are inter-dependent – what anybody does about any of them shapes what is possible for all.

2.3 Needed knowledge - for global realities

The realities that give these issues their urgency are global. And global change is reaching us in three waves: economic, cultural and environmental. The cultural effects are pivotal because they affect how and what people learn. Global economics are made possible by digital communication and control technologies. Those same technologies have given us text messaging, e-mail, FaceBook, iPods, game-boxes, and camera-phones. They are cultural artefacts: globalisation is a cultural as well as an economic reality. Cultures shape the way people form their beliefs, values and expectations (Law, 2006b):

1. *beliefs*. People can access more images, impressions and narratives – and all shape their beliefs about what is going on. Those sources range from downloaded impressions, through stories gathered from the media, to the local exchange of versions of what they find in street-level gossip (Barham 2004).

2. *values*. Much of what people find in these ways is intended to be persuasive – it points to what people should do about things. These are social, commercial and religious messages – about *what* is worth acquiring, *what* is worth doing, and *who* is worth paying attention to. And, in all cases, *what* and *who* is not! (Sen, 2006).
3. *expectations*. All of this readily forms into impressions, narratives and mind-maps of how things are – ‘out there’ in the world. But also – ‘in here’ in inner life – they shape ideas about where a person stands in relation to what is going on. And that conjures up ideas about what a person can expect to get out of life (Arulmani, 2007).

These are ‘ways of seeing’. And they have as much significance for careers work as does the economic ‘bottom line’. What people learn from these processes is deeply embedded – the logos, icons and narratives become part of learning about reality and identity. And so managing a career is entwined in matrices of tension-laden needs, feelings, attachments, and allegiances. People are under pressure, they are increasingly conflicted and anxious. It has been possible, in the past, to think of the future as a promise. But, for too many people now, the future has become a threat. Life is uncertain. People’s well-being is damaged.

Well-being is increasingly a policy concern (Layard, 2005). It is impacting the ‘what?’ question – ‘what should people be learning from curriculum?’ The cultural trends are pervasive and dynamic enough to have radically reshaped recent policy ideas on that question. The British Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 2008) has relocated ‘careers education’ by linking it to the whole curriculum as a feature of learning for well-being. And there is further potential here, not just for economic well-being and personal-well-being but for civil-, spiritual-, physical-, and environmental-well-being. It is a departure for policy. Government has, for two decades, been concerned with maintaining high standards in response to economic imperatives. The current reforms do not abandoned that focus, but they set alongside standards an emerging concern that curriculum should be seen by students as relevant to their lives. It is, in this way, setting up two drivers for future curriculum development: (1) the importance to the economy of raising standards; and (2) the importance to people of learning for well-being.

The QCA proposals are handing careers workers an opportunity to set up well-managed and adequately-resourced learning for life. It is also handing us the biggest challenge to our creativity that we have faced in two generations (Law, 2009). The consequences will be far-reaching. They will rework the partnership between guidance and curriculum. We know what we can achieve through career guidance. We need to know more about what else is needed, and about what only curriculum can provide. It is a bigger task than can be taken on by conventionally understood careers-education-and-guidance. That is the ‘how?’ question – to be taken up later in this article. It will certainly demand more than tick-box teaching and cut-and-paste learning squeezed into edge-of-timetable spaces.

2.4 Entrenched knowledge – in stratified communities

There is another dimension to all of this. It has to do with the ‘who?’ question – ‘who gets access to what opportunities?’ Cultural beliefs, values and expectations are mostly picked up informally – from the people we spend most time with, the media we pay most attention to, and the gossip we most engage in. And all of this applies whether we come from some inner-city ghetto, some leafy suburb or some sequestered parkland development. It means that what careers workers say to clients and students, show them, and invite them to do, is understood by students and clients in terms of what

they already believe, value and expect. Any helper who is serious about enabling well-being cannot afford to ignore this.

But the point here is that people from different backgrounds carry different beliefs, values and expectations. We sometimes use the metaphor 'baggage' – as though it slows them down, holds them back, and needs getting rid of. But the facts are that, while baggage can hold some people back, other beliefs, values and expectations help other people on. In that case we call it 'cultural capital' (Hodkinson and others, 1996) – as though it were a kind of currency that can pay for a ticket to enter a sought-after life. The accumulation of this baggage and that currency is a generation-on-generation effect. It draws separating lines between some backgrounds, where sought-after access is granted, and others where that access is denied. The term for the way those lines are drawn in a society is 'social stratification'. Stratification is a reminder of a core question: 'who gets to do what?'. But stratification causes us to ask a supplementary: '... and on what basis?' – that is '...on what kind of say-so do some people get more-rewarding careers while others don't?'. It is a big question for careers work.

But we have fewer answers than we need. Repositioning ourselves for reform on access means repositioning ourselves on the spectrum of research agendas. The spectrum of research on our work is already wide. It ranges from enquiries into what useful impact the work has, to enquiries into what we now need to do to improve practice. Most studies contain elements of more than one sector of that spectrum. Four are worth flagging:

- '*impact*' questions – e.g. does careers-work work in any useful way?
- '*compliance*' questions – e.g. does it match anybody's hopes and expectations?
- '*diagnostic*' questions – e.g. when and with whom does careers-work work best?
- '*practice-based*' questions – e.g. when it works well, why does it do so, and what can we do to make it work better?

The 'with whom?' and 'why?' questions are critical for people whose metaphorical arms are loaded with a lot of 'baggage', but whose pockets are not filled with much 'capital' – metaphorical or monetary. So we need to know how we help not just the well-connected but all our people, and – above all – those most in need of help.

This part of that spectrum gathers practice-based evidence to improve evidence-based practice. Paul Willis (1997) is a trailblazer for this sort of diagnostic research. He uses a narrative-based method, to show how working-class lads deal with – or decline to deal with – the help offered to them. It is expensive detail to collect. We need to be able to develop more cost-effective narrative-based enquiry methods (Law, 2008b).

However, to be fair, policy also examines the impact on learning of culture. The government paper which is shaping the future of British careers work for young people into the foreseeable future – *Youth Matters* (DfES, 2005) – is premised on a useful analysis of cultural change in how careers are managed. But policy produces, at best, a filtered account of the bases for our action. We need our own research agenda.

There is an issue of language here. Much of our language is based on psychology – particularly of individual differences. That thinking has given us personal-construct theories (Savickas, 1995). There has been a marriage between, on the one hand, these versions of differential psychology, and, on the other, labour-market economics. And the offspring of that marriage have been matching theories – ways of positioning a free-standing self for an unproblematic opportunity. But Paul Willis is among those who have opened a door to a wider vocabulary for careers work. And, as we find here, much of

what we now need to understand is as likely to be expressed in the language of philosophy, sociology and cultural theory as in the language of psychology and economics.

The most telling stage in the setting up any enquiry project is the formulation of a research question. We have been examining a widening range of ways for posing those questions. The process is shaped by language. Some of the language built into the spectrum of research is spread out in table one. Differently positioned enquiries use different language. We now need that breadth.

Table 1. Research talk

impact enquiries	compliance enquiries	diagnostic enquiries	practice-based enquiries
'labour economy' 'competitiveness' 'user employability' 'user skills'	'quality standards' 'performance targets' 'learning outcomes' 'stakeholder expectations'	'individual differences' 'cultural backgrounds' 'social stratification' 'work stereotypes'	'user experiences' 'helping roles' 'helper credibility' 'user narratives'

Moving from left to right on the table means taking on board more ways of understanding our work. The widening vocabulary is not just a means of communication: language provokes curiosity, voices questions, and maps progress.

We already have our own people looking directly into these complexities. Meijers (2002, 2008) and Bimrose and her colleagues (2004) do so. Meijers looks at students and client behaviour in the context of their cultural experience. His work explains a great deal about how policy-driven work helps – and why it does not. Bimrose’s and her colleagues are disentangling how different approaches to guidance work differently for different groups of clients. Both point to ways of understanding what sort of provision helps and does not help – and how that works differently for different people. We need these kinds of evidence in order to expand our understanding of working with different cultural backgrounds, and – especially – working with its stratifying effects. The more we know the harder it is to imagine how we can move on except by serious reorientation of the uses of curriculum in careers work.

2.5 Knowledge and control – keeping up and taking command

We haven’t yet finished with the ‘who?’ and ‘what?’ questions. The way in which they are answered also has consequences for whether we see education as for positioning or for well-being.

Learning for positioning. But first we should acknowledge that careers work does not have exclusive rights to either question. The question ‘who gets to do what in society?’ is also explicitly posed by recruitment and selection people (Brown & Hesketh, 2004). They are also interested in what psychological characteristics can be linked to what economic opportunities. But their interest is differently rooted. For them the good of the organisation in which they work is the ‘given’: they work in its interests. A candidate’s abilities and motivations are contingent: significant only when they fit to the given. If one candidate doesn’t fit, another will. And, so, when it comes to the ‘what?’ question, recruiters and selectors are interested in whether or not candidates have learned enough successfully to position themselves for competitive advantage in selection procedures. As a matter of fact some teachers, students, their families, and the politicians those families elect find it difficult to imagine the

purposes of education in any other terms – they search only for ‘what a person needs in order to look good’.

Processes for well-being. But there are other purposes for education. At its heart education is interested in the ‘how?’ question – ‘how do people effectively learn?’ (Meadows 1993; Maclure & Davies, 1991). The ‘how?’ question points to an educational given – the rest is contingent on it. Because anything that has been learned can be re-learned – it can be expanded, developed, enhanced. Using that reference point makes a student’s competitive abilities contingent on how they learn. The same reference point applies to what they have learned about motivations and opportunities, or acquired from cultural beliefs, values and expectations. And what is then learned in any of these ways can enable students – not just for a channelled selection process but for life-wide and life long use. Isn’t that what education is for? So we come to the ‘how?’ question – ‘how do people learn?’. Among the key elements in any learning are coverage and process. Coverage is about knowing things. It includes knowing that something is so (like how the labour economy is changing) and knowing how to make something work (like how to write an effective cv).

While curriculum coverage is often expressed in nouns – referring to ‘facts’, ‘factors’, ‘trends’, ‘skills’. Process is often written in verbs (Law, 2005). The processes of learning include finding things out, sorting them out, checking them out and working out what that means. For example, up-dating labour-market information is a process, and so is adapting an approach to building a cv. Other learning verbs include ‘remember’, ‘explore’, ‘imagine’, ‘question’, ‘practise’, ‘interpret’, ‘explain’ and ‘anticipate’. All are critical to careers work. The importance of learning processes is widely understood. It features in talk of curriculum as ‘thinking skills’ (Maclure & Davies, 1991). Arguments for more emphasis on process usually mention the rate of global change. Any attempt to cover any ground will include information that is itself changing. And so people need to be able to update or replace what they know. And that means taking their own command of how to learn. This is a strong argument, but there is a stronger one. With all the social, cultural, and commercial pressures exerted on acquiring knowledge and forming impressions, people need to be able to scrutinise what they gather. That means questioning whether they have found enough to go on, whether they have sorted out the spin and bias, whether sources have been checked out for reliability, and how they can anticipate that the learning can lead to useful, valuable and sustainable action. When people learn how to manage their own learning in these terms, they are taking command of their own story.

Transfer of learning. A key part of learning process is getting transfer of learning. It means that what is learned in one place will be used in another. This is an absolute requirement for careers work: if the learning is not transferred to life then careers work is not working. Sara Meadows (1993) shows that to achieve transfer helpers must – every time – offer people clear and specific markers, pointing to where in their lives this learning will be useful. Learning must remind students of their lives, so that their lives remind them of their learning. For, without those links, the only markers they have is in tests and assessments. That may be good enough for positioning, but it is not good enough for education. Careers work needs more than disposable learning-outcomes, it needs re-useable outcomes-of-learning. Where students and clients are enabled to make their own use of learning process, our work ceases to be a course to be ‘delivered’ – like a commodity to a consumer. Students gaining their own command of the learning verbs makes learning a shared activity. They are our partners engaged in a probing, scrutinising and interrogating search – not customers ingesting a product.

A process-driven use of programme needs a strong contrast between learning for positioning and learning for well-being. Well-being, in a pressurised and changing world, requires abilities to look at other people’s agendas and develop your own, to receive the advice of others and question it – and to

examine a proffered opportunity and wonder why you would want it. We find in all of this something else that will not be achieved through tick-box teaching and cut-and-paste learning squeezed into edge-of-timetable lessons.

The ways in which process engages students is set out in table 2. All of these processes respond to the eight key features of contemporary career management listed at the beginning of this article. They can deal with pressure, change, conflict and confusion. They can put students in command of their own learning. They can build from basic to useful learning. They can enable students for the interrogation of curriculum and community influences. And they set learning in a balanced narrative of work life and well-being. A curriculum which enables students to take command of their own learning serves them life-long and life-wide.

Table 2. Student tasks in process-driven curriculum

processes	engagement	task
learning-to-learn	getting into a learning frame-of-mind, for interrogating what they encounter – finding out, sorting out, checking out, and working out what is going on and what they can do about it	researcher
assembling links	linking formal curriculum and community experience, comparing learning from different sources, probing academic and applied knowledge, questioning both expertise and experience – both other people’s experience and their own	narrator
progressing learning	moving-on, in a step-by-step progression – building from having enough to go, through how they develop ways of usefully seeing things, and how things can be explained, to what they can reasonably expect from their own action	theorist
transferring learning	bringing learning into life, setting up credible life-relevant markers – embedded reminders for how this learning helps in that life – so that learning is not seen as a hoop to be jumped through, but a resource for living	in all life roles – partner, family, social, shopping, financial, civil, religious and work roles

On the net such levels of engagement by autonomous users are known as ‘Web 2.0’. This article calls for the parallel creation of ‘Curriculum 2.0’.

2.6 Curriculum ‘two-point-zero’

‘Web 2.0’ is different from ‘1.0’ because people no longer just receive what is offered, they contribute: digital technology has put into their hands an apparatus through which they become their own researchers, narrators and theorists. And they make what they find work for all their life-role experience – and much that they imagine. These are twenty-first century realities. And there will soon be a ‘Web 3.0’, – and later. We have a lot of catching up to do. And the most formidable obstacle is our marginal position in the curriculum. We need more space: for students to probe what they find,

imagine new possibilities, work out what they can do about them, and rehearse-and-refine their own action. This kind of learning will not fit into occasional face-to-face work, we need to do more with curriculum. But neither will it squeeze into the to edge-of-timetable lessons. We therefore need to think about our how people can learn for their lives from the breadth and depth of the whole curriculum. And that is what the QCA's concept of well-being in curriculum is currently asking British teachers to do. But thinking about curriculum in broader term takes us into a field with political, conceptual and research dynamics of its own.

Political. The politics of curriculum call up all three of our questions. And they are entangled – when people talk about one, they often find themselves, willy-nilly, talking about another:

- the 'what?' question: what do people now need to gain from curriculum? – an issue for the purposes of curriculum.
- the 'who?' question: who gains access to what kind of learning opportunity? – an issue for stratification;
- the 'how?' question – how do people learn for their lives – an issue for how we can best help.

They 'who?' and 'what?' get badly entangled; and the muddle is most troublesome when tracing distinctions between vocational and academic curriculum. The terms 'vocational' and 'academic' speak – at the same time – of what people learn, and of the people who learn it. We conflate this: speaking of 'academic' students on academic courses, and 'vocational' students on vocational courses. It is claimed that vocational and academic courses can have equal status. But the claim falls apart when it comes to thinking about academic and vocational *students*. All of this crops up most visibly in the defence of separated school-leaving qualifications for an élite, with the assignment of lower-level school-leaving diploma to the rest.

Careers work is involved: we offer help on what combination of academic and vocational studies people should take. But, if we are serious about engaging curriculum more widely, then we should seek a deeper involvement. Our work is about more than operating whatever system is 'given'. It is about the purposes of learning and about fairness in access. That means being ready to speak of more than helping individual operate within a given system. The proposals of a British government-commissioned committee proposes cutting through these entanglements. Chaired by Mike Tomlinson (DfES, 2005) it envisages a unified qualification structure which locates vocational, academic and experience-based learning in a single system. Government is, inch by political inch, shifting in that direction.

Conceptual. The political wrangling is a surface manifestation of a long-standing and closely-argued discussion about the purposes and accessibility of education. Some of our most useful thinking has been set out by sociologist Basil Bernstein (1973). On the 'what?' question: Bernstein examines two features of curriculum coverage: (1) the way we divide knowledge into arbitrary parcels (which he calls 'classification'); and (2) how we separate curriculum knowledge from other knowledge ('framing'). Classification and framing are strong in academic curriculum – its timetable slots are tightly boxed and the whole is firmly set apart as élite knowledge. But, Basil Bernstein argues, curriculum needn't be like that: there can be flexible integration – sharing content and drawing on outside experience. He argues that this more flexible classification and framing is better suited to an open society – one where all members can achieve their life roles, rather than having their roles assigned to them. This is a 'Web 2.0' society.

On the 'who?' question: Basil Bernstein goes on to say that curriculum is marked up ('coded') through the use of distinctive forms of communication: specialist talk rather than ordinary talk, discourse rather than conversation, expertise rather than experience, guidance rather than gossip. Strongly-

classified talk is firmly categorised, enclosed and pure. Weakly-classified talk, cutting across subject and curriculum boundaries, is communicated in every-day terms. Basil Bernstein goes on the argue that the use of curriculum codes privileges some social groups over others – it is stratifying. And there is some confirmation in a recent MORI (2005) survey of user reactions to British guidance which shows our expertise is more familiar and accessible to some people than to others. This might be because they find the codes unrecognisable and unusable. The last thing that careers work should be colluding with is social stratification.

Research. Policy rightly has little to say about how this kind of learning is best enabled. British careers has support from the QCA urging greater relevance in curriculum, and of the Tomlinson Committee urging a unified assessment system. Both provide us with a strategic opportunity. But we must look elsewhere for tactical action. We need more practice-based research. But we already have some basic research which resonates with Bernstein’s analysis (Blakemore & Frith, 2005). It points to parallels between the way we – as a species – learn, and the way we – as a society – structure curriculum. The research points to how different sorts of learning fire-up different neurological networks:

- semantic learning is knowing that things seem to be so – such as facts, factors and trends in any field of knowledge, and the results of enquiries and assessments of performance in that field;
- procedural learning is practising how to do things – such as the crafts, routines and skills which are needed in any of the on-going tasks or activities we take on at work or at play;
- episodic learning is sequencing events to show the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of what happens – such as what goes on in the feeling-laden turning-points of real-life narrative scenes.

Table 3. What, how and why we learn

neurological psychology	sociological analysis
semantic learning – facts, factors and trends in any field of knowledge	academic curriculum – strongly classified, framed and coded
procedural learning – practising how to do things	skill curriculum – strongly classified, but weakly framed
episodic learning – sequencing events to show the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of what happens	personal-and-social curriculum – weakly classified, framed and coded

What we know moves back and forth in the neurological networks linking these areas of learning. And all learning draws on what these different areas of the brain have evolved to help us survive and flourish – that is to achieve well-being. Table 3 sets out a striking correspondences with Bernstein’s thinking.

The distribution of resources to these forms of learning is disturbing. Academic learning is less likely to be used in everyday life – and less likely to be remembered. But this is where we devote most of our curriculum resources. Episodic learning is more likely to be remembered, because it has value for well-being. Yet this is where we devote the least of our curriculum resources (Law, 2008b).

How question. The QCA and Tomlinson committee open doors to more ways of locating ourselves on the issues. These proposals call on careers workers to think about more than helping students navigate a system. We are needed to engage with the issues for purpose and fairness which have always underlain curriculum development. Recent ‘blue-sky’ thinking (Law, 2006c), commissioned by the QCA to inform its proposals, relocates careers education in the curriculum. Called ‘LiRRiC: life-role

relevance in curriculum', the thinking argues, and the QCA acknowledges, that none of this will be possible without seriously restructuring timetable. Based on the thinking set out in this article, LiRRiC is a curriculum design specification with five key characteristics:

- *timetable*: for a series of set-aside long-slots which academic teachers share with careers-work specialists;
- *time and space*: with enough room for sustainable, valued and practised learning;
- *community-links*: engaging contact with sources of useful experience outside the school;
- *standards and relevance*: enlisting both expertise and experience for the realisation of well-being;
- *focus*: drawing on fewer staff, but staff selected for their motivation and ability for each particular piece of work.

Learning for 'knowing what is going on' and 'knowing what I can usefully do about it', will not be found in any single source in any organisation's range of resources. LiRRiC therefore links up a range of both professional expertise and community experience. Its specification is, then, flexibly classified, framed and coded: it draws on more than one discipline, it relates to life outside all classrooms, and it is expressed in conversational language. But, as significantly as any of Basil Bernstein's concerns, LiRRiC's shared time and space gives enough room for students to work through the processes. And these processes can put them in command of transferable learning for life-wide and life-long use.

A recent development project identifies pressing practical issue for this work. The project applies LiRRiC principles by consulting with small groups of main-stream teachers. Teachers examine how 'academic' work can enable students for well-being in life. The strategy is to work with a few self-selected teachers, who recognise the possibilities and have the commitment and imagination to pursue them. Their main concerns are that a well-being agenda conflicts with a positioning agenda – because students may, in examinations, be distracted into straying from meeting criteria for achievement. But teachers are glad of the freedom that the QCA now offers. Engaging students in learning for life is seen as needed and rewarding (Law, 2008c).

Their concerns are realistic. But there is no subversion of academic standards In LiRRiC. On the contrary – for the quality of any programme cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. The future of careers work depends on attracting the interested attention of the best in the profession. And that includes the best of our 'academic' teachers. 'Academic' curriculum is good at setting out 'what is going on': from the mathematics of probability, through the history and geography of opportunity, into the narratives of self, and onto the science of consequences – knowing is useful. But this is not a use of learning as a selection device for positioning. It is not even a precious cultivation in students of some 'love of learning'. It is a grittier commitment for firing-up in students an appreciation of a 'point for learning'. Standards and relevance – that binary, but reciprocally dependent, dynamic for future curriculum development needs to be clearly expressed – certainly to students, but also to all of the many stakeholders in the education of any society's people.

Each new generation's future will not much resemble its predecessor's past. Neither must the future of curriculum. Careers work is deeply involved in that process of adaptation: we have people in our programmes now who will work into the twenty-second century – they must be ready for anything. And, so, we must reform.

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3

Self, Identity, and Globalization in Times of Uncertainty: A Dialogical Analysis²

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Understanding globalization and its impact on self and identity is a crucial task for social scientists today. As a result of increasing demographic, economic, ecological, political, and military interconnections on a global scale, cosmopolitanism is becoming an aspect of the everyday life of people in many parts of the world. Educational contacts crossing the borders of nationalities; tourism as the biggest industry in the world; the daily use of the Internet by adults, adolescents, and children; business contacts with people on the other side of the world; and intensive communication between diasporas and homelands illustrate that never in the history of humankind have global connections had such a broad reach and deep impact on the selves and identities of an increasing number of people.

Although globalization broadens the scope and opens new horizons for an increasing number of people from divergent origins, it has its evident shadow sides. Tragic events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, DC, and the bombings in Bali, Madrid, and London are fixed forever in our memories. They happened in a globalizing world filled with tensions, oppositions, clashes, prejudices, and misunderstandings between people from different cultural backgrounds who never in history have been so interconnected with each other as in the present era. Not only human-caused dramatic events have global reverberations, but so too do nature-caused disasters. Not only did the tsunami in southeast Asia result in the death of many thousands of people and deeply change the selves of their relatives, but this event also entered the living rooms of billions of people in the world via emotional images broadcast by TV stations and spread by the Internet. Moreover, many people from other parts of the world were tragically involved as a result of the growing tourism in the stricken areas. As a response to the disaster, individuals and organizations from all corners of the planet organized worldwide support, feeling closely affiliated with the victims.

Without doubt, the process of globalization opens new vistas and broadens our horizons. It offers increasing possibilities of international contacts and fosters economical, ecological, educational, informational, and military forms of cooperation. However, it also restricts and closes the selves of many people as a counterreaction to what they experience as a threat, as evidenced by the resistance to the worldwide immigration gulfs, to the religious practices and rituals of other cultural groups that are experienced as “strange” or “alien”, to the economic gap between “haves” and “have-nots,” and to the power of multinationals. In this article, we argue that to understand both the positive and the negative implications of the process of globalization on the individual level, a dialogical conception of self and identity is required, one that can account for the different and even opposing demands resulting from the processes of globalization and localization.

We divide the article into two parts. The first part offers a sociocultural analysis in which we argue that (a) globalization evokes localization as its counterforce and in this counterreaction the experience of uncertainty plays a crucial role and (b) a dialogical perspective is required that takes into account not only the increasing number of voices and countervoices that populate the contemporary self, but also

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their social dominance and their emotional character. In the second part, we present literatures that serve as a theoretical bridge between sociocultural understandings of globalization and biological and neurological processes that underlay the psychology of the self. In particular, the uncertainty and instability of a globalizing world increases the desire for stability, safety, and survival as universal biological needs. In this way, this article aims to present a dialogical framework that serves as a link between the historical and social phenomenon of globalization on the one hand and the biologically rooted needs for stability and security on the other hand.

We should note that it is not our intention to present a standard review article, which seeks to test a broad theoretical hypothesis against extant published findings. Rather, our purpose is to push a particular theoretical perspective to its limits so that it is able to link literatures originating from different traditions in the social sciences as parts of an extended theoretical framework. Although the purpose of this article is primarily theoretical, we suggest, in the final part, some research ideas that focus on the dialogical self as involved in the process of globalization and localization.

3.1 Globalization, Localization, and Uncertainty: A Sociocultural Analysis

Before we present a dialogical analysis of self and identity, we discuss the intimate interconnection between the global and the local. As we show, the experience of uncertainty is a significant psychological factor in this interconnection.

Globalization and Localization as Its Counterforce

Conceptions that treat globalization and homogenization as equivalent processes have become increasingly obsolete. Whether homogenization is seen positively in terms of the utopia of the global village or negatively in terms of cultural imperialism, such notions are based on the questionable assumption that we are moving toward an increasing global uniformity. However, as Meyer and Geschiere (1999) and others have observed, one of the ambiguities of the notion of globalization is that the homogenizing tendencies inherent in globalization imply a continued or even intensified heterogeneity that stresses cultural differences and even oppositions. Rather, the process of globalization, with its implied technological advances, leads to a sharpening of cultural contrasts or even engenders new oppositions. Indications of such paradoxical articulations are numerous. A few examples (see Meyer & Geschiere, 1999) may suffice. Modern technical devices, such as tape recorders, facilitated the spread of Muslim fundamentalism in North Africa and the Middle East, creating a giant market for cassettes of the latest star imam. The desire of many Westerners for an encounter with the "exotic" world of particular cultural groups requires these groups to produce local "authenticity" as a commodity for global tourism. The recent economic boom of industrializing countries in East Asia was accompanied by an equally vibrant boom of popular religions and spirit cults in local situations (see Weller, 1994). In some parts of Africa, witchcraft is used as a leveling force, undermining inequalities in wealth and power. Paradoxically, the same force is regarded as indispensable for the accumulation of such wealth and power. Witchcraft is used both to express envy and to accumulate Western goods as an indication of success (Geschiere, 1999). From a historical point of view, Obeyesekere (1977) has already observed that spirit cults and sorcery assumed a heightened status in the more modern sectors of Sri Lanka and concluded that this finding contradicts the well-known Weberian equation of "modernization" and "disenchantment" (see also Adams, 2004, who presented similar data from modern England). Such observations suggest that globalization and localization imply each other and can be regarded as two sides of the same coin (see also Robertson's [1995] concept of "glocalization" in which these sides are combined).

The dynamic relationship between the global and the local is even visible in studies of the process of civilization. Schäfer (2004) argued that not too long ago the big picture of human history showed a small number of large civilizations and large number of small local cultures. However, since a technoscientific civilization has begun to cover the globe, the big picture today looks very different. We are increasingly living in a globally spread civilization with many local cultures: “a *deterritorialized ensemble of networked technoscientific practices with global reach*” (p. 81). The Internet provides crucial evidence for the emergence of such a global civilization. However, Schäfer added that despite the fact that the Internet has a growing user base worldwide, it remains local at all points (see also Latour, 1993). User terminals are the places where global connections and local cultures interact. This implies that information and knowledge emerging on a global scale are always transformed and adapted so that they fit with the needs of people in their local situation.

In summary, two sociocultural trends can be observed that are closely intertwined: (a) globalization as boundary crossing and leading to international and intercultural connectedness and exchange and (b) localization as sets of customs or practices emerging from particular places, regions, or countries. The two trends do not exclude each other but rather coexist and fuel each other in dialectical ways. Any kind of cultural imperialism will be always negotiated in local terms so that it is unsuccessful in its homogenizing effects. (For related views on the intimate connection between the global and the local, see Appadurai, 1999; Arnett, 2002; Bhabha, 1999; Hall, 1991; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Kinnvall, 2004; Marsella, 1998; and Wallerstein, 1991.)

Globalization and Uncertainty

Globalization is not a new phenomenon, but its scale, speed, and import have changed (Kinnvall, 2004). In terms of scale, the number of economic, ecological, demographical, political, and social linkages is greater than in any previous time in history. In terms of speed, we are witnessing a compression of space and time as never before experienced. In terms of import, the globe is perceived as an ever smaller place: Events elsewhere have important implications for our everyday lives in our local situation. Globalization allows increased movement and border crossing, which permits the exchange of goods, services, ideas, and practices at the interfaces of cultures (Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Manners, 2000). However, global developments also have their shadow sides. As Kinnvall (2004) noted, the process of globalization is often accompanied by a “neo-liberal” ideology that involves a move from Keynesian economics toward more monetarist macroeconomic policies in highly developed countries. Moreover, such changes are followed by the introduction of structural adjustment programs in developing countries (see also Hurrell & Woods, 1999). Although these programs have the purpose of increasing privatization and global competitiveness and are intended to create stability and strengthen civil society, they often have the reverse effect of removing job certainty in the middle and lower classes of many societies. As a result of the state’s diminishing involvement in economic affairs, the image of the government as provider of welfare and certainty has been undermined in many societies, creating an authority vacuum in which new, often demagogic leaders emerge as a reaction to people’s desire for certainty (Kinnvall, 2004; see also Stiglitz, 2002, who referred to globalization as creating dual economies and technological or digital divides in societies).

The new terrorism

Many parts of the world are confronted with a new source of uncertainty: new terrorism (Grant, 2005; Moghaddam, 2005). Whereas terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s tended to be geographically confined to territories of dispute or conflict, the emergence of transnational or deterritorialized organizations marks a new phase in the operational complexity of terrorist groups. With their reliance on the mass media, they are communication organizations *sui generis*. An organization like al-Qaeda uses the full panoply of information technology devices, including CD-ROMs and satellite phones, while avoiding

the vulnerability of E-mail communication by using advanced encryption techniques to ensure confidentiality (Nacos, 2002). In its presentation to a global audience, al-Qaeda manifests itself as a transnational theater of operations sending and distributing their emotion-arousing messages worldwide. Its organization takes the form of a loose agglomeration that makes the risk of terrorist attack apparently unpredictable and potentially more global. The organization seeks to promote instability in its environment as a means to promote uncertainty (Grant, 2005; see also Crelinsten, 2004).

Global and local identities

Focusing on the psychology of adolescence, Arnett (2002) discussed the uncertainty and confusion resulting from globalization. He noted that in a globalizing world, people have to face the challenge of adapting not only to their local culture but also to the global society. He argued that, as a consequence of globalization, most people in the world, and adolescents in particular, now develop a bicultural identity: Part of their identity is rooted in their local culture, and another part is attuned to the global situation. Or they may develop a hybrid identity, successfully combining elements of global and local situations in a mix (see also Hermans & Kempen, 1998). However, Arnett referred also to the increase of identity confusion among young people in non-Western cultures. As local cultures are challenged and changed as a result of globalization, some young people feel themselves at home in neither the local situation nor the global situation.

Aspects of uncertainty

Given the central role we attach to the experience of “uncertainty” – a term to which different authors ascribe alternative meanings – a more detailed description is required. We see the experience of uncertainty as composed of four aspects: (a) *complexity*, referring to a great number of parts that have a large variety of relations; (b) *ambiguity*, referring to a suspension of clarity, as the meaning of one part is determined by the flux and variation of the other parts; (c) *deficit knowledge*, referring to the absence of a superordinate knowledge structure that can resolve the contradictions between the parts; and (d) *unpredictability*, implying a lack of control of future developments. As we demonstrate below, the experience of uncertainty characterizes a global situation of multivoicedness (complexity) that does not allow a fixation of meaning (ambiguity), that has no superordinate voice for resolving contradictions and conflicting information (deficit knowledge), and that is to a large extent unpredictable. As this description of globalization suggests, it is not necessarily a negative experience; for many people, the experience of uncertainty may open and broaden the space for possible actions, adventures, and explorations of the unknown (e.g., traveling, international contacts, forms of international and intercultural cooperation). Moreover, uncertainty can be seen as a definitive farewell to the dogmas and ideologies of institutions that restricted and confined the self in earlier times. However, when uncertainty reigns in many life areas or when one’s survival is at stake, as the recent terrorist attacks demonstrate, the experience of uncertainty may be intensified to a degree that it changes into an experience of insecurity or anxiety. As we have suggested, the latter experience motivates people to find local niches in which they try to find security, safety, and certainty (Adams, 2004; Giddens, 1991).

In summary, globalization is not to be equated with homogenization or uniformity but finds localization as its counterforce. Whereas globalization challenges people to extend their selves and identities beyond the reach of traditional structures, this extension implies the pervasive experience of uncertainty. Intensification of this experience motivates individuals and groups to maintain, defend, and even expand their local values and practices by establishing a niche for the formation of a stable identity. From a dialogical perspective, we see the experience of uncertainty (in the neutral sense of the term) as an intrinsic feature of a dialogical self. Building on the views of figures like Bakhtin (1973,

1981), James (1890), and Mead (1934), we envision the existence of a multivoiced dialogical self that is involved in internal and external interchanges and that never reaches a final destination. This self is conceived of as open to an ambiguous other and is in flux toward a future that is largely unknown. As we show in the next section, this uncertainty challenges our potential for innovation and creativity to the utmost, and at the same time, it entails the risks of a defensive and monological closure of the self and the unjustified dominance of some voices over others.

3.2 A Multivoiced and Dialogical Self

Our central thesis is that global–local connections require a dialogical conception of self and identity for several reasons. Three reasons, in particular, warrant such a conception: the increasing multiplicity of self and identity, the need for developing a dialogical capacity, and the necessity of acknowledging the alterity of the other person with whom one enters in dialogical contact.

Multiplicity of voices in the self

In a globalizing world society, individuals and groups are no longer located in one particular culture, homogeneous in itself and contrastingly set against other cultures, but are increasingly living on the interfaces of cultures (Appadurai, 1990; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Raggatt, 2000; Spiro, 1993; Wolf, 1982). The increasing interconnectedness of nations and cultures does not only lead to an increasing contact between different cultural groups but also to an increasing contact between cultures within the individual person. Different cultures come together and meet each other within the self of one and the same individual. This process may result in such novel and multiple identities as a business representative educated in a French school system but working for a Chinese company; Algerian women participating in an international football competition but afterward praying in a mosque; English-speaking employees living in India but giving technical training courses via the Internet to adolescents in the United States; and a scientist with university training in Zimbabwe desperately looking for a job as an immigrant in Great Britain. The focus here is on intercultural processes that lead to the formation of a multiplicity of cultural positions or voices coming together in the self of a single individual (Pieterse, 1995). Such positions or voices may become engaged in mutual negotiations, agreements, disagreements, tensions, and conflicts (e.g., “As a German I’m used to giving my honest opinion in case of disagreement with my colleagues but in the Iranian company where I work now, I found out that it is better to be deferential”). These examples have in common that different cultural voices are involved in various kinds of dialogical relationships and producing positive or negative meanings in fields of uncertainty. In other words, the global–local nexus is not just a reality outside the individual but is rather incorporated as a constituent of a dialogical self in action.

Dialogical capacity

In contrast to earlier closed and homogeneous societies, the globalizing society is characterized by strong cultural differences, contrasts, and oppositions. As Marsella (1998) observed, cultures and nations are competing for survival as life in contemporary society pits secular, religious, humanist, and scientific cultural traditions against one another in seemingly irreconcilable struggles because of fundamental differences in cultural practices, worldviews, and ideologies. It is our conviction that fundamental differences in an intensely interconnected world society not only require dialogical relationships between people to create a livable world but also a self that has developed the capacity to deal with its own differences, contrasts, tensions, and uncertainties (Cooper & Hermans, 2006). When the world becomes more heterogeneous and multiple, the self, as part of this world, also becomes more heterogeneous and multiple. As a consequence, increasing differences in the social milieu result in increasing differences in the self in which some parts of the self become more

dominant than other parts (Callero, 2003). Cultural and historical differences require a well-developed dialogical capacity (Watkins, 2003) in order to perceive, recognize, and deal with differences, conflicts, and oppositions and to arrive at workable solutions to the problems and challenges that result from an accelerating process of globalization. This requires a conception of the self in which processes of question and answer, agreement and disagreement, and negotiations between different parts of the self are recognized as intrinsic features of problem solving (Bertau, 2004; Hermans, 1996b).

Alterity

The potential of dialogue goes beyond the familiar situation of two people in conversation. Participants involved in conversation may express and repeat their own view without recognizing and incorporating the view of the other in their exchange. Innovative dialogue exists when speaker and respondent are able and willing to recognize the perspective of the other party in its own right and, further, are able and willing to revise and change their initial standpoints by taking the preceding utterances of the other into account (Marková, 1987). In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (1954) described, at the higher levels of communication, the experience of the other as “alter ego.” The other is like myself (ego), but at the same time, he or she is not like myself (alter). Dealing with differences in a globalizing world requires the capacity to recognize and respond to the other person or group in its alterity. Alterity, as a central feature of well-developed dialogue, is a necessity in a world in which individuals and cultures are confronted with differences that they may not understand initially but that may become comprehensible and meaningful as the result of a dialogical process. In the elaboration of a dialogical view, three propositions are indispensable: (a) other persons, groups, or cultures are parts of an extended self in terms of a multiplicity of contradictory voices or positions; (b) relations of social dominance are not alien to dialogue but belong to its intrinsic dynamics; and (c) emotions play a crucial role in closing or opening the self to global and local influences. As we demonstrate, these three propositions require linkages between the level of the global, the local, and the individual.

The Other in the Self: A Multiplicity of Voices

In a historical analysis of the concept of identity, Hall (1992) contrasted an “enlightenment subject” and a “decentered or postmodern subject.” The Enlightenment subject “was based on a conception of the human person as a fully centered, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose ‘center’ consisted of an inner core” (p. 275). The decentered subject is composed of different parts that are highly contingent on the changes in the environment. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identifications are continually being shifted about. If we feel that we have a unified identity from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or “narrative of the self” about ourselves (p. 277).

Along similar lines, Hermans (1996b, 2001) and Hermans, Kempen, and Van Loon (1992) proposed a decentralized conception of the self as multivoiced and dialogical. More specifically, they defined the dialogical self in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of *I*-positions or voices in the landscape of the mind, intertwined as this mind is with the minds of other people. Positions are not only “internal” (e.g., I as a man, White, Catholic, professor, husband, father, lover of the music of Beethoven) but also “external,” belonging to the extended domain of the self (e.g., my wife, my children, my colleagues, my country, my enemy; for the extension of the self, see also Aron et al., 2005; James, 1890; and Rosenberg, 1979). Dialogues may take place among internal positions (e.g., a conflict between my position as a father and my position as a hardworking scientist), between internal and external positions (e.g., I discuss with my colleague John our common project), and between external positions (e.g., disagreement between my teachers on religious topics). The dialogical self is not only part of the broader society but functions, moreover, itself as a “society of mind” with tensions, conflicts, and contradictions as intrinsic features of a (healthy functioning) self (Hermans, 2002).

Such a multivoiced dialogical conception acknowledges the extension of the self to the local and global environment. The personal voices of other individuals or the collective voices of groups enter the self-space and form positions that agree or disagree with or unite or oppose each other. Along these lines, real, remembered, or imagined voices of friends, allies, strangers, or enemies can become transient or more stabilized positions in the self-space that can open or close itself to the globalizing environment (Hermans, 2001).

Features of a globalizing position repertoire

As far as the dialogical self is open to the globalizing society, the position repertoire of the self has some specific features: (a) It is populated by an unprecedented density of positions (internal and external ones) that requires the self to organize and reorganize itself and implies the risk of a “cacophony of voices” (P. H. Lysaker & J. T. Lysaker, 2002); (b) when the individual is increasingly faced with a great diversity of groups and cultures on a global scale, the position repertoire becomes more heterogeneous and laden with oppositions and contradictions (see also Falmagne, 2004); (c) as a result of the speed and unpredictability of global changes, the repertoire is subjected to an increasing change and receives more “visits” by unexpected positions; and finally (d) as a consequence of the increasing range of possible positions, there are larger “position leaps” (e.g., immigration to another country, cosmetic surgery, instant fame as the result of TV performance; Hermans, 2001).

Collective voices and audiences

Dialogical self theory is inspired not only by the psychology of the self devised by James (1890) but also by dialogism as proposed by Bakhtin (1973, 1981). In Bakhtin’s view, all utterances are multivoiced and dialogical at the same time (Skinner, Valsiner, & Holland, 2001). They are multivoiced because in the act of speaking there are two voices: the voice of the speaking person and the voice of a social language (e.g., one’s dialect, one’s professional group, one’s generation). In a sense, Bakhtin argued, the word in language is “half-foreign” because the collective voice of the social group speaks through the mouth of the individual speaker. The collective voice becomes one’s own when the speaker populates it with his or her own intentions and expressive tendencies (e.g., I speak as a psychologist, but at the same time I’m expressing my personal opinion or conviction). The speaker adapts the social languages to his or her meaningful and expressive personal tendencies.

Cultural groups

Although Bakhtin (1973, 1981) did not say much about cultural groups (Wertsch, 1991), they can easily become incorporated in a dialogical view of the self. Both the cultural groups to which one belongs and those to which one is emotionally opposed can be part of an extended, multivoiced, tension-laden dialogical self. A representative of one cultural group can talk about representatives of another cultural group in an ironic or even deprecatory way, imitating or ridiculing their words, accents, or facial expressions and using characteristic intonations and gestures to express one’s own evaluation of the other person or group in verbal and nonverbal ways. When people communicate with each other in dialogical ways, there is not only a speaker and an addressee, but also one or more implicit or hidden audiences (Marková, 2006; Salgado & Hermans, 2005) that are, as third parties, the objects of speech (the ridiculed group in the example). The process of globalization implies not only an increase in the number and heterogeneity of addressees and their various cultural backgrounds but also the number and heterogeneity of audiences that are implicitly present in the speech of everyday life.

Psychopathology

The increasing density and heterogeneity of positions of the self in a globalizing era is also reflected in the literature on psychopathology. Some dysfunctions that were once of peripheral importance in psychiatric diagnostic systems have assumed almost epidemic proportions at the present time. Borderline personality disorder and eating disorders, for example, have “identity disturbances” among their core features (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), suggesting that an increasing number of patients are faced with a disorganizing instability of the self and the impossibility of choosing a limited number of favorite and stable positions to help them to find a meaningful direction in their lives. Moreover, psychiatrists maintain that we are facing an epidemic of multiple personality disorder (or, to use its more recent name, dissociative identity disorder). Whereas up until 1980 no more than a hundred of these cases had been diagnosed (Boor, 1982), the number of multiple personality disorder diagnoses have increased dramatically since then (Hacking, 1995). Of particular interest for the multivoiced nature of the self is the increase in the number of “alters” in this disorder. In the beginning of the 20th century, the few patients with these kinds of troubles were simply “double personalities.” At the end of the same century, patients diagnosed with multiple personality disorder were frequently found to have a great variety of alters, at some extremes numbering in the hundreds (Putnam, 1989). Not only the number but also the nature of the alters have changed over time. In earlier diagnoses, typical symptoms included alters that were ascribed to the etiology of the dysfunction: childlike positions and persecutors, in case of a diagnosed history of child abuse. Today, however, alters show increasing variation: Frequently, they have the names of characters in soap operas, TV movies, and comedies, some of them being of the opposite sex and differing in race, religion, and age (Hacking, 1995). It is very hard to imagine a patient of Pierre Janet’s in France at the end of the 19th century displaying an alter with Black skin and devoted to Islam. The changing pattern of diagnostic symptoms, implying differences in the number and nature of the alters, suggest the workings of cultural factors. For other pathologies such as schizophrenia, whose cause may be of a more genetic nature, such an increase of incidence is not reported (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Therefore, we propose that cultural changes in the realm of psychopathology reflect the increasing density and heterogeneity of positions in a globalizing age.

Dialogue and Social Dominance

Often the notion of dialogue is regarded as essentially different or even as opposed to the notion of social dominance. Usually, *dialogue* evokes an image of people sitting at a round table discussing their views and problems as perfectly equal partners. As far as there is any dominance, it is the power of arguments that count. Such a conception of dialogue, however, can be regarded as an ideal speech situation or even a romantic ideal. In apparent opposition to this image, Linell (1990) has argued that asymmetry exists in each individual act–response sequence. As participants in a well-organized turn-taking process, the actors continually alternate the roles of “power holder” and “power subject” in the course of their dialogue. As long as the one party speaks, the other party is required to be silent. As long as the dominant party talks, the subordinate party allows, or must allow, his or her contributions to be directed, controlled, or inhibited by the interlocutor’s moves (interactional dominance). Moreover, one party can predominantly introduce and maintain topics and perspectives on topics (topic dominance). The amount of talk also reflects dominance relationships: The party who talks much prevents the other party from taking a turn. Finally, the speaker who makes the most strategic moves may have a strong impact on a conversation without needing to talk a lot. In other words, although the topic of a meaningful conversation is under mutual control, relative dominance is not extrinsic but rather intrinsic to the dialogical process (see also Guilfoyle, 2003, for a discussion of social dominance as an intrinsic feature of dialogical relationships between psychotherapist and client).

Social dominance and institutions

Social dominance plays a more structural role when the positions of people in institutions are taken into account. This can be illustrated by referring to two basic forms of dialogue in the sense of Bakhtin (1973): (a) the play of question and answer and (b) relationships of agreement and disagreement. When differences in dominance between parties are minimal (as in a conversation between two good friends), the dialogical process is reciprocal, that is, the parties involved are relatively free to ask questions of each other at any time in the conversation. In the situation of a legal interrogation, in which differences in dominance are strongly increased, questions and answers are highly uneven, with one party posing the questions and the other party forced to answer within the frame determined by the inquirer as a representative of the institution. In similar ways, relationships of agreement and disagreement are organized on the basis of institutional positions. In modern schools that aim to stimulate the personal responsibility and creativity of the learners, students are permitted to disagree not only with their classmates but even with their teachers, provided that these teachers regard such disagreements as signs of a creative, independent mind. In traditional, hierarchically organized educational settings, however, students are not permitted to disagree with teachers on any subject at all, as any disagreement is regarded as questioning the self-evident authority of teachers as the exclusive power holders within the educational setting. As these examples suggest, societal institutions entail social positions that deeply influence the dialogical process in structural ways. When one of the parties is not allowed to play a role as an active and reciprocal contributor of the interchange, dialogue is reduced to monologue because one voice is in control of the situation at the expense of the active contribution of the other to a commonly produced result.

Social dominance and hierarchical organization of self

Similar processes can be found when localizing forces reduce the multiplicity of voices of globalization in protective or defensive ways. In a study of Jewish orthodoxy, Kaufman (1991) was interested in women who grew up in secular Jewish homes in the United States and felt that the secular values of their education did not give them an adequate foundation for their lives. Despite the limitations that traditional beliefs place on women, they converted, in their teens or 20s, to orthodox Judaism. They did so in the conviction that an orthodox religious system offered them a meaningful place in the world and the experience of being rooted in a long, durable tradition. Placing Kaufman's study in the broader context of globalization, Arnett (2002) discussed the emergence of fundamentalist movements in both Western and non-Western societies and argued that many of these movements arose in the late 20th century as a reaction to the changes caused by globalization. Apparently, such worldviews can be regarded as localizing reactions to the process of globalization. They provide the self with a stabilized religious position that is based on a belief in a sacred past, a social hierarchy of authority of men over women, adults over children, and God over all (Arnett, 2002; Marty & Appleby, 1993).

In a similar vein, Kinnvall (2004) argued that the emergence of Bin Laden and al-Qaeda cannot be grasped without taking into account the extent to which many Arab countries pursued paths of modernization that were inspired by Western developments in the early post-Second World War period. Initiated by the state, not by the people, such reforms were often rationalized by the conviction that the "modern" few were planning the future for the more "traditional" and less educated segments of society. The uncertainty created by the problems and failures of such experiments motivated young people to revolt against these reforms and to seek refuge in older and more familiar concepts. In the case of Egypt, this led to identity constructions based on patriotism and religion, whereas Saudi Arabians tried to find certainty in ethnicism and Islamic guardianship (see also Ayubi, 1999; Haddad & Esposito, 1998). Also, Nandy (1997) has pointed to the destabilizing effects of the process of globalization and the tendency to withdraw into local niches. He observed that in recent years many

expatriate South Asians in the West have become “more aggressively traditional, and more culturally exclusive and chauvinistic” and “more protective about what they think are their faiths and cultures” (p. 158). From a dialogical point of view, religious orthodoxy, the rise of fundamental movements, and the phenomenon of patriotism find their expression in collective voices that encourage a hierarchical organization of the position repertoire of the self and a reduction of the heterogeneity of positions with a simultaneous avoidance of internal disagreement, conflict, and uncertainty. The dominance of one voice or a few voices over the others leads to a reduction of the experience of uncertainty, but at the same time, it has the questionable effect that other voices, as possible contributors or innovators of the self, are silenced or split off.

Recognition of social dominance in theories of self

For a deeper understanding of the process of globalization and its implications for self and identity, the notion of social dominance is indispensable. Contemporary theories of the self, with their strong emphasis on unity, often lack insight about the intense interplay between relations of dominance in the society at large on the one hand and relations of dominance in the “minisociety” of the self on the other hand. In a recent review of the literature on the self, Callero (2003) listed a number of concepts representing the focus of mainstream psychology: self-enhancement, self-consistency, self-monitoring, self-efficacy, self-regulation, self-presentation, self-verification, self-knowledge, self-control, self-handicapping, and self-deception. In one of his critical comments on these concepts, he raised the issue of social power. The self that is socially constructed is never a bounded quality of the individual or a simple expression of psychological characteristics; it is a fundamentally social phenomenon, where concepts, images, and understandings are deeply determined by relations of power. Where these principles are ignored or rejected, the self is often conceptualized as a vessel for storing all the particulars of the person. (Callero, 2003, p. 127; see also Sampson, 1985, who criticized from a social constructionist point of view the self-contained individualism as typical of many psychological theories of the self in the West.) Because dominance fights are usually controversial, they require a more explicit psychology of emotion. Therefore, we discuss in the following section the role of emotions in relation to globalization, localization, and identity formation.

Emotional Voices

Dialogical voices can be reasoned or emotional. They can argue, negotiate, and convince, but they can also shout, accuse, beg, regret, laugh and cry, and express anger, joy, sympathy, love, fear, anxiety, hate, or disgust, to mention just a few ways in which people relate to their environment or to themselves. As Kemper (1978) suggested, a large class of human emotions result from real, imagined, anticipated, or recollected outcomes of social relationships (see also Averill, 1997; Parkinson, 1996; Sarbin, 1989; Shaver, Wu, & Schwartz, 1992). In the field of psychotherapy, Stiles (1999) has expressed the view that voices in the self are emotionally laden, have agentlike qualities, and are more or less integrated in the larger community of voices in the self. As these literatures suggest, a social psychological perspective of emotions can be helpful in understanding the ways in which people respond to the processes of globalization, localization, and identity formation.

Home and homesteading

From a social psychological perspective, the emotional implications of globalization were presented by Kinnvall (2004), who argued that global changes have intensified “ontological insecurity” and “existential uncertainty.” A primary way of responding to these experiences is to seek reaffirmation by drawing closer to any localized group that is seen as capable of reducing uncertainty and insecurity. Particularly, (institutionalized) religion and nationalism are identity markers in times of rapid change and uncertain futures. In more general terms, Kinnvall pointed to the significance of the notion of “home” as a bearer of certainty and security and as constituting a spatial context in which daily

routines can be performed in rather stabilized circumstances. Whereas for many individuals feeling at home in a family, neighborhood, workplace, or religious group may be a self-evident part of their life situation, for other people, particularly immigrants, refugees, and those living in diaspora, homes have to be actively created. In this context, Kinnvall referred to the phenomenon of "homesteading" (see also Sylvester, 1994, and Kronsell, 2002) as a strategy for coping with homelessness. In new and uncertain circumstances, people shape a political space for themselves in order to cope with the uneasiness and anxieties of homelessness. This may motivate people to become a member of an exile community (e.g., the Sikhs in Canada, the Pakistanis in Britain, or the Kurds in Sweden) and to create common places of assembly (e.g., gurdwaras, mosques, or Kurdish community halls). Certainly, the tendency to create homes when separated from one's homeland has been part of the (voluntary as well as forced) immigrant experience throughout history. However, the increasing global immigration gulfs have stimulated a process of homesteading on a larger scale than ever before in history.

To understand the process of globalization and its impact on identity, Kinnvall (2004) posed a significant question concerning the emotional aspects of the opposition between in-group and out-group. How can we comprehend why feelings of fear, loathing, and even hatred creep into "our" perceptions of "them," and how can we understand these emotions in times of uncertainty? To find an answer to these crucial questions, Kinnvall built on psychoanalytic accounts of identity and identity conflicts. Kristeva's (1982, 1991) psychoanalytic work is particularly relevant from a dialogical point of view.

Subject, object, and abject

A basic tenet in Kristeva's (1982, 1991) and Kinnvall's (2004) analysis is that the psychological roots of xenophobia, anti-immigrant discourses, racism, and the marginalization of others are to be found in "the enemy in ourselves," as the "hidden face of identity." It is an unconscious part of the self that has become internalized as an "enemy" in the past, fueling our imagination in times of opposition or conflict. The important role of imagination can be illustrated by situations in which the enemy is perceived as threatening without actually being present. Anti-Semitism in Poland exists despite its relative lack of Jews, and sometimes stronger anti-immigrant feelings can be found in places with few or no immigrants than in places with a large number of immigrants. This combination of interiorization and imagination produces "another" that is perceived not as a subject, not as an object, but as an "abject". The other is rejected on emotional grounds and not considered an integrative part of the conscious self. This is done in the service of maintaining a secure identity: "The construction of an abject-other becomes a means to securitize subjectivity as it reduces anxiety and increases ontological security" (Kinnvall, 2004, p. 753; see also Appadurai, 1999, for a treatment of extreme violence as a response to the experience of uncertainty and Moghaddam, 2005, who describes the circumstances in which young people living in economically deprived circumstances and frustrated by feelings of injustice, find a "home" by affiliating themselves with terrorist organizations where they learn to perceive nonbelievers as abject others).

In an attempt to study the abject other in a psychotherapeutic context, Hermans and Hermans-Jansen (1995) examined a dream from a client in which two characters played central roles: an abjected murderer who was depicted as a threat to a village community and another character, the pursuer, who had the responsibility of defending the community against the murderer. As part of a dialogical procedure, the client, Paul, was invited to separately produce some utterances from the perspective of the two positions. Whereas the pursuer phrased socially acceptable statements (e.g., "I chase him to the pinnacles of the tower"), the murderer expressed his intention in the form of extremely crude statements (e.g., "I hate them, I kill them all"). In the discussion of the dream, Paul recognized himself clearly in the position of the pursuer and accepted this figure and his emotions as very close to the

internal domain of his self. In contrast, Paul perceived the murderer as an enemy-other, and the murderer's aggression was regarded as totally external. After a closer inspection of the dream content, however, Paul found out that the pursuer possessed information that he earlier perceived only in the mind of the murderer. From that moment on, he had to admit to himself that the murderer and the associated emotions of hate and anger were also closely related to his internal self. This was reason for the therapist to invite the client to give, from his own position as Paul, an answer to the extreme statements and emotions of the murderer. He then produced some statements that suggested that he opened himself, to some degree, to the unwanted position: "The feelings that are associated with my experiences – I'm not very well aware of them" and "There are a lot of situations in which I have harmed myself by not defending myself" (p. 135). The results of this investigation were interpreted in terms of the identity-in-difference phenomenon (Gregg, 1991). Whereas initially the unwanted position was clearly outside the internal domain of the self, at some later point in time this position stood somewhere in a transitional field where it was at the same time experienced as "belonging to myself" and "not belonging to myself." As this study suggests, the boundaries between the internal and external domains of the self are not necessarily sharp. Rather, it argues for the existence of a field of transition between internal and external, where an individual knows at some level of consciousness that the "bad guy" is part of the internal domain and at another level that this position is part of the external domain. Moreover, these results suggest the existence of a dynamic self that allows, under special conditions, the movement of an enemy-other from the external to the internal domains of the self. If this happens, there is a chance that the abject other, rather than being silenced or excluded, becomes an accountable voice in the polyphony of the self (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995).

As this case study suggests, the inclusion of the enemy-other or the stranger-other is part of a self-construction that is built on the contrasting distinction between "superior" and "inferior." Positions that correspond with one's own national, religious, or ethnic group represent purity, order, truth, beauty, good, and right, whereas those on the outside are affected by pollution, falsity, ugliness, bad, and wrong (Kinnvall, 2004; Moghaddam, 2005). The problem of defensive forms of localization is that the permeability of the boundaries between internal and external domains of the self is closely intertwined with the exclusive opposition between the superior and the inferior. Permeability decreases when particular positions in the external domain are perceived as inferior.

Differences with other theories

There are other theories in psychology and the social sciences that deal with similar phenomena as dialogical self theory. What are the differences? In social identity theory, for example, there is not one personal self, but rather several selves or positions that correspond to widening circles of group membership. An individual has multiple social identities, dependent on perceived membership in social groups (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002). The existence of collective voices in dialogical self theory corresponds with the notion of internalized group membership in social identity theory. An important difference between the two theories is that social identity theory asserts that group membership creates self-categorization in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group, whereas according to dialogical self theory other individuals or groups in the self are conceived of as voices that are able to entertain dialogical relationships with other individuals or groups in the self and are able to dominate and silence each other as a result of internal negotiations and conflicts. In other words, whereas social identity theory is based on the notion of categorization, dialogical self theory is based on the notion of addressivity. Certainly, as a result of inner dialogue in-groups may be favored at the expense of out-groups, but other solutions are possible as different voices can entertain a dialogue with each other and produce an outcome that is different from a straightforward in-group preference.

A comparison can also be made with optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991), which suggests that people, in their affiliations with groups, try to maintain a balance between the desires to fit in and stand out. Whereas feelings of belonging create a need to individuate oneself, feelings of uniqueness lead to attempts to reembed oneself in the collective. There exists a dialectical opposition between these tendencies: Meeting one signals a deficit in the other and leads to increased efforts to reduce this deficit. Whereas optimal distinctiveness theory and dialogical theory both assume the existence of tension and conflict between opposing parts of the self, the latter theory acknowledges sign-mediated dialogical relationships between voices that may agree or disagree with each other and question each other in processes of negotiation, deliberation, and mutual criticism.

Dialogical self theory also shows some similarities to and differences from intersectionality theory (Collins, 2000). In contrast to theories that consider race, gender, and class as discrete or additive processes, intersectionality theory sees the effects of race, class, and gender as intersecting and interlocking. For example, a woman's gender status cannot be separated from her class or racial status. A Black woman is confronted with other challenges and disadvantages than a Black man. Gender, class, and race work together in creating an overarching structure of domination, creating different outcomes for individuals and for groups positioned at the point at which a particular race meets a particular gender and a particular class status. In agreement with intersectionality theory, dialogical self theory considers self or identity as located on the interface of social position and as subjected to relations of social domination. An important difference, however, is that dialogical self theory is interested not only in processes on the interface of social positions (e.g., gender, class, gender), but also in personal positions (e.g., I as a victim, I as an optimist, I as ambitious).

3.3 On the Mutual Complementarity of the Social and the Biological

In the second part of this article, we discuss some recent theoretical issues regarding the embodied, biological, and neurological aspects of the self and their significance for a dialogical self involved in the process of globalization. There are two problem areas that are particularly central to our argument and, at the same time, challenge us to consider the relationship between the social and the biological aspects of the self: (a) the issue of stability in a changing world and (b) the social nature of emotions.

Need of Stability in a Changing World

Recently, Falmagne (2004) argued for the necessity of establishing a "site" in the self that remains continuous and sufficiently stable through moments of dialogical and discursive meaning construction. Conceptually, the self must be individuated as the same element through the different ways in which it is dialogically constructed and through the experiential and contextual ways in which it moves through time and space. The self is involved in rapid movement and change, as part of the globalizing process, but at the same time, there is a deep need for local stability (for a thorough discussion of the coexistence of stability and change, see Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol, & Hallett, 2003).

The apparent need of stability raises the important question of whether a substantial self exists or not. As Falmagne (2004) explained, some social-constructionist conceptions of the self have led to the radical rejection of a substantial self and resulted in a shift toward a nonsubstantial, fluid notion of subjectivity. Because in these views the center of the self "does not hold," its different parts are decentralized to such a degree that the self becomes scattered and loses its coherence (see, e.g., Gergen's [1991] notion of "multiphrenia"). Apparently, for some social constructionist accounts, nonhomogeneity and contingency in discursive positioning are taken as reasons to reject the self as a theoretical notion. In contrast to these views, we argue, in agreement with Falmagne, for a

substantial embodied self that includes multiplicity, heterogeneity, contradiction, and tension. We see such phenomena not as an impasse for a theoretical notion of the self, but as intrinsic aspects that are “owned” by an embodied self. Like the experience of uncertainty, fluidity and contradictions are regarded as intrinsic features of a dialogical self in a globalizing world. A theory is needed that is able to explain the mechanisms by which individuals, as agentic subjects, do or do not identify with positions to which they are summoned through dialogical or discursive relationships. Part of this identification is how individuals fashion, stylize, and personalize the positions they occupy as participating in global and local situations (Falmagne, 2004; Hall, 1996). In this view, the self is not only a social but also a personal construction. Two or more internal voices can construct a personal space as a productive field for inner dialogues and for the authentic construction of meaning, a field that is continuously exposed to the field of social relationships and expanded by it (Salgado & Hermans, 2005).

Biological needs reduce the position repertoire

Apparently, people are in need of an environment stable enough to feel at home and to experience a feeling of security and safety in a quickly changing world. Moreover, people tend to respond with anxiety, anger, hate, loathing, or disgust when they feel threatened in their need for protection and local security. Such observations require that a psychology of emotions be included as part of the processes of globalization and localization. As Kinnvall (2004) has noted, reducing emotions to present social relations in society would neglect the deeply rooted need for safety and stability in one's life circumstances, strongly emphasized by object relations theorists (e.g., Winnicott, 1964). Referring to the important role of emotions for survival, evolutionary psychologists (Buss, 1995), psychoanalysts (Lichtenberg, Lachman, & Fosshage, 1992), and cognitivists (Gilbert, 1989) have presented evidence that human behavior can be understood as driven by a set of evolutionary-based motives that grant survival and fitness both to the individual and to the group (in competition, cooperation, sexuality, and fight–flight). When these motives are at risk of being not fulfilled, emotions arise and are expressed in behavior that signals the corresponding states of mind (e.g., shouting and crying by children in situations of threat). In the course of life, a large percentage of self-narratives, populated by a number of characters representing a variety of internal and external self-positions, are built around these universal, transcultural, biological motives. People are motivated to construct narratives centered on themes that help them deal with fundamental life issues while sharing these narratives with others (McAdams, 2006; Salvatore, Dimaggio, & Semerari, 2004). A significant implication of this view is that some positions or voices in the self become exclusively important, and particularly in situations of anxiety and threat, they receive priority above other voices on emotional grounds, moving the self in a monological direction. At the interface of the social and the biological, we witness a paradoxical situation: Whereas globalization has the potential to increase the density and heterogeneity of positions of the self in unprecedented ways, it evokes, at the same time, forms of localization that are driven by deeply rooted biological needs that cause a serious reduction and restriction of positions in the repertoire of the self.

A Pakistani family

In the field of tension between social–historical developments and biological urgency, the dialogical self is particularly challenged. Let's illustrate this with an example of a Pakistani family living in England. The family is traditionalist and deeply affected by the fact they are not accepted for what they are by the dominant communities in the host country. The collective voice of the out-group community is critical and urges them to change. From the other side, there is an inner voice, deeply rooted in the collective voices of their original culture, that presses them to stay faithful to their origins. This traditional voice is empowered by the myths, stories, and autobiographical memories associated with their attachment history. So they must find a way to negotiate between their wish

to be accepted by the host culture, which stands in hard opposition to their original culture, and their adherence to their original culture, which, as an embodied reality of their selves, they cannot renounce. Located in this field of tension, they are forced to negotiate among the several contrasting voices to find a dialogical solution.

Tensions between voices representing original and host cultures are certainly not unique to the situation of globalization. What the example illustrates, however, is that the process of globalization creates new and intensified fields of tensions between global and local positions, with strong differences, conflicts, and oppositions between voices, which require dialogical interchanges both between and within different selves to arrive at workable solutions. Surely, the demands and opportunities of globalization are broadening the range of differing, opposing, and conflicting voices and may lead, along these lines, to an increasing discontinuity and incoherence of the self. However, biological survival needs work as a restricting and even opposing force on these demands and possibilities. Biological needs, particularly if frustrated, restrict the dialogical self.

The dialogical brain

Further arguments for the need of mutual complementation of social and biological conceptions of self and identity can be derived from brain research on the dialogical self. Lewis (2002), proposing the notion of a dialogical brain, questioned the idea of unlimited flexibility within the dialogical self and emphasized the apparent need of people to return to "ordinary positions" in their lives. Lewis based this insight on a study of the workings of the orbitofrontal cortex, a region at the base of the frontal lobe that is tuned to rewards and punishments in social relationships. By its dense connections with the amygdala, a structure primarily responsible for fear, anxiety, and some kinds of anger, the orbitofrontal cortex favors emotionally based monological responses rather than flexible dialogical movements. The tendency to seek, often in an automatic ways, for routine or standardized positions raises the question of whether a dialogical self, which assumes the existence of a variegated and flexible position repertoire, is possible.

In an attempt to answer this question, Lewis (2002) analyzed automatic phrases like "That was stupid" or "You are dumb" that the person (or an imagined other) is saying to him- or herself during the performance of a task. In these examples, there is no clear-cut other voice and there is not much turn-taking or an explicit sequence of question and answer. Instead, internal dialogues are sublingual and inchoate, and there is not much elaboration and development of a dialogue with another voice. In this case, the person automatically operates from a familiar *I*-position and continuously returns to situations in which this position can be reached. On this sublingual and inchoate level, we are more conservative and monological than innovative and dialogical. In keeping with dialogical self theory, Lewis concluded that in our daily lives we are involved in a dialogical relation with an anticipated, almost-heard other from the perspective of a familiar and rather continuous *I*-position. As part of the external domain of the self, such a position produces statements like "good!" "too bad!" and "stupid!" or more complex utterances like "You see, this leads to nothing, as always!" or "You are not able to achieve anything, whatever you do!" Lewis supposed that these utterances come from voices of significant others in the remote past whose positions are incorporated as stabilized parts into the external domain of the self.

Similarly, in a discussion of the orbitofrontal area in the brain, Schore (1994) pointed to the existence of repetitive neural mechanisms in the working of the dialogical self. He described the emergent capacity of the growing brain to switch adaptively between psychobiological states that are colored by different affects. When the child develops a dialogical self, he or she is increasingly able to transcend an immediate negative state (e.g., distress) and enhance "self-solace" capacities that help

the child make a transition between the two states when the mother is not present (“Mommy is away, but she will come back”). As Schore explained, the child develops the capacity to make transitions from negative to positive affective states of mind and realizes, in recurring ways, an adaptation of the self to a problematic situation. This adaptation is seriously reduced in forms of insecure attachment. As this research suggests, the experience of insecurity reduces the self’s capacity to make the transition from a negative to a positive position. This reduction impoverishes the variation of the position repertoire and flexible movements between different voices. As discussed earlier in this article, the lack of flexibility associated with strong negative emotions is a central problem in defensive forms of localization.

Both Lewis’s (2002) and Schore’s (1994) work is focused on the orbitofrontal cortex, which produces, in its linkage to the subcortical limbic system, an affectively charged, gistlike sense of an interpersonal respondent, based on stabilized expectancies from many past interactions. Both models have the advantage in that they show how relatively stable, sublingual voices and recurrent dialogical routines put limits on the linguistic, dialogical processes. These limits are not to be evaluated necessarily as a disadvantage because they may contribute, in specific situations, to our action readiness and behavioral efficiency.

Fluid and stable dialogical patterns

As the work on the dialogical functioning of the brain suggests, it is necessary to distinguish between “fluid” and “stable” forms of dialogue. Fluid dialogues are contingent on changing situations, highly open to new input, and involved in an active process of positioning and repositioning. Stable forms of dialogue are repetitive, automatic, and closed to new input and information and, therefore, move to the monological end of the continuum. From a developmental perspective, Fogel, De Koeper, Bellagamba, and Bell (2002) have observed both regularly recurring dialogical routines (e.g., patterns of opposing wills between mother and child) and creative, changing, developing routines (e.g., taking a variety of positions during role playing) in the first 2 years of life. In a clinical setting, Dimaggio, Salvatore, and Catania (2004) found psychopathological analogues of this distinction in patients suffering from personality disorders: Some dialogical patterns were impoverished and rigid, others were disorganized and chaotic. The developmental and psychopathological literatures on changing and stable forms of dialogue are expected to be relevant both for the flux of globalizing processes and for stabilizing forces of protective or defensive forms of localization.

Basic needs as reducing the openness of the dialogical self

In the tradition of Bakhtinian dialogism, it is commonplace to emphasize the openness and unfinalizability of the notion of dialogue (e.g., Holquist, 1990). The difference between logical and dialogical relationships may serve as an example of the open nature of dialogue. Take two phrases that are completely identical, “life is good” and again “life is good” (Vasil’eva, 1988). From the perspective of Aristotelian logic, these two phrases are related in terms of identity; they are, in fact, one and the same statement. From a dialogical perspective, however, they may be seen as two remarks expressed by the voices of two spatially separated people in communication, who in this case entertain a relationship of agreement. Here we have two phrases that are identical from a logical point of view, but different as utterances: The first is a statement, the second a confirmation. In a similar way, the phrases “life is good” and “life is not good” can be compared. In terms of logic, one is a negation of the other. However, as utterances from two different speakers, a dialogical relation of disagreement exists.

In principle, dialogical relationships are open and move toward an unknown future. Every speech act opens a dialogical space (Hermans, 2001) that allows a broad range of possible statements or opinions in the future, and at every step in the process the next step is largely unpredictable. Logical

relationships, however, are closed, insofar as they do not permit any conclusion beyond the limits of the rules that govern the relationship. A syllogism, for example, starts from a set of premises and leads, through a number of logical steps, to a conclusion that is necessarily true, rejecting any other possibility. In apparent contrast to dialogical relationship, nothing is left to be said, nor is an opening created to the domain of the unexpected. However, the question can be raised as to whether dialogical relationships are as open as suggested by Bakhtinian dialogism. An everyday example may illustrate that dialogues are highly restricted by vested interests and emotional affinities. Two people, A and B, start a conversation, exchanging a variety of experiences in a casual way. At a certain point, A expresses an opinion with which B disagrees. For his part, B expresses a counteropinion that is not compatible with A's point of view. In the case of an open dialogue, one would expect that the two conversational partners would exchange their opinions and develop them in such a way that they learn from each other and revise their initial position in light of the input they have received from the partner. However, this is not what can be observed in many, perhaps even most, cases of disagreement. As soon as the conversational partners notice that the other party disagrees, they feel that their opinion, in which they have invested part of their identity ("This is *my* opinion"; "This is the way I see it"), is at stake, and from that moment they are motivated to "defend" their position against that of their opponent. Given this motivation, they repeat or paraphrase their initial point of view in an attempt to "protect" it against the "undermining" statements from the other. Gradually, the conversation assumes a competitive character, and both partners try to strengthen their own position to make it dominant over the position of the other party. Owing to this repetition and striving for dominance, the openness of the dialogue is seriously reduced and moves to the monological end of the continuum. The fact that people exchange opinions in a conversation is no guarantee of an open dialogue. In case of disagreement, they defend their point of view against the opinion of the other, and in case of agreement, they use the opinion of the other party as a means to further corroborate or even expand their initial viewpoint. In a globalizing environment, people are confronted with myriad opinions and ideologies that are different from those that they have learned in their local environments. When these views are experienced as threatening or undermining their local point of view, they are motivated to defend their local positions, often in emotional ways. Self-defense restricts the dialogical self.

Social Nature of Emotions

In the preceding section, we emphasized the apparent need for stability, safety, and self-maintenance and have argued that these basic motives restrict the range of the position repertoire and the openness of the dialogical self. We drew on some literatures from biology and the neurosciences to underline the emotionally tuned need for stability. Does this mean that we propose an essentializing view of emotion? Or are we advocating to physiologize the emotional basis of the self? The answer is a clear no. From a dialogical point of view, emotions are isolated things and not just internal physiological processes. A dialogical view of self and identity in a globalizing world is in need of theories of emotions that are intrinsically social and societal. To underscore this view, we present in the following sections three significant concepts: emotion work, emotion rules, and emotional positions.

Emotion work and the power of expectations

Our treatment of the role of neural connections (e.g., the dialogical brain) in the genesis and development of emotions and our discussion of evolutionary-based needs (e.g., safety, self-defense, and self-enhancement) does not claim that emotions have no significant social and societal context. Our purpose is not to downplay the role of social factors in the field of emotion theory, but rather to bring biological–neural and social–societal factors together as interconnected elements of a dialogical approach (see also Blackman, 2005). A concept that links emotions to social positions is the notion of "emotion work." Emotions are not things in themselves or purely internal processes, but parts of

a highly dynamic social and societal process of positioning. Depending on the positions in which people find themselves, particular emotions are expected to emerge in a particular situation, whereas other emotions are expected to be absent or suppressed. Under the influence of position-bound expectations, some emotions are tolerated, accepted, emphasized, exaggerated, or denied, whereas others are not.

In an extensive treatise on the management of emotions, Hochschild (1983) gave the following examples: A secretary creates a cheerful office that announces her company as friendly; the waiter fashions an atmosphere for pleasant dining; a tour guide makes us feel welcome; the social worker makes the client feel cared for; the funeral parlor director makes those who are bereaved feel understood; and the minister creates a sense of protective outreach. Such emotion work is typical not only of social positions that are organized on the basis of social or societal expectations but also of expectations or requirements of a more personal nature. People act on their feelings when they are trying to feel grateful, trying not to feel depressed, let themselves feel sad, permit themselves to enjoy something, imaginatively exalt their feelings of love, or put a damper on their love. In all those cases, emotions are conceived of not as purely internal impulses that have an existence on their own or as purely physiological reactions that take place within the skin, but as integral parts of an agentic process of social or personal positioning. Depending on the positions and the dialogical spaces in which they find themselves, people act on their emotions, under the influence of position-bound expectations and requirements (e.g., "As a rich guy who has everything he wants, I expect myself to be happy").

Sometimes emotion work becomes a struggle of the person with him- or herself. In a moving excerpt, Hochschild (1983) described a woman who felt in love with the "wrong guy." Although in love, she discovered that he had regularly broken off relationships with his many former girlfriends after only a short time:

"I attempted to change my feelings. I talked myself into not caring about him... but I admit it didn't work for long. To sustain this feeling I had to invent bad things about him and concentrate on them or continue to tell myself he didn't care. It was a hardening of emotions, I'd say. It took a lot of work and was unpleasant because I had to concentrate on anything I could find that was irritating about him." (p. 44)

Apparently, this person found herself to be in two different positions in clear conflict, "I'm in love" and "I must protect myself." As part of this conflict, she entered into a series of internal dialogues in which she tried to change her feelings of love in the service of self-protection. In her internal fights, she aimed at a "dominance reversal" (Hermans, 1996a) in which the self-protecting forces would become stronger than her feelings of love.

Emotion rules and emotional positions

Emotion work takes place under the guidance of emotion rules. Such rules are standards used in internal and external dialogues to determine what is right or wrong to feel. Emotion rules serve as standards that tell us what is "due" in a particular social or personal position. From a social constructionist view of emotions, Averill (1997) has argued that the rules of emotion help to establish a corresponding set of emotional roles or, in our terms, "emotional positions." An emotional position can be analyzed in terms of privileges, restrictions, obligations, and entrance requirements. There is a privilege when, for example, a person in love may engage in sexual behavior that otherwise may be viewed as socially inappropriate. *Restrictions* refer to limits on what a person can do when acting under emotion. For example, lovers are expected to be discrete and honorable in their affairs. Whereas restrictions forbid a person to feel and do particular things, obligations instruct the person what should be felt or done. For example, in all societies those who are bereaved are expected to perform particular mourning practices. An individual who fails to comply with these expectations is often

subject to severe sanction. Finally, most social positions have entry requirements, that is, they can be occupied only by persons of a certain age, sex, training, or social status. This also applies to emotional positions. For example, persons higher in authority (e.g., parents) are afforded more right to become angry than persons lower in authority (e.g., children; Averill, 1997).

Implications for Globalization and Localization

In the preceding sections, we have discussed some neurologically and biologically based literatures that deal with the emotionally based tendency to return to ordinary, familiar, and self-protecting positions and to engage in repetitive dialogical routines. In addition, we presented research that refers to the social and societal nature of emotions. Both literature streams have in common that they restrict the openness of dialogical relationship and the range of possible positions. As we have argued, evolutionary-based motives that grant survival and fitness and the need for safety, protection, and stability lead to establishing a set of positions that create a split between in-group and out-group in the service of confirming the identities of individuals and groups. The neurologically based tendency to return to ordinary and familiar positions and the existence of automatic dialogical routines have the advantage that people can use an economical set of stereotypical or abbreviated dialogues (Lyra, 1999), but they do not permit the individual to move easily beyond the constraints of traditional or familiar interactions. The socially based emotion rules, on the other hand, help individuals and groups to interact in ways that are shared and appreciated by the community to which they belong, but they restrict the range of positions and limit the openness of dialogical relationships with people outside the community. What are the implications of these insights for the processes of globalization and localization?

Emotion rules and globalization

Contemporary social scientists are confronted with a situation in which privileges, obligations, restrictions, and entry requirements typical of emotion management in a particular society are basically challenged by the process of globalization. Emotion rules about love, anger, or grief are typically limited to a particular group, community, or culture, but they can be very different in different cultures. Such rules organize and regulate interactions between people within a particular community that are accepted as belonging to the culture to which one belongs, but that may be strange, unfamiliar, or even offensive to people from another community (e.g., the rage of Muslims over the portrayal of Mohammed in those Danish cartoons within a Western liberal democracy with strong traditions in favor of freedom of expression). In the contemporary world, one and the same individual is increasingly confronted with the emotion rules from different communities in which the individual participates as a member of a globalizing society. The result is an increasing sense of uncertainty, particularly in situations where there are different sets of rules and where it is not clear which set has priority. An example may illustrate this.

American gay tourist Chris Crain was walking hand in hand with his male friend in Amsterdam at the festival of the birthday of the Queen of the Netherlands in 2005. Suddenly, he was spit on by a passing man, who was raised in a Moroccan culture but lived in the Netherlands. When the victim objected, he was knocked down. This event, reported and discussed in the Dutch newspapers (and in some American media), happened in a city that, for many decades, has been known as the most gay-friendly city in the world. However, in the past decades, the Netherlands has become populated by inhabitants from an increasing variety of different cultures (e.g., Turks, Moroccans, and Surinamese) and has become a multicultural society. As a result of this process, the emotion rules concerning gay love that were accepted by large parts of the traditional Dutch community in earlier times are now highly controversial in the eyes of some cultural groups of the “same” country.

Emotion work and globalization

The accelerating process of globalization requires increasing amounts of emotion work. When emotion work is required and organized by one position (e.g., the flight attendant being friendly, the minister being protective, the funeral director understanding those who are bereaved), it does not imply an excessive amount of emotion work as long as these social roles are felt as “ordinary positions” (Lewis, 2002) by the person in charge. Emotion work may even take place in automatic ways when performed in usual circumstances and when it is part of one’s daily routines. However, in the case of different, conflicting, or opposing positions a significantly greater amount of work is required. A simple example may illustrate this. On one of his travels, a German man falls in love with a woman from Cuba. She reciprocates his love, and they decide to marry and begin living in Germany. However, while he goes to work each day, she regularly phones her family members in Cuba to whom she feels strongly attached and tells them how much she misses them. She is in love with her German husband, but does not like the German setting (no work for her, cold climate, lack of music and street dancing). Although she is not happy in Germany, she is convinced of her love for her husband and is doing her best to be a good partner to him (happy, active, and caring). After some time, however, she gets depressed and has to admit that she can no longer stay in Germany. Her husband takes leave from his work and goes with her to Cuba. However, after some weeks he has to return because of work obligations in his own country. Finally, the couple decides to live separately, and eventually they divorce. In this example, the woman feels herself in a field of tension between at least two conflicting positions, “I as loving my husband” and “I as loving my own family and country.” Stretched between two strongly attractive positions, she vacillates and must convince herself that she loves her husband, particularly at those moments in which she most wants to return to her homeland. In general terms, the process of globalization locates individuals and groups in fields of tensions between different cultural positions. Each of these positions represents a different or even conflicting cultural voice that requires multivoiced emotion work, with one voice speaking in ways that are different from and even opposed to how the other voice speaks. Such multivoiced emotion work coexists with intensified internal and external dialogues that aim at the reduction of tensions.

In the preceding sections, we discussed two groups of factors that are considered highly relevant to the processes of globalization and localization: neural and biological factors and social-cultural factors. We have argued that both groups of factors restrict the openness of self and the range of the position repertoire. We discussed the tendency of the brain to return to ordinary and familiar positions; the pervasive influence of the need for safety, protection, and stability; and the role of biological survival needs as they organize the self and restrict its boundaries, particularly in times of globalization and uncertainty. In the following sections, we continue our exploration of self and identity by resuming the three issues that were central to the first part of the article: the other as extension of the self, the role of social dominance, and the significance of emotions. We argue that the three concepts (the other, dominance, and emotion) require a linkage between three levels of analysis: global, local, and individual. By distinguishing these levels, we want to integrate the insights that emerged from the exploration of the biological and the social domains of inquiry.

3.4 A Three-Level Proposal: Global, Local, Individual

In the presented theoretical framework, we have analyzed self and identity at three levels: the global level, the local level, and the individual level. We have done so in the conviction that the process of globalization, which forms and changes the lives of an increasing number of people in the world, requires theoretical approaches that overcome any self-contained individualism. As we have argued, globalization is not to be equated with homogeneity, uniformity, or cultural imperialism, but can

only properly be understood in its dialectical relation with localization, resulting in heterogeneity, difference, and cultural diversity. To create a link between the level of the self and the levels of globalization and localization, we discussed the self as being extended to the social environment, a conception that has played a central role in both theoretical and empirical traditions in psychology (e.g., Aron et al., 2005; James, 1890; Rosenberg, 1979). We argued that in the present era, self and identity can only be properly understood as being extended to the global and local environment and as being formed and transformed by processes on these levels. An important implication of the self as globally extended is the experience of uncertainty that is pervasively present in the selves of people of our world today.

Self as Dialogically Extended

We propose to conceptualize the self not only as extended to the world, but also, and more specifically, as *dialogically* extended to the world, because we believe that a globalizing world can only be a livable world when dialogical relationships play a central role in the relationships between individuals and between groups. One of the main tenets of this article is that our world can only be dialogical when the self is dialogical as well. The self as a society is not separate from society at large. The other as self-extension serves as a first link between the three levels. Given the basic extension of the self to the world, we argued that the other is not simply outside the self but rather a constitutive part of the self, in terms of a multiplicity of voices emerging from global–local dialectics. In the field of psychoanalysis, object relations theorists (e.g., Guntrip, 1971; Winnicott, 1964) have made important contributions to understanding the role of the other as interiorized parts of the self. In an era of increased globalization, however, the number and nature of voices in the self have been expanded dramatically, and we are increasingly involved in mediated forms of dialogue: In contrast to earlier times, dialogical relationships make use of technological advances such as the Internet, E-mail, mobile telephone, multi-user dimensions, and short message systems that expand our dialogical possibilities beyond the boundaries of self and identity as described in traditional theories (Annese, 2004; Cortini, Minnini, & Manuti, 2004; Hermans, 2004; Hevern, 2004; Ligorio & Pugliese, 2004; Van Halen & Janssen, 2004). As we have discussed, globalization in particular increases the number of individual and collective voices and their mutual relationships dramatically, whereas localization aims more at the stabilization and even limitation of voices in the dialogical field. Particularly when localizing tendencies function as exclusive identity markers (e.g., the own nation or religion as opposed to and above other nations or religions), the localizing voices move the self to the monological end of the continuum between dialogue and monologue. On the global–local interface, we see two risks: One is the monological domination by only one voice (e.g., nationalism, fundamentalism, sexism, or terrorism); another is the disorganized and chaotic cacophony of a multiplicity of voices (e.g., identity confusion, lack of a meaningful direction in life, or rootlessness). Taking these risks into account, individuals and groups in our time are placed in fields of tension between globalizing and localizing forces. In these fields, they are challenged to make creative use of the experience of uncertainty and to open and close themselves dependent on their own needs and the possibilities offered by their situation.

Institutionalized Dominance

The notion of dominance also points to the necessity of a linkage between the three levels. Because dominance relations are intrinsic features of the society at large, they are also characteristic of the functioning of the self as a minisociety (Gillespie, 2005; Tappan, 2005). Therefore, dominance relationships suggest the existence of linkages between the levels of the individual, the local, and the global. It should be emphasized that social dominance is not regarded as necessarily positive or negative from an evaluative point of view. In the present theoretical context, it is regarded as an intrinsic aspect of a well-ordered dialogical relationship. Relations of dominance, however, become

problematic when institutional and societal structures and ideologies prevent individuals and groups from expressing their voices from their own particular points of view and on the basis of their own specific sources of experience. As we suggested earlier, social dominance is an important reaction to experiences of heightened uncertainty as it results in protective or defensive forms of localization. Such localizations tend to sharpen and essentialize the differences between in-group and out-group, and between self and other, with one's own group or self defined as superior and the other group or self defined as inferior. The consequence is that particular positions in society (e.g., jobs, responsibilities, privileges) remain inaccessible to particular individuals or groups and result in a forced restriction of their position repertoire (Hong & Chiu, 2001). (For the role of social power in relation to gender, race, and class, see Falmagne, 2004; for a discussion of the self in the context of racialization and diaspora from a dialogical point of view, see Bhatia, 2002; Bhatia & Ram, 2001.)

Emotion and Defensive Localization

The third linking concept, emotion, is a necessary element in the dialogical self because, particularly in the context of defensive localization, voices can express indignation, anger, and even hate, and such emotions often lead to uncontrollable escalation (Valsiner, 2002) of violence and destruction on a societal level. It should be noted that it is not our intention to restrict the psychological implications of globalization to negatively experienced emotions only. On the contrary, the loosening of boundaries between cultures, groups, and traditions and the global interchange of (local) goods, practices, and ideas may be a source of positive emotions. In this article, we have emphasized negative emotions as they are characteristic of protective or defensive forms of localization. We have elaborated on the role of such emotions by referring to the distinction between the other as object and the other as subject and described the reaction of excluding this other from one's own self-definition. Again, we want to emphasize the significant role of imagination in the depiction and construction of the subject other. In the context of globalization, Appadurai (1996) has proposed a distinction between individual and collective senses of imagination and has emphasized that the faculty of imagination is not restricted to the individual mind. Collective experiences of the mass media, especially film, video, and DVD, can create communities not only of worship and charisma, but also of animosity and abjection. Conditions of collective reading, pleasure, hate, rejection, and exclusion make groups imagine and feel things together and lead individuals to feel themselves as part of a group that derives its identity not only from separation from other groups but even by their rejection and demonization. Rejection and demonization of other groups, fueled by individual and collective imagination, can be regarded as emotional responses to situations of intolerable uncertainty. The significant role of emotion in relation to the subject other or group of others, the collective experience of animosity, and the dynamics of escalation between groups in the service of identity protection require an analysis in which emotions of individual people are linked to processes at the local and global levels. Finally, globalization may cause uncertainty about emotion rules as the individual person is exposed to different rules originating from different cultures. Moreover, globalization increases the number and heterogeneity of positions, often leading to tensions between conflicting or opposing positions. Such conflicts require excessive amounts of emotion work and, as a reaction, may motivate individuals to retreat to local groups, practices, and traditions.

In the preceding sections, we have dealt with three main concepts (other-in-the-self, dominance, and emotion) that function as bridges between the levels of the individual, the local, and the global. At the same time, these concepts can be used to demarcate settings and situations where there is no dialogue. Dialogue is not everywhere. It is restricted or even impossible when the self is populated by a high number of disconnected voices of other people, resulting in a cacophony in which any meaningful exchange is impeded (P. H. Lysaker & Lysaker, 2002). Dialogue is even impossible when social dominance in interpersonal or institutional settings becomes so unbalanced that the voice

of the subjugated party is silenced or suppressed so that it has no chance to express itself from its own particular point of view. Dialogue is also seriously restricted when the person is absorbed in a particular narrative and its corresponding emotional state to such an extent that the flexibility to move to another emotional state (or the capacity to understand the different emotional state of another person) is seriously reduced.

3.5 Some Research Implications

Although it is not our purpose to present a review of literatures that provide empirical evidence or contra-evidence for dialogical self theory, we want to briefly sketch some lines of empirical research that can be suggested by some of the insights described in this article. We do so in the expectation that the presented views have the potential of connecting existing lines of psychological research with the challenges posed by the processes of globalization, localization, and the experience of uncertainty. We limit ourselves to three lines of research: (a) a dialogical approach to private audiences, (b) friendship with out-group partners, and (c) the innovation of the self as a result of globalization.

A Dialogical Approach to Private Audiences

Inspired by the work of symbolic interactionists, Baldwin and Holmes (1987) assumed that a sense of self is experienced in relation to some audience: people who are present or imagined, specific or generalized, actual or fantasized. These authors referred to the common observation that people respond to a range of different significant others, who represent distinct ways of evaluating the self. They termed such an evaluating other as a "private audience" that could include such divergent figures as a spouse, best friend, religious leader, or business colleague. In one of their studies, a group of undergraduate women visualized the faces of either two friends from campus or two older members of their own family. Later they were asked to read a sexually permissive piece of fiction. When they were afterward asked to rate the enjoyableness of the story, it appeared that participants who had thought of friends from campus reported liking the story more than those who thought of their (supposedly more moralistic) older family members. Apparently, they tended to respond in ways that were acceptable to their salient private audiences. The self-evaluative process was guided by cognitive structures that were primed by the preceding perception of significant others. (For a similar study, see Baldwin, Carrell, & Lopez, 1990.)

The concept of private audience is very well in agreement with one of the premises of dialogical self theory, that positions or voices are always addressing somebody (Salgado & Hermans, 2004). Voices convey messages, knowledge, or information in sign-mediated ways to somebody who is assumed to listen to the message and may respond, in one way or another, to it. The existence of private audiences is quite compatible with the idea that a person or a group is imagined to respond to messages that have become part of the self. However, it should be noted that in Baldwin and Holmes' experiment the audience is imagined but does explicitly convey a message. The respondents see faces, but the faces do not speak or give any sign-mediated response. We suggest performing social psychological experiments in which private audiences are primed and explicitly talking with the participants so that the effect of messages can be studied on subsequent evaluative responses. Moreover, different kinds of audiences could be introduced, not only those who are familiar to the respondent but also those who are unfamiliar, strange, or belonging to other cultures or even those perceived as direct opponents or enemies. The guiding idea is that the process of globalization implies the introduction of a heterogeneous set of audiences to the self to which the self can respond in various ways (e.g., approaching, avoiding, or opposing).

Friendship With Out-Group Partners and Friendship With Oneself

As we have argued in this article, significant others are represented as intrinsic parts of the self. In close correspondence with this idea, Aron and colleagues (2005) have presented an inclusion-of-other-in-the-self model. The basic idea of this model is that when standing in a close relationship with another person, one includes in the self, to some degree, the other person's perspectives, resources, and identities. To give some idea of the kind of research that this model has stimulated, we restrict ourselves to two examples. In psychological research, it is a well-known finding that people recall past successes as more recent and past failures as more distant in time than they actually are. Building on this finding, Konrath and Ross (2003) examined whether people are subjected to the same effect when they take the perspective of their romantic partners. In agreement with the hypothesis, they found the same effect when their participants recalled past events for their romantic partners, but only in those cases in which the partners were felt as close, not when they were felt as distant.

In one of the applications of the inclusion-of-other-in-the-self model, Aron and colleagues (2005) investigated prejudices toward out-groups. They reasoned that intergroup contact is most likely to reduce prejudice when intimate contact with an out-group member is involved. Usually, people treat in-group members as parts of themselves and out-group members not as part of themselves. However, what happens when one develops a friendship with an out-group partner? Aron et al. hypothesized that not only the out-group member but also the out-group member's group identity become part of the self. In this way, they expected that it was possible to undermine negative out-group attitudes and prejudices. On the basis of several studies, Aron et al. concluded that there is support for the proposition that contact with a member of an out-group is more effective in reducing prejudice when one has a close relationship versus a less close relationship with that out-group member.

The research on friendship with out-group members opens a welcome avenue for studies on the effect of globalization and localization because it may contribute significantly to the understanding of how prejudices between social and cultural groups can be reduced and closed boundaries between individuals groups opened. However, the process of globalization poses a problem that goes beyond the pure opposition between in-group and out-group. As we argued earlier, globalization increasingly leads to the emergence of a multiplicity of cultural voices within one and the same individual (e.g., an American man married to a Japanese woman, a Polish scientist studying in the United Kingdom, an Iranian artist looking for asylum in France). The existence of multivoiced individuals creates a more complex situation because there is typically more than one group to which an individual feels attached. Given the existence of cultural differences or oppositions, the different voices may criticize each other or may be involved in a mutual conflict although they may come from groups who are all felt as in-groups. An example may illustrate this complexity.

From struggling cultural positions to internal friendship

From the perspective of dialogical self theory, Clarke (2003) studied the clinical phenomenon of burnout in a people living at the interface of different cultures. One of her respondents, Hawa, was a 30-year-old woman who had immigrated with her family from Turkey to the Netherlands when she was 5 years old. At the age of 30, she suffered from a burnout that was reason for her to contact a psychotherapist. The psychotherapist proposed that Hawa perform a self-investigation in which she told two self-narratives, one from the perspective of her Dutch position and another from the perspective of her Turkish position. The results showed a severe conflict between the two positions. She described her relationships with several boyfriends, which were very acceptable from her Dutch position but from the perspective of her very moralistic Turkish position were a forbidden area. Although her parents were very important in her life, she could only talk with them about matters

of business, never about the things that were of emotional value to her. In the course of therapy, she found out that she was investing an enormous amount of energy in suppressing her Turkish identity as a result of her tenacious attempts to defend her Dutch way of life against the collective voices of her family and original culture. She wanted to be an independent and powerful woman but suffered from guilt feelings because she acted in conflict with the mores that she had learned as the daughter of Turkish parents. The result of the therapy affected her in two ways. She discovered that her Turkish / had more facets than she had ever thought. Her Turkish position was not purely moralistic and expressing only a businesslike attitude. She realized that part of her emotions and her aesthetic preferences were the result of her Turkish education. Also, her Dutch position became more multifaceted. She found out that this position did not purely coincide with her independence and freedom to choose her own friends, but also gave her the space to reflect about herself and to see things from many sides. Gradually, she discovered and emotionally accepted that her Dutch and Turkish positions were not purely competitive, with one criticizing the other, but were mutually complementary. At the final phase of therapy, she had enough courage to introduce her new friend to her parents, who, somewhat to her surprise, accepted him as a welcome guest.

The example of the Dutch–Turkish woman exemplifies two phenomena that are significant to understanding the influence of globalization on the self. Hawa was not living in one cultural group as in-group with the other group as out-group. Rather, both groups were parts of her. The problem was that the two cultures presented her with two very different emotion rules that she were not able to reconcile. Her attempts to be a decent woman who obeyed her parents and her striving to become a strong independent woman required so much emotion work that she ended up burnt out. From an empirical point of view, this case study suggests that it is important to distinguish three lines of future research in the context of the process of globalization and localization. The multiplicity of positions in which individuals find themselves as a result of immigration and intercultural contact requires (a) the investigation of conflicting emotion rules, the experience of uncertainty, and the nature of emotion work that is required to cope with conflicts in the self; (b) the investigation of the ways in which conflicting positions can be reconciled so that they are no longer experienced as competitive or mutually exclusive, but as cooperating and mutually complementing; and (c) the study of the multifaceted nature of each position separately. This idea behind this suggestion is that the chances of reconciling conflicting positions increases when not only the positive but also the negative facets of positions are taken into account (Cooper, 2003). When the multifaceted nature of each position is acknowledged, there is greater chance that the positions can cooperate on the basis of nonconflicting elements and form effective coalitions (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 2004).

Innovative Power of Dialogues

One of the central features of dialogical relationships is that they have the potential of innovating the self. The most straightforward way in which the self can be innovated is when new positions are introduced that lead to the reorganization of the repertoire in such a way that the self becomes more adaptive and flexible in a variety of circumstances (Hermans, 2003). From a developmental point of view, Fogel and colleagues (2002) have argued that children innovate their selves in role-playing situations in which they learn to reverse roles (first the mother is the lion and then the child) and build on them in their own play. From a clinical point of view, Dimaggio, Salvatore, Azzara, and Catania (2003) showed how clients, using a self-confrontation method, were able to “rewrite” their self-narratives in innovative ways, and Neimeyer and Buchanan-Arvey (2004) described how clients can “relearn” the self by revising their self-narratives after traumatic loss.

How can dialogical relationships and the introduction of new positions be used, in empirical ways, to innovate the self? Two ways are briefly described, one referring to the communication with

real others, the other focusing on the contact of an imaginary other. In an experimental study Stemplewska-Zakowicz, Walecka, Gabinska, Zalewski, and Zuszek (2005) asked students to discuss whether psychological knowledge could be helpful in passing exams. Some of the students were instructed in such a way that they believed themselves to be in the position of an expert, whereas others received an instruction that made them believe that they were in the position of a layperson. In some experimental conditions, moreover, students were placed in the position of expert or layman in a direct way (both participants received the instruction that they were expert or layperson), whereas in other conditions students were positioned in an indirect way (their interlocutor was instructed that they were an expert or layman, but they themselves did not receive this instruction). The experimenters' intention was that in the latter condition the participants not see themselves as expert or layman, but that they be perceived as such by their interlocutors. The experiment provided confirmation for one of the basic premises of dialogical self theory: that different positions produce different narratives (the students positioned as experts gave more advice than those positioned as laypersons). Moreover, it was found that even indirect ways of positioning showed this effect, although to a minor degree (students positioned as experts by their interlocutor but not by themselves gave more advice than those that were positioned, also in an indirect way, as layperson). (For another experiment with similar outcomes see Stemplewska-Zakowicz, Walecka, & Gabinska, 2006).

Experimental research in which participants communicate on the basis of a variety of instructed positions may be relevant to innovation in the self. In the context of globalization, people who are in contact with an increasing diversity of significant others raised in other groups, communities, or cultures may become positioned in direct or indirect ways. Experiments like the one described above could be run with participants instructed to believe that they communicate with people from groups of diverse cultural origin. Such experiments could examine under which conditions participants positioned as a member of a particular culture would learn from interlocutors positioned as members of another culture. A particularly relevant question would be whether participants are able or willing to modify their selves, taking the alterity or otherness of the interlocutor into account. (For the relevance of otherness in the self, see Simão & Valsiner, 2006.)

Imaginary dialogues and innovation

Whereas experiments like those performed by Stemplewska and colleagues (2006) are focused on dialogues with real others, other work has examined dialogues with imaginary others. Drawing on Marková's (1987) model, Hermans (1996b) invited clients in psychotherapy to enter into an imaginary dialogue with a person depicted in the 1930 painting *Mercedes de Barcelona*, by the Dutch artist Pyke Koch (1901–1992). The painting depicts a middle-aged woman, placed in a frontal position so that eye contact with the viewer is possible. Clients were invited to select a personally meaningful part of their previously told self-narrative (a so-called "valuation") and imagine that they were telling it to the woman in the painting. They were asked to concentrate on the picture and imagine that the woman responded to their valuation. After the woman had given an imaginary reaction to their valuation, participants were invited to return to their original valuation with the possibility of revising this valuation in light of the woman's response. In fact, this procedure involved three steps:

Step 1: Participant presents a valuation to the woman.

Step 2: Woman gives an imaginary response.

Step 3: Participant responds to the woman.

Different clients responded in very different ways to the woman's imaginary response. One client, Bob, a 50-year-old man who participated in this investigation after a 4-year period of depression, gave the following responses:

Step 1: Bob: "I always had to manage things on my own; didn't receive any attention, or affection; was superfluous at home; this has made me very uncertain."

Step 2: Woman: "This sounds very familiar to me: I've had the same experience."

Step 3: Bob: "I recognize the sadness in your eyes."

As this example shows, in Step 3 there are no significant differences in comparison with the original formulation in Step 1. Rather, Bob expresses in Step 3 a feeling that was already present in Step 1 and confirmed by the woman in Step 2. In fact, the dialogical movement does not produce innovative elements. A very different process can be observed in the example of Frank, a 48-year-old man, who referred to his work as manager in a company:

Step 1: Frank: "I trust most people in advance; however, when this trust is violated, I start to think in a negative way; this can have harmful consequences."

Step 2: Woman: "You should keep your openness; however, your trust should become somewhat more reserved and take into account the topic involved."

Step 3: Frank: "You are right; I must pay attention to this; reservations in this will also help me to control my negative feelings."

In this case, the woman, in the role of a wise advisor, offers Frank a new perspective (Step 2) that is incorporated in his final reaction (Step 3), so that the original formulation (Step 1) has been further developed. The content of his final valuation in Step 3 involves not only a central element of the woman's response (reservation), but also a central theme in his original valuation (negative thinking). Frank brings together and integrates elements from Steps 1 and 2 in Step 3 and thus constructs a final valuation with a considerable innovative and synthesizing quality.

Dialogical procedures are particularly relevant in light of Appadurai's (1996) discussion of the role of imagination in collective experiences in the mass media and especially in film, video, and DVD that can create not only worship and charisma but also animosity and hate. Three-step procedures like the one proposed by Marková (1987) may be helpful in studying in detailed ways to what extent people involved in contact with remembered, anticipated, or imagined others innovate their selves in dialogical ways or confirm and defend it in a monological fashion. Such studies should pay attention to the ways in which emotions (associated with liked, disliked, and abject others) can be changed and innovated as a result of internal and external dialogues. (For the notion of emotional creativity, see Averill, 2004.) For the future of dialogical self theory, it is of crucial importance to expand its empirical evidence to avoid a gap between theory and research. Further development of the theory might profit from research traditions and methodologies devised in mainstream psychology. We are in strong agreement with Sakellaropoulou and Baldwin (2006), who proposed interconnecting the recent field of dialogical science and the more established field of interpersonal cognition in this way:

"We believe that to further increase the understanding of both interpersonal cognition and dialogical science, researchers should strive to incorporate each area's fundamental principles into the other. Although research into interpersonal cognition has progressed significantly in the last decade, much work remains. Despite dialogue being a core component of self and identity, a dialogical component to interpersonal cognition is essentially lacking. Indeed, the majority of the dependent variables in the studies we reviewed in this article [Sakellaropoulou and Baldwin's review of developments in the field of interpersonal cognition] are fundamentally non-dialogical in nature (e.g., affect, self-esteem). On the other hand, dialogical science, still a relatively recent enterprise, could benefit greatly from the methods and findings already available in the interpersonal cognition literature. (p. 63)

Future research in the field of dialogical science may very well profit from the foundational work by classic theorists such as James, Mead, Cooley, Pierce, and Bakhtin (see Wiley, 2006, for a review of

literature, and Colapietro, 2006; Leary, 2006, and J. Lysaker, 2006, for commentaries). However, to be recognized as a respected science, it is necessary to develop the dialogical field in a theory-guided, empirical direction, taking advantage of both quantitative and qualitative methods and of both experimental and experiential approaches. Building on the work of the founding fathers, new and challenging theories should be created that may profit from equally developed assessment methods and research procedures that are essential to revise and improve existing theoretical notions.

Future Perspective

In our view, the global–local nexus requires a theoretical bridge between social, cultural, and historical sciences on the one hand and biological and neurosciences on the other. Social and cultural approaches offer a welcome contribution to the understanding of self and identity from one side of the bridge, but biological and neuroscientific approaches offer their own contributions from the other side (see also Cromby, 2004). Developments in dialogical self theory have the potential to provide a conceptual framework for creating viable connections between the two disciplinary groups. On the interface between culture and brain, we envision a promising field of research that is interested in the question of how experiences of certainty and uncertainty, including their behavioral consequences, can be understood in the context of the processes of globalization and localization.

Around the above-mentioned bridge between culture and brain, we envision a number of other disciplines that can feed dialogical self theory in the future. Some of these disciplines played, directly or indirectly, a significant role in the present article. Sociology has the potential to offer more knowledge and understanding of identity problems and conflicts resulting from immigration, diaspora, and bidirectional global movements (from the West to the East and vice versa; from the North to the South and vice versa). Psychiatry can focus on the conditions under which dysfunctions of the self are the result of the experience of uncertainty or insecurity associated with globalization and can offer knowledge about dysfunctions that are typical of defensive localization. Political science provides analyses of institutionalized power differences and the injustice experienced by many groups who are on the “wrong” side of economic welfare, technology, and digitalization in a globalizing world. Economics contributes insight to the causes of binary economies and poverty on a global scale and develops models for redressing such imbalances. In collaboration with other disciplines, the relation between economic deprivation and identity construction should be studied in depth. Ethics can widen our horizon by studying the ethical implications of self-formation and identity construction. As Richardson, Rogers, and McCarroll (1998) have shown, a moral worldview was self-evident in a premodern era. In the present era of accelerated globalization, it is necessary to revisit the ethical dimension in close connection with dialogical notions of self and identity. Cultural anthropology is well equipped to perform comparative studies of local practices such as witchcraft, health practices, beliefs in demons, and other cultural rituals that influence self and identity. Contributions from history could provide a thorough analysis of the times in which the first signs of globalization were visible and how people of different eras responded to the experience of uncertainty. Philosophy could also deepen our historical awareness. The notion of dialogue has been a central concept in philosophical treatises since Plato. Social sciences interested in the study of self and identity could learn much from philosophical views on the relationship between multivoicedness, dialogue, and agency as exposed in various philosophical traditions. Literary sciences could function as a bridge to the realm of art. The metaphor of the polyphonic novel, a significant source of inspiration to the theoretical framework of the dialogical self, was originally based on the novels of Dostoyevsky, whose writings can be seen as one of the first signs of the retreat of the omniscient narrator in Western literature (Hermans & Kempen, 1993). Explorations on the interface of literary sciences and social scientific literature regarding the contemporary experience of uncertainty could result in insights that are of immediate relevance to understanding the process of globalization.

The present article can be seen as an invitation to a dialogical approach with contributions from disciplines that are often working in splendid isolation from each other. Such an approach can only be promising if dialogue is not only studied but also practiced. One form of such a practice is to cooperate as scientists and humans originating from divergent cultural backgrounds and working together as members of the same globalizing society.

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4 Career learning and teachers' professional identity: narratives in dialogue

Kara Vloet

Professional development is a topical subject within the education system. Teachers and other education professionals are questioned about planning their own career, about the development of competences and about dealing with their personal development in a reflective manner. Vloet & Van Huijgevoort (2006) believe that this means:

- they must clearly know what they value about being a teacher and upon which values, standards and educational concepts they are basing their teaching methods;
- they must have a clear vision of their own competences and their strongest and weakest points;
- they must have insight in personal experiences, feelings, motives that play a key role in their professional performance;
- they must be able to utilise learning methods that are based on knowledge about processes and identity formation, construction of meaning, and the development of values (e.g. autobiographical reflection);
- they must be able to gear the development of their competences towards the school policy and participate in school activities in the field of educational progress and organisational development.

'Professional identity' appears to be functioning as a personal interpretation framework for professional conduct together with notions about the education system (Kelchtermans, 1994; 2007). This applies to both beginning as experienced teachers. A comprehensive study showed that 'professional identity' is a complex concept with a number of characteristics (Verloop, 2003; Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). A professional identity is not a fixed characteristic and is never 'complete'; it is a dynamic process instead. It is about continuously (re)interpreting meaningful experiences from the teacher taken from his or her practice and biography. By definition, it refers to the person in his or her context and it relates to several sub-identities that are more or less in harmony with one another. Professional identity has hardly been researched among experienced teachers, as opposed to that among teachers in training (Mansvelter-Longayroux, 2006) or beginning teachers (Flores & Day, 2006). Exceptions are studies conducted by Kelchtermans (1994), Van Veen, Slegers & Van de Ven (2005) and Ballet (2006). Those studies do not only address 'self-knowledge' (cognition), but 'self-feeling' (emotion) as well – or in particular.

In this chapter, I will describe how professional identity as a dynamic concept can be brought into the picture and how I developed a research instrument for professional identity. I will first elaborate on how professional identity in teachers appears to be defined in research literature (Vloet, 2007; 2008). Next, the creation of an instrument to help portray professional identity will be discussed. Finally, I will be reviewing whether this instrument is able to portray the complex nature of professional identity.

4.1 Professional identity in teachers: narratives in dialogue

A comprehensive survey into professional identity conducted among teachers revealed that a clear definition rarely exists for this concept and that it is rarely used unambiguously (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Many researches derive from the works of developmental psychologist Erik Erikson

and sociologist Herbert Mead. Originally (in 1968), Erikson placed the development of an identity in the adolescence stage, but later described identity development as a lifelong process (and no longer as a product). In 1934, Mead related the concept of 'identity' to the concept of 'self' and explained how the self develops through transactions with the environment. According to Mead, the self can only originate in a social environment through dialogue with the other. Through interactions with others, we begin to learn the roles of others and we also learn to gear our own actions toward our environment (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop 2004, p.107-108). More recent psychological personality theories interpret the 'self', as a narrative of identity about a person in a specific context and at a given time. This is how Hermans & Hermans-Jansen (1995) developed a narrative theory about the self. They regard the self as 'an organised process of constructing a meaning' in order to study individual experiences and their mutual relation and to describe how they change within time and space. Through dialogue with oneself and with others, 'meaningful experiences are organised into one narrative structured system', the self-narrative (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995). Identity can be considered as a narrative about ourselves: 'I' as 'author' of a play or novel about 'me', myself as an actor or character in it. Kelchtermans (1994, page 107) also believes that the professional development of teachers is a process of lifelong learning which is narrative, constructivist, contextualist, interactionist and dynamic. He uses the phrase 'professional self-understanding' for professional identity to emphasize its construed character (the verb 'to understand') but also the product thereof ('to understand' as a result, referred to as 'professional identity') (Kelchtermans, 2007).

Characteristics of professional identity

A variety of characteristics can be ascribed to professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Professional identity in teachers:

- is formed through a dynamic process where teachers continuously interpret and reinterpret their experiences;
- implies an interaction between person and context;
- consists of several sub-identities that are more or less in harmony with one another;
- would ideally be generated based on self-direction ('agency'); teachers should play an active role in their professional development.

Professional identity as a dynamic process: a never-ending story

Several studies do not interpret professional identity as a fixed characteristic or feature of teachers but as a continuous dynamic process of interpretation and reinterpretation of meaningful experiences from teachers throughout their life path and in their professional practice. Narrative approaches interpret identity as a narrative told by a person about himself at a given moment in time within a certain context (Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995; Sfard & Prusak, 2005; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). The professional identity of teachers is also shaped and reshaped through the stories they tell each other (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Professional identity is construed by these narratives, and the latter affect teachers personally but also affect their teaching practice. Sfard and Prusak (2005) see identity as a 'set of narratives about and by a person'. They regard the development of identity as bridging the gap between the identity experienced by a person at a given time and the identity ascribed to that person by others.

Professional identity: person in context

Professional identity relates to the person *in* context and refers to both the influence of the image and expectations created by others – within the context, widely accepted professional images in society about what a teacher should know and be capable of – and to what teachers personally find important in their profession and in their life (values). What we personally find important is based on practical experience (context) and on personal background. In their work, Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop

(2004) refer to the tension, which may arise between the 'agency' of the teacher as a person and the structure that can be found in the context. Being a teacher is a matter of being perceived as a teacher; by him or herself as well as by others. Thus, professional identity implicates the teacher's person and his or her context (professional practice) and research into the development of professional identity therefore requires a psychological as well as a sociological approach.

From the *person* side, a large number of studies refer to the influence of biographical experiences, which affect the professional self-image of teachers as well as their often implicit and subjective perceptions about what constitutes good education (Kelchtermans, 1994; Teune, 2004; Bakx, 2001). Relevant biographical aspects are early childhood experiences, early teacher role models, previous experiences throughout their teaching career, significant others and critical periods or moments in their life path (Kelchtermans, 1994). These biographical experiences have an impact on the self-conception of teachers but also on their conception of education, and they form a personal interpretation framework for the professional conduct of teachers. Subjective biographically formed conceptions furthermore influence the competences developed by teachers (Teune, 2004; Snoek, 2004; 2007).

From within the *context* of teachers, it is primarily the *expectations* about the teacher's role that affect how teachers develop their professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Flores and Day (2006) investigated whether beginning teachers, after having developed an idealistic task perception throughout their training, *retained* their idealism in the perception of tasks when they commenced work in the unruly practice of education. This appears to depend on their professional motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic), in addition to the extent to which, in their context, they experience the room given by their school leader and colleagues to experiment with their new role. Sachs (2002, pages 130-134) describes a continuum with two poles of professional identity. One pole is the 'entrepreneur identity' and the other is the 'activist identity'. Teachers displaying an entrepreneur identity are more 'individualistic, competitive, control and regulation minded, their identity is defined *externally* and guided by external standards'. They are also more focused on others. Teachers with an 'activist identity' tend to be more focused on 'democratic principles, negotiation and cooperation, they are critical of society, future-minded, strategic and tactical' based on *internal* standards. They could be regarded as more 'self-guiding'. Sachs (2002) derives from Wenger (1998) who ascribes the *development* of identity to two processes: the degree to which people can contribute to their own professional practice and the degree to which they participate in that professional practice. Being able to contribute as well as participate will depend on the degree to which this is expected by the surroundings of the professional (Wenger, 1998). Thus, the professional identity of teachers is always 'in creation' within the context they are working in. Additionally, they must continuously gear their own conceptions and image of good education and of themselves as a teacher towards what is expected from them by their environment; a balancing process between self-direction and *regulation* by others in their context (Ponte, 2003; 2007).

Professional identity: sub-identities in dialogue

Professional identity is made up of several sub-identities which may conflict or cooperate, referred to with the metaphor 'selves as a chorus of voices'; a 'multi-voiced' and 'dialogical self' (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, 2002, 2003, 2006). Voices within the 'self' are in dialogue and are to a greater or lesser degree in harmony or in conflict with one another. Research shows that one cannot define 'the' professional identity of teachers because teachers fulfil a variety of professional roles or have sub-identities. Subject teachers, for example, are 'experts' within their field, but they are also 'didactic experts' and 'pedagogic experts' (Beijaard, Verloop & Vermunt, 2000). Additionally, teachers may also perform special tasks at school: being an 'expert in counselling' in the field of Special Educational

Needs (SEN) for example, as well as 'coach/counsellor of students' and 'coach/counsellor of colleagues' or 'change agent'. Teachers also perform additional professional (sub) roles such as the role of 'colleague', 'employee within the organisation' or 'student'. This may involve more deeply grounded sub-identities as well, to which more emotions may be linked than the mere performance of a role. Therefore, professional identity is sometimes referred to as being 'multifaceted': historical, sociological, psychological and cultural factors may have an impact on the sense of 'self as a teacher' (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004).

The importance of self-direction in the development of a professional identity

Both, critical thinking and self-direction ('agency') seem to be significant for the development of a professional identity (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Jochems, 2007). Teachers actively shape their professional identity development, which reflects a constructivist notion of learning. Reflecting on moral, emotional and political issues then seems to be important for teachers to gain insight into the interests at play in their professional practice, or, in other words, to learn how to read their 'micro-political' context and how to deal with it (Kelchtermans, 2007). Critical reflection on one's own professional identity from an ideological perspective is then certainly desirable (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis & Conlan, 2007), where one's own values and personal motives and emotions are at issue. Studies into the development of a professional identity among experienced teachers often focus on how teachers deal (emotionally) with change and education reforms in their professional practice. Emotions seem to play a role and appear to be functioning as a 'lens' through which education reforms are filtered and possibly accepted (Kelchtermans, 2005; Reio, 2005; Jochems, 2007). Professional 'vulnerability' is inherent to becoming, being and remaining a teacher (Lasky, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2005). Ballet (2006) examined how experienced teachers struggle with the ever-increasing work pressure due to education reforms, where one's own professional identity is brought under discussion. This raises some questions such as 'Am I (still) a good teacher?' and 'Can I be the teacher I want to be?'. To many teachers, one important criterion for feeling competent as a teacher seems to be the moral commitment of 'doing the students' justice' (Ballet, 2006, p 272). When teachers feel as if they are no longer capable of fulfilling the needs of their students, their professional identity is subjected to pressure, which conjures up feelings of insecurity, doubt, loss and guilt. Van Veen, Slegers & Van de Ven (2005) describe a case study into one experienced teacher, who was initially enthusiastic about reforms but became more and more sceptical about reforms throughout his career.

4.2 The development of a narrative dynamic research instrument

How can we gain more insight into the professional identity of teachers, taking into account its complexity and the above characteristics, as a basis for research into the development of a professional identity? For this purpose, we will combine the Biographical Interview by Kelchtermans (1994) and the Self Confrontation Method (SCM) by Hermans & Hermans Janssen (1995). The Biographical Interview by Kelchtermans (1994) maps out the professional and career development of a teacher based on five conceptual key concepts: narrative, constructivist, contextualist, interactionist and dynamic (1994, p. 107). The semi-structured interview focuses on the professional development of teachers throughout their career. The teacher reflects on his or her career and focuses on meaningful (critical) stages, persons or events and on their influence on both his professional conduct and his professional thinking. Here, we find the first characteristic (dynamic process, interpreting meaningful experiences) but also the second: person in context. Subjective notions emerge about the best education system or the best form of student counselling. Kelchtermans refers to this as the 'subjective education theory': subjective knowledge and conceptions about education and student counselling. The career narrative furthermore sheds light on 'professional

self-understanding' which we would like to refer to as 'professional identity' or 'professional self-knowledge'. Kelchtermans operationalises professional identity into five conceptually diverse components (yet inseparable in the teacher's perception of day-to-day professional practice): looking back on job motivation, task concept, self concept, self feeling and looking ahead towards the future perspective of the teacher.

The Self Confrontation Method (SCM) by Hermans & Hermans Jansen (1995) comprises of a systematic (self) investigation of the past and current life, placed within a broader context of the career and life history, allowing one to gain insight into aspects that are meaningful. Aspects which shaped the person and which have an influence on the person's professional and personal functioning, but also on motivation and well-being. Through self-investigation, a person can explore both positive, stimulating aspects of functioning at work and in a career (and preferably from a wider angle: through the life history) as well as the less valued, negative and inhibiting factors. It is about recounting your 'self-narrative' as a person in which, apart from the – more cognitive – content of meaningful experiences, the feelings thereof is also systematically mapped out. Similarly to Kelchtermans, the findings of Hermans & Hermans-Jansen are based on the principle that, each in their own way, people give meaning ('value') to themselves, their surroundings and their life. Two basic motives play an important role in this process of constructing a meaning. Each person aims towards self-enhancement: the S-motive (i.e., self-maintenance, self-expression, self-development and self-defence). In addition, every person is longing for contact and union with the other, the feeling of being a part of a larger entity: the O-motive (i.e., contact with other people and the surrounding world). In essence, both motives are equally important. They provide energy and direction to the evaluation process of experiences (how a meaning is constructed). In brief: people aim to distinguish themselves from others, but they want to feel like they belong at the same time. Through self-investigation, teachers experience how both basic motives operate in their life, work and training. An imbalance is caused when one of both motives is more prominent than the other. When the S-motive is too prominent, we could say that the person will stand up for himself or herself at the expense of others. When the O-motive is too prominent, the person could become (too) dependent on others and may become a 'plaything' of the other. Both motives can go hand in hand or be in conflict.

Self-investigation is also rooted in the narrative tradition and is in close keeping with Kelchtermans' conceptual principles. The SCM does justice to the professional identity characteristics: the dynamic and the narrative can be found in the narrative about the past, present and future, where meaningful experiences are rooted, by definition, in the person in his or her context. Furthermore, the SCM offers a systematic approach for mapping out aspects of perception that can bring out the underlying connection among meaningful experiences: the *leitmotiv*, a theme throughout the narrative, the narrative underneath the narrative. The SCM also provides an opportunity to distinguish several sub-identities and to determine the extent to which these sub-identities are in harmony or in conflict. Finally, the relation between S-motive and O-motive can shed more light on the level of self-direction.

Eliciting meaningful experiences through key phrases

In the process of self-investigation, the self-narrative is (re)construed during a 2 to 3 hour discussion based on open-ended questions. In response to these 'elicitors', meaningful experiences are discussed during a dialogue with the counsellor/researcher and are formulated into key phrases – in the method referred to as valuations – with the teacher in charge of the final editing. During self-investigation, elicitors roughly follow this pattern: Past – Present – Future. Using specifically formulated elicitors related to the professional identity and career development of teachers, a link is made with the identity components from the Biographical Interview by Kelchtermans (1994):

- *past* includes personal meaningful biographical and education and training experiences, the motivation to become a teacher, manager or specialist in education; teacher role models and various previous periods from the career.
- *present* encompasses the learning request, the motivation to work with *these* students, task concept (expressed in a vision, mission), the organisational context in which the teacher is active (colleagues, appreciation, support, relation with leader, etc.). Other topics of discussion include experiences and helping hands from the training period, the subject matter in which the teacher professionalises, and everything achieved through that in practice (e.g. video-interaction counselling, conducting action research to improve one's own practice).
- *future* refers to how persons see themselves in 1 to 2 years from now as a professional, and the qualities and competences they wish to develop to reach this goal (e.g. reverting back to the learning request).

Self-investigation also considers meaningful experiences in specific roles fulfilled by the teacher. They are incorporated by means of 'offered valuations' (for instance, 'me as an education reformer', 'me as a coordinator', 'me as a coach/counsellor of students', 'me as a coach/counsellor of colleagues', 'me as an employee within the organisation', 'me as a colleague'). These various roles are regarded as sub-identities based on the theory of the 'dialogical self' (Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Hermans, 2006). A role is a position filled by the teacher towards students and at the same time towards colleagues and the school organisation. For example, while staying focused on the student the teacher could focus more or less on the content of education (role as subject teacher) or the counselling of students (role as counsellor/coach of students as a mentor, student counsellor, school career counsellor, for instance). With regard to colleagues or the organisation, for example, the teacher can be more geared towards achieving personal goals (role as education reformer) or more geared towards teamwork. Finally, the participants are questioned about how they feel in general and how they would like to feel, both at the school and within the specific expert position they are trained for, as outside of work.

Connecting feelings

After the initial conversation, which focuses on telling the self-narrative and formulating key phrases about critical meaningful experiences, the teacher indicates the extent to which each key phrase is associated with a number of feelings. This process usually takes place at home in the form of a homework assignment.

Table 1 Overview of 24 affects terms from self confrontation method ³ on a feeling level

Self-motive affects	Other-motive affects	Positive affects	Negative affects
Self-Esteem	Care	Joy	Anxiety
Strength	Unity	Happiness	Stress
Self-Confidence	Warmth	Enjoyment	Loneliness
Pride	Commitment	Trust	Powerlessness
Energy	Sympathy	Safety	Anger
Freedom	Solidarity	Inner Calm	Disappointment

³ Diverse affect lists are used in the self confrontation method, we used Van Geel's (2000) 24 affect list and adjusted it for appliance in the domain of education.

The *S-motive* reveals itself in these feelings: Self-Esteem, Strength, Self-Confidence, Pride, Energy, Freedom. The *O-motive* manifests itself through the following feelings: Care, Unity, Warmth, Commitment, Sympathy, and Solidarity. In addition to the feelings of the *S-motive* and *O-motive*, key phrases may evoke positive or negative feelings. Positive feelings are: Joy, Happiness, Enjoyment, Trust, Safety, and Inner Calm. Negative feelings are: Anxiety, Stress, Loneliness, Powerlessness, Anger, and Disappointment. From the emotional pattern that is associated as such with the phrases, we learn whether – in a specific situation – the teacher is feeling or has felt **S**elf-assured and strong (**S**-motive), or more connected with the **O**ther (**O**-motive). It will also become clear whether this specific situation is or has been a positive or negative experience to the teacher:

- If the *S-motive* is associated with positive feelings, the experience formulated in the key phrase is called a +S field. These fields refer to autonomy and success (self-direction). If the *S-motive* is associated with negative feelings, then we refer to the experience as a -S field, which indicates aggression and anger, resistance.
- The *O-motive* associated with positive feelings is called a +O field, referring to 'unity and solidarity'. Associations with negative feelings are called -O fields and indicate an 'unfulfilled longing'.
- Some experiences may reflect feelings which evoke both basic motives at the same time ('strength and unity'): +SO; S and O occur simultaneously. On the other hand, other experiences lack either motive: referred to as -LL, low S and low O) ('powerlessness and isolation'), mostly associated with negative feelings.
- Experiences may also result in ambivalent feelings: a combination of positive and negative feelings, whether or not in combination with the basic motives.

The valuation types can be visualised in a circle (see figure 1 on page 76):

Figure 1. Types of valuation

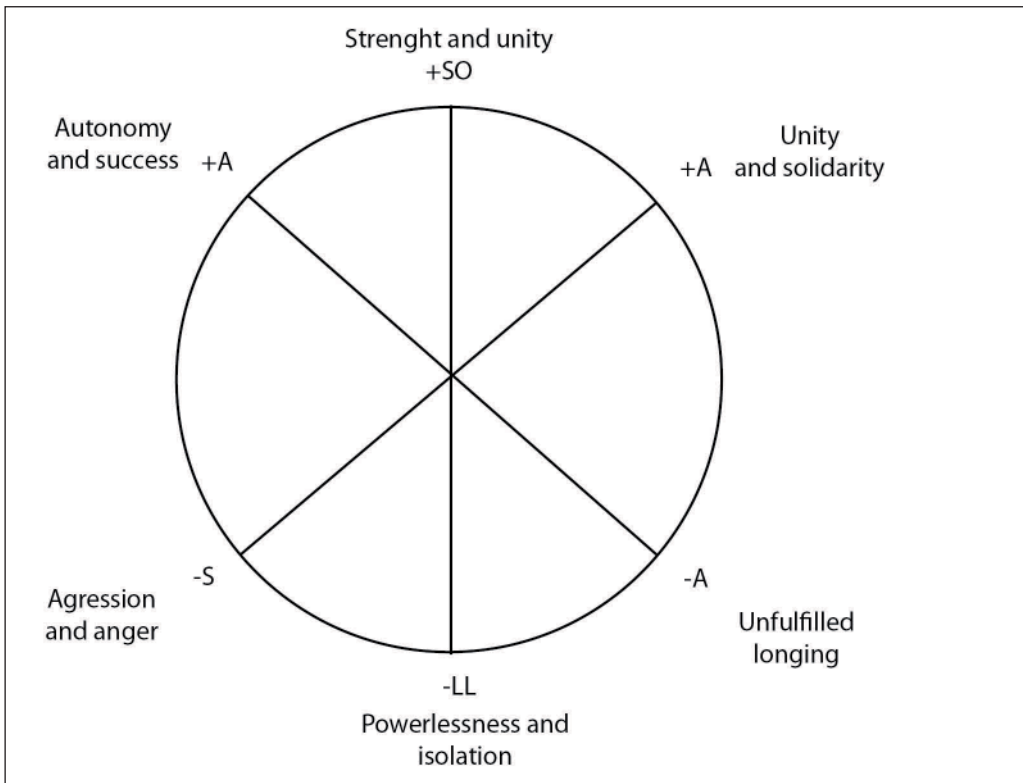


Figure 1. Types of valuation (+S, positive self-enhancement; -S, negative self-enhancement; +O, positive contact with others; -O, negative contact with others; +SO positive combination of high self-enhancement and high contact with others; and -LL, negative combination of low self-enhancement and low contact with others) (Based on Hermans & Hermans-Jansen, 1995, page 24).

Table 2 shows examples of different valuation types in a teacher's self-investigation.

Examples of key phrases in teacher's self-investigation	S	O	P	N	Type
I became a teacher: I wanted a job that allowed me to EXPRESSIVE (end of secondary school)	17	13	30	7	+SO
I wanted to earn my own money: be independent; also a bit of pride: taking care of myself	20	8	34	4	+S
Sometimes I ward off questions from 'attention-seeking boys' to give the girls an opportunity to speak up	8	13	17	0	+O
I am afraid that, if our department will be merged with another, the pleasant atmosphere within our department will be lost	9	14	4	27	-O
The school (board) does not offer any clarity about the direction, objectives and approach of the assistant variant (this really bothered me)	14	2	5	21	-S
When I get emotional (show my feelings) I lose track, and keeping track means everything to me (e.g. student M)	2	0	1	27	-LL

Frank is a subject teacher handicraft with many years of experience, who participated in an early stage of out orientation study. He recently commenced his new job in Practical Education for students with learning support in which he now wishes to professionalise further. He also teaches a number of other subjects (technical skills, mathematics, Dutch) to one very difficult class to which he is also a mentor. The first key phrase about his professional motivation gives Frans a feeling of strength and unity. The second experience, which is also about his motivation, mainly evokes autonomy and success. The third key phrase evokes solidarity and unity with students, i.e. the girls in the classroom. The fourth key phrase expresses an unfulfilled longing for unity within his school. The fifth phrase relates to an experience of anger and resistance towards the school board about a policy statement. Frank is feeling powerless and isolated when he is feeling emotional, showing his feelings and loses control of his classroom, which is displayed in the sixth key phrase.

According to the valuation theory, 'psychological well-being' does not merely comprise of positive experiences. Emotional health is more about responding to a range of experiences using the appropriate feelings. In the circle of types of valuations, a person will then be able to switch to feelings that are appropriate at that given time. This presupposes more to a variety of experiences (including negative ones) with the corresponding associated feelings like powerlessness, fear, anger or disappointment and flexibility than purely positive experiences.

Every key phrase has its own emotional pattern, which more or less corresponds to the emotional pattern of a different key phrase. In the report, the relation between emotional patterns is represented based on correlations. Correlations are used to examine, at an emotional level, what two key phrases have in common. The analysis, which uses correlations, also searches for a connection with emotional patterns that are associated with statements about one's day-to-day functioning (How have I generally been feeling lately) and the ideal experience (How would I like to feel). By connecting key phrases this way, a theme or pattern may emerge that the teacher is unaware of. By exposing the relation between the general and the ideal experience, we can learn how penetrating an experience is or how much inspiration can be drawn from an experience for future purposes.

Follow-up discussion

A second meeting of approximately 2 hours discusses the above information: the S-motive and O-motive, the feeling associated with key phrases, as represented in the circle. The instinctive connection between experiences is examined and the teacher is looking for an underlying theme or *leitmotiv* in his or her (career) self-narrative or professional function. Extra emphasis is placed on the context of the career history and the life narrative as a whole. During the follow-up discussion, the teacher becomes aware of essential aspects and thus gains insight as to how these basic motives operate in his or her life, career or professional development. Essentially, both basic motives are equally important, though not always in balance. At times, one motive may overpower the other. Development in professionalism or in a career is then about dealing with a diverse range of experiences in a more flexible manner; or expanding the S- or O-motive. This method of discussing data from self-analyses and eventually achieving a theme and action plan can occur based on a fixed structure⁴.

4.3 The self-narrative of Eva, school career counsellor in training

Eva is joining the information meeting on a training course for school career counselors and states during the intake interview that she recently commenced work at a small secondary education establishment. She makes this 'career move' in view of a reintegration plan after a long-term illness. She is not yet qualified as a school career counsellor, but currently occupies the position of school career counsellor assistant, where she is offering a homework guidance programme to students. Her schoolleader has promised her that she can take up the position of school career counsellor in due time, even though – Eva believes – this is met with some opposition from the current school career counsellors. She is doubting whether or not to take this course: "Won't it be too hard for me; on top of starting my new job?" Furthermore, the fact that the training course takes place on Wednesday afternoon poses some difficulty to her with regard to finding a career for her 10-year-old daughter who still attends primary school and is free from school during Wednesday afternoons. The training course is aimed at participants who have some experience in a teacher position (minimum of 2 years) and in student counselling (e.g. as a mentor). Eva does not fall into that category and the question remains whether Eva will be able to gain the required counselling experience at her school to be able to complete certain assignments. Another factor to be considered is the investment she needs to make in the number of hours of self-study: 10 to 12 hours per week, apart from trainee meetings which take up 5 hours a week. Eva initially decides not to take on the course, but one week later she decides to jump aboard after all.

Students are presented with knowledge and visions on career guidance, which are processed during the meetings into work models geared towards their practice, with reflection as the main focal point. They become aware of biographical influences on their own career and write a paper on this. This will allow them to translate the acquired knowledge into their own biography on the career guidance of *their* students in their practice. Theoretical concepts concerning career guidance such as 'matching' (Holland), 'development' (Super), influence from a 'socio-economic class' and 'gender socialisation' (Gottfredson) and the concept of 'self-direction throughout the career' are discussed (Spijkerman & Admiraal, 2000). The narratives presented in this course enter into a dialogue with the self-narratives of the students. A school career counsellor in training learns how to 'translate' these theoretical approaches and basic concepts into his or her own career narrative. Writing down their own career narrative is often an eye-opener to the students. This is also the case for Eva. Apparently, the fact that

⁴ A more detailed description can be found in: Master class: Empowered Follow up Dialogue, Reflection and Action, 2005, based on Gershon & Straub (2002) *Empowerment*.

Eva has been seriously ill twice has been a defining factor in her career and in her stance on life and work.

A better understanding of professional identity through self-investigation

At the start of the second year, Eva is faced with the same doubts as the previous year. Through self-investigation, she hopes to gain more insight into her own professional identity. Her question is: "Do I still want to continue this course?" It is a relevant question, given the time commitment required for the final project and the energy she will need to put in. This becomes the key question throughout her self-investigation, which focuses on her meaningful experiences: events, periods or persons in her career and life, from the past and present, but also with emphasis on the future. Eva formulates these experiences into key phrases which are later associated with feelings during a homework assignment. From a discussion on her self-investigation, it appears that her doubts about continuing the course are not necessarily related to the time commitment it requires but rather to her isolated position within the school and to a different approach towards tasks between herself and her schoolleaders. The influence from her illness on her career, her professional motivation and conception of tasks are points of discussion. She wants to guide young people and their individuality through the vulnerable times in their life. Eva experiences the difference between how she sees herself as a (future) school career counsellor and how her school sees her (as a handywoman) as a negative problem. In her job motivation, the reason why she wants to work with *these* young people, her vision and how she experiences her job, there seems to be friction between her conception of tasks and how the school perceives these tasks. She currently considers herself a 'school career counsellor on the lookout' and is disappointed in the last year. As a school career counsellor, she considers herself 'nipped in the bud'. She does get appreciation for the 'odd jobs' she performs but that is not the role she wants for herself as a school career counsellor and as an expert in career learning for students. That role is coloured by a positively experienced sub-identity formed during her initial education assistant training in 'Arts & Culture'.

Discussing this self-investigation proved to be a true eye-opener. Eva becomes painfully aware what a negative experience her position at the school is to her, and how she deals with it. She also discovers where her heart – the core of her professional identity – truly lies. This confirms her view that profession-wise, she would like to be someone/something else than what she currently perceives; she would like to build on this in the future, for example, as a teacher in culture and arts or working from her own agency as an art consultant. After a week to think the matter over, Eva decides to quit the course; not because of the course itself, but because she no longer wishes to become a school career counsellor. She will look for a new job, perhaps even in a totally different field. Until then, she wants to become more assertive at her school by reinforcing her S-motive: expanding her self-direction. The self-investigation has given her (and her trainer) this insight. Eva may want to 'take a different direction', but in any case she wants to be more self-directing. She might eventually keep the position as school career counsellor, but in that case she might want to strengthen her position within the school.

Self-investigation provides self-knowledge about work and career, not only for the professional but also for the trainers. In addition, self-investigation promotes self-direction:

- self-investigation allows people to formulate what moves them or what inhibits them;
- formulating people's life or career 'theme' creates a clear and effective impetus for development and change;
- the relation between the person facilitating the self-investigation and the teacher is of such a nature that the teacher must roll up his sleeves from the very beginning and is the owner of his developmental process.

4.4 Research into professional identity through self-investigation

The narrative instrument developed by us and described above was conducted during an exploratory study among 11 teachers after one year into the course, after completion of the course and after about a year and a half following the completion of the course. The results of this study are summarised and discussed below.

1. Which image of job motivation from experienced teachers emerges after one year into the training course on special educational care?

All participants believe that becoming a specialist in educational care is a *career* move. *Biographical experiences* often (unconsciously) play a role in their *motivation* to be active in special educational care. Teachers are motivated to work in special educational care from a diverse range of backgrounds. However, their motivation to fulfil a special task in student counselling or education with learning support for students Special Educational Needs mostly stems from a great sense of commitment to and special contact with these students. This is where we discover their O-motive. Furthermore, teachers are often on a mission to provide a positive contribution to the development of their students and their future, and to the improvement of the student counselling practice at their school. Thus, they also wish to operate as 'change agent'. Distinguishing oneself from others is regarded as an expression of the S-motive.

2. Which image of task concept and task feeling from experienced teachers emerges after one year into the training course on special educational care?

All participants reveal a critical *conception of tasks*, where they place their role as a counsellor/coach at a *core* position, with a *vision* that focuses on stimulating self-direction and self-responsibility in students. They believe one of their tasks is to create the necessary conditions for this (through sub-roles as counsellor/coach of colleagues, coordinator for special educational care, expert and reformer/policy maker). In addition, they often occupy a role as subject teacher, but again, in this sub-role they often consider their pedagogical role (being a student counsellor) to be more important than the subject content. Being a colleague, employee and fulfilling a social role in dealing with diversity among students are also professional sub-roles.

Their *task feeling* depends on themselves and on their context. They *enjoy* those moments when they succeed in realising their conception of tasks and their vision into their day-to-day practice and they find it *difficult* when they do not (yet) achieve this. Coaching/counselling colleagues is perceived as even more difficult, particularly when their personal conception of tasks discords with that of others. This goes hand in hand with negative or ambivalent feelings (frustration or powerlessness) and various sub-roles may then conflict with one another. This is where we can observe the multi-layered structure within oneself and in students and how one deals with it. Some teachers *rebel* against colleagues or their directors who have a different view on task conception than their own (e.g. about education reforms or about being a teacher; about student counselling or career counselling). This may lead to conflict, both in the internal dialogue with oneself as in the external dialogue with others within that context.

3. Which self-image and self-feeling of experienced teachers emerges after one year into the training course on special educational care?

These teachers develop a professional *self-image* in a dialogue with how they perceived themselves in the past and how they would like to perceive themselves in the future, in a dialogue between several sub-identities (professional roles and more profound sub-identities) and in a dialogue with how they are perceived by others within that context. Sometimes they feel conflict, sometimes harmony and sometimes ambivalence. In particular when they wish to present themselves as a 'reformer' (change agent) in their practice, conflict or tension may arise.

Conclusion

Kelchtermans' and Hermans' theoretical notions are mutually enriching as they offer a methodology to study both the content components of professional identity as its underlying feelings and motives. By combining both, we can get a better perspective on studying professional identity than by implementing each theory individually as it allows us to systematically examine both the cognitive aspect of professional identity and the underlying emotional layer. Results from this small-scale study demonstrate that *narrative* self-investigation into professional identity within the context of training can offer a positive contribution to reflection on one's own practice and with the purpose of 'understanding' oneself as a teacher to eventually be able to act professionally in one's practice. Self-investigation provides teachers with *self-knowledge*, it exposes their motivation, their task conception about educational care and their self-image, yet it also provides insight into how they *experience* themselves as professionals in relation to their context. This does justice to the dynamic, narrative and emotional character and the complexity of professional identity as a concept.

Furthermore, the developed instrument provides a basis for finding a theme or '*leitmotiv*' in the self-narrative of teachers. This generates a lead to reveal the development of professional identity in teachers without 'cutting up' their narratives into subcomponents of identity. In order to examine the leitmotiv in the self-narrative of teachers, follow-up research is currently conducted into the distinguishable patterns across the components of professional identity. This follow-up research also focuses on the question as to how we can assist experienced teachers in becoming effective 'change agents' within their schools.

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5 The (im)possibility of new learning and self-direction

Tom Luken

'New learning' puts demands on learners, students and workers in the field of self-direction and the development of competences, career identity and employability which many of them cannot (yet) meet. This conclusion was made nearly ten years ago based on development theories supported by empirical research (Luken, 1999). 'New learning' was then referred to as 'learning how to learn' and was specified as a creative-social learning process. The conclusion was based on an analysis of this learning process in terms of nine specific demands it brings to the learner. If the above conclusion persists then it undermines the foundations of many programs for educational reform and career guidance that have been launched on a massive scale. Odd as it may seem, critical reviews on new learning (Van der Werf, 2005) and several analyses of failed educational reforms (Basoski, Wieges & Overmeer, 2007; Dijsselbloem Committee, 2008) conducted in recent years rarely addressed the question whether the demands made by new learning in its many different forms are at all feasible for the people concerned. Such failures are mainly blamed on political, organizational, preconditional and technical operational difficulties. In recent times, this trend seems to have shifted somewhat, as demonstrated in the publications by Jolles (2006, 2007, 2008), Westenberg's Dies Oration (2008) and the response in the press. The findings from relatively recent, large-scale and advanced research into the functioning of the brain led to increased attention to the discrepancy between the demands and the learners' abilities. The voice from solid science is always heard. It provides unexpected support for the conclusions drawn earlier from the development theories.

'New learning' offers many aspects that are emphasized by several different authors in their own personal way. This chapter zooms in on the aspect of self-direction or self-regulation. It investigates what we can learn from development theories, development research and brain research at this point in time. The first question is: What is the current status of said development theories? What exactly is the status of these theories and of the empirical research conducted in this field? This is followed by a brief description of the content and results of brain research. Finally, a number of conclusions are drawn which specifically address the question: what to do with this? Concluding that people are currently incapable to do something is one thing, yet it is equally important to ask: *can* they learn, and if so, how?

5.1 Definitions

New learning refers to new learning output (often in terms of competences), new types of learning processes and new methods of instruction. "It is based on the conception that learning is a social-interactive, contextual, construing, self-regulating and reflective process", as Simons explained (in Van der Werf, 2005:9). In many vision and program documents for intermediate vocational education (MBO) and higher vocational education (HBO), learners/students are referred to as 'directors of their own learning process'.

Self-direction and *self-regulation* are a complex notion for which many different approaches and descriptions exist. Donkers (1999), for example, devotes 33 well-wrought pages to these concepts, without offering a clear distinction however, nor a clear description. In this chapter, *self-direction* is

defined as a continuous process where people direct their actions towards goals that have been set and reviewed by them, based on a personal vision. *Self-regulation* is considered to be the same, with the exception that the goals have been preset. Learners can (co) decide on sections in the learning and production process and hold a personal responsibility with regard to the approach and the implementation thereof, yet without being able or being permitted to question the objectives. In cybernetic terms: self-regulation is mainly about a feedback process that reduces the discrepancies between a desired situation and the actual situation. Self-direction involves a feedforward process in which people are consciously setting goals which then generate discrepancies. Self-direction implies that there is greater autonomy than in self-regulation.

5.2 Personal development

In Jean Piaget's footsteps, numerous scientists have created appealing theories about the personal development of people. Some important examples are (e.g. see Hoare, 2006): Kohlberg (moral development), Loevinger (ego development), Perry (intellectual development), Kegan (development of consciousness), Torbert (professional development and leadership), Elder & Paul (critical thinking) and King & Kitchener (reflective judgement). These theories have in common that the development occurs in a number of distinctive steps or stages. During one stage in their development, people will be faced with limitations, which require a qualitative change to be able to reach the next stage. In the words of Piaget: at one stage, assimilation with confronting information or experiences will no longer suffice, and the system will have to accommodate. We will examine three of the above theories: the oldest and most well known theory (Kohlberg), the most researched theory (Loevinger) and possibly the most significant theory (Kegan).

Kohlberg's moral development

Lawrence Kohlberg (e.g. see Kohlberg & Ryncarz, 1990) describes moral development in six (in later publications, seven) stages, classified under three main categories. This theory has been subjected considerably to empirical research, mainly based on storylines, where the subjects are requested to respond to moral dilemmas. For example: imagine that while on holidays you recognise a man, who was once sentenced for a serious offence. He did not serve his sentence as he escaped prison shortly after. Now he is leading a decent and altruistic life in a different country... What would you or wouldn't you do, and why?

The first of the three main levels are labelled 'preconventional' (see table 1), where the individual mainly focuses on self-interest. The individual obeys rules and people who have more power in order to avoid punishment. Doing something for others to get something in return. In early adolescence, this would still be classified under the modal stage. Until around age 16, the majority of adolescents should have reached the first stage of the second ('conventional') main level. In their role as son, brother or friend (daughter, sister, friend), they mainly do what is expected by people they esteem highly. It is important to them to be considered as 'good' by their social environment.

Table 1. Overview of moral stages, Kohlberg

I		Preconventional
	1	Obedience and punishment
	2	Individualism and exchange
II		Conventional
	3	Interpersonal accordance?
	4	Social order and authority
III		Postconventional
	5	Social contract
	6	Universal ethical principles
	(7)	(hypothetically: transcendent morality)

The second stage of the second main level is the modal stage, which relates to adults. Now the emphasis is not so much on one's expectations from their personal, close social environment but rather on the organisation in which one is operational or on society as a whole. The main focus is on performing the duties one has committed to. It is referred to as the 'Law and Order' stage, as the main concern lies with maintaining 'the system', respecting authorities and obeying laws and convention. The third ('postconventional') level can be reached around age 23. However, the above study showed that only 15% of people have reached this stage by the age of 36. At this level, people start observing the relative aspect of conventions and rules. One makes an agreement and fulfils that agreement. Finally, stage 6 subjects construe their own ethics based on universal ethical principles. Only a minority of subjects would reach the last 'cosmic perspective' stage.

Loevinger's ego development

Jane Loevinger (Lê Xuân Hy & Loevinger, 1996) researched 'ego' development. By this she means "the spectacles through which we look at ourselves and at others throughout social interaction and relationships" (Westenberg, 2002, 316). Loevinger primarily bases her theory on experiences using the Sentence Completion Test or the WUSCT, testing many tens of thousands of subjects (young and old) throughout the years. De interrater reliability and internal consistency of this instrument are rated very high (Rogers et al., 2001). Research based on the WUSCT and variants led to a theory according to which ego development follows nine stages. One metastudy, which critically examined the hundreds of studies conducted throughout the last 20 years, states as its principal conclusion: "... there is substantial empirical support for the conceptual soundness of ego development theory and the WUSCT." (Manners & Durkin, 2001: 541). Below you will find a description of the nine stages. A number of examples are provided (*italics*) to illustrate the characteristic ways, according to Lê Xuân Hy and Loevinger, to complete the sentence "*When I am being criticised...*". The examples will demonstrate that it would not be easy for a layman to categorise the responses from the subjects into several different stages. In order to achieve the abovementioned high standard of interrater reliability, the raters must be trained!

1. Pre-social stage

At this stage, children are slowly learning to make a distinction between self and not-self and are not yet capable of giving interpretable answers to the Sentence Completion Test.

2. Impulsive stage

In this mode, children are often impulsive, though obedient. It categorises people based on simple dichotomies (nice people give me good things, mean people give me nothing). There is little insight in causation and rules; punishment is a rather arbitrary means of revenge.

"When I am being criticised, I do as I'm told."

"... I go to my room."

3. Self-protective stage

Children now start to understand rules as they comprehend why it can be beneficial to obey the rules. However, it is a state of hedonism and the immediate satisfaction of the desires of self is paramount. When something goes wrong, they blame others or a circumstance or maybe something for which the child does not feel responsible ("my eyes").

"... I will criticise them."

"... I get angry."

4. Conformist stage

The focus has shifted from egocentric to group-centered. The person identifies with the group to which he or she belongs. The subjects are preoccupied with appearance, material things, being accepted, and belonging. No clear distinction between what people are like (including oneself) and what they should be like.

"... I don't like it."

"... I don't care."

5. Self-awareness

This stage is seen as a transitional stage: the person remains a conformist in essence, which is demonstrated by a high level of sensitivity to valuation and by concern about possible rejection and abandonment. At the same time, it is the beginning of the inner life and thus the need for individuality arises. The subject experiences an increased level of self-awareness, demonstrated for example by the growing availability of concepts to describe his or her inner life (such as emotions). More so than in the previous stage, subjects now display more interest in individual differences.

"... I try to learn from it."

"... I pretend not to care."

6. Conscientious stage

By now, the individual conscience plays a directional role instead of external authorities or peer standards. Where a stage 3 subject will obey the rules to avoid punishment and stage 4 and 5 subjects obey the rules in order to be accepted by the group, the organisation or society respectively, stage 6 subjects will evaluate the rules by themselves in view of personal ethical principles, ideals and plans (which could very well lead to conformist behaviour, which in this case would be a choice they made). At this stage, subjects are capable to personally set some long-term goals. This stage is further characterised by a strong sense of responsibility.

"... it will hurt, but (afterwards) I may consider it to be quite a positive experience"

"... I assess the criticism and consider it carefully."

7. Individualistic stage

Personal individuality and (emotional) independence become paramount. Excessive feelings of responsibility for others disappear. They are more accepting towards individual differences. They gain insight in their own and others' personal development and they differentiate more clearly between people and their roles.

"... I listen, think about it and then decide."

"... I try not to react in a defensive manner and I try to see what I can learn."

8. Autonomous stage

This stage is characterised by a developed capacity to deal with ambiguity and to integrate differing ideas. There is respect for the autonomy of others and a desire for interdependence.

"... I would like to see it from the viewpoint of the other"

"... I will react openly, accept the criticism or defend my own viewpoint."

9. Integrated stage

Little is known about this stage due to lack of participants and psychologists who function at an adequate level of ego development to rate it. It resembles Maslow's self-actualisation.

According to the research using Sentence Completion Tests – mainly in the United States – the fourth (conformist) stage is the modal stage for adolescents. The fifth (self-awareness) stage is the stage of the average (American) adult. However, not everyone develops at an average level! Sometimes the sixth, conscientious stage (increased sense of responsibility, self-made long-term goals, etc.) is reached during early adolescence (at age 13 or 14). This is rare however. Most adults exceed stage 3, yet some do not. However, Loevinger believes that the latter (e.g. when born rich or with a lot of luck or if they have a high IQ) can function in a normal, good manner within society. Most people never reach the Conscientious stage, let alone a following stage.

Since 2000, there has been a proper, validated Dutch Sentence Completion Test, also referred to as 'ZALC' (Westenberg, 2002). This was used, for example, in a study by Nelck-da Silva Rosa & Schlundt Bodien (2004) on learning how to reflect on literature. Three versions of the ZALC are available for three age categories. The instrument consists of 32 incomplete sentences, such as "When a child keeps refusing to participate in group activities...", "What I like about myself is..." and "Rules are...". The subjects are instructed as follows: "Complete the following sentences in whichever way you like." Based on an extensive score manual, the responses written on the dotted lines lead to a classification into stages of ego development. Apart from that, the ZALC does not encompass all Loevinger's stages but only stage two until stage six inclusive.

The qualities of the ZALC have been determined by conducting the test among a large group of subjects (approx. 3000 children and youngsters). The instrument has a high level of interrater reliability, great consistency and solid arguments for validity. Based on data collected in the Netherlands (Westenberg, 2008), the development of Dutch people differs only little from that of Americans, at least up to adulthood, as little research has been carried out in the Netherlands into the development of adults. On average, the transition from the self-protective to the conformist stage occurs between ages 13 and 14. Around the ages of 17 and 18 on average, the transition occurs towards the self-awareness stage. However, this varies greatly. "About one quarter of adults remain stagnant at the developmental level of a fifteen-year-old!"⁵ The transition towards the Conscientious stage, if it occurs at all, varies too strongly to be linked to a specific age. It is clear however that the ego development of girls is ahead of that of boys. For example, the average 14-year-old girl is Conformist, whereas the average 14-year-old boy is still Self-protective (Nelck-da Silva Rosa & Schlundt Bodien, 2004: 126). "The difference between sexes is apparent in late childhood and disappears in early adulthood" (Westenberg, in Nelck-da Silva Rosa & Schlundt Bodien, 2004: 146).

⁵ Statement by Saskia Kunnen in her keynote introduction '*Is Kiezen te Leren*' ('Can choosing be learned') at the conference 'Career development between old and new learning', 24 April 2008, The Hague University.

Below are some other interesting research findings:

- There are only minor (positive) correlations with intelligence, language skill and socio-economic status (Cohn & Westenberg, 2004). In other words: the fact that someone is intelligent, eloquent and holds a good social position does not necessarily mean that that person is at a more advanced stage of ego-development.
- Contrary to what is predicted in Loevinger's theory, ego development does not only progress upwards, but some people (men more often than women) regress in their developmental (Manners & Durkin, 2001).
- There are indications that ego development can be promoted. Manners, Durkin & Nesdale (2004) reported a successful, well-controlled intervention study (control group matched on relevant characteristics, people conducting the tests were unaware of the ego development stage of the subjects, etc.), with the intervention consisting of a training program of ten sessions based on discussion, communication exercises, guided fantasy, extracting feedback and relaxation exercises. Nevertheless, as Loevinger (op. cit.: 20) admitted personally, there is no satisfying explanation as to what instigates or halts ego development.

Kegan's consciousness development

The narrative of Robert Kegan (1994) does more justice to the phrase 'theory' than those of Kohlberg or Loevinger. The different stages of the last two authors are based on research using interviews and questionnaires and hold a primarily descriptive, yet less explanatory value. Kegan focuses more on the principle which lies at the basis of stepwise development. While doing so, he also explains Piaget's theory. Either way, his work seems to inspire many people. For example, a search for his name on the Internet generates nearly five times as many hits as Jane Loevinger's. Many chapters in the handbook on adult development (Hoare, 2006) are partially built on Kegan's work. With regard to development, Kegan believes that the manner of knowing and of constructing meaning, changes stepwise. Knowing presupposes that there is a subject (the knower or understander) and an object (what is known or understood). The subject is what we are but cannot look at from a distance. You can compare this to the eye, which cannot see itself, or a fish, which only knows a world of water and discovers what water is as soon as it is thrown ashore. Object is what we can take perspective of, think about, and take responsibility for. At each step throughout the development process a limit is reached and exceeded in the relationship between subject and object: step-by-step, what was once subject will become object. During this process, consciousness will reach higher levels from which more and more complex data can be observed and correlated. Thus, as a young child you *are* emotions. When you are a bit older, you *have* emotions (in the sense that you know that you are something different than your emotion, because you know that you have other emotions at other times). Later, you are able to feel emotions about emotions and you are able to think about them. Finally, you are able to anticipate your own emotions and to consciously influence them.

Kegan's theory describes the process of development in terms of five orders of consciousness. In order to establish which order of consciousness one belongs to, a considerably reliable, albeit laborious instrument has been developed: the 'subject-object interview', which, without the standardised processing, takes approximately one and a half hours (Lahey e.a.). Below is a description of the five orders of consciousness. The names given by Kegan to these five orders of consciousness are not very clear. Hence, many authors use their own names. This is what I did as well, and I added the terms used by Kegan in quotation marks alongside some alternatives used by other authors. In practice, one often simply refers to them by their sequence number.

1. Impulsive (“Social Perceptions”)

At this stage, there is quite a direct relation between stimulus and response. Little consciousness is involved at this point. The child ‘is’ his or her hunger or sadness. This stage runs parallel to Piaget’s pre-operational stage and lasts until age six on average. The child has an incredible learning capacity (in the field of language acquisition, for instance), but is hardly able to solve problems.

2. Instrumental (“Point of View”, Imperial)

This stage is in keeping with Piaget’s stage of concrete operations. The subject is now able to solve real (i.e. non-abstract) problems. However, this is mainly geared towards the subject’s own interests, needs and desires: you can’t get something for nothing. Other features are: little empathy as yet, black-and-white and monocausal cause-effect thought process. In education, this stage is characterised by statements such as: *“Now tell me which theory is the correct one”*; *“Give me clear, step-by-step instructions on how to do this”*; *“What you told us was great and very interesting, but can this lesson please be more about preparing for our test”*. Reliable sources (also see § 4) confirm that these kind of statements are anything but rare in MBO or even in HBO. We will return to this topic later.

3. Interpersonal (“Mutuality/Interpersonalism”, Socialising, Traditional)

The interpersonal stage is similar to Piaget’s stage of formal operations. The subject is able to think in an abstract and hypothetical manner (what would happen if ice were heavier than water?). He or she is no longer ‘embedded’ in his or her own needs and is now able to empathise with others. However, this new skill is rather dominating, which causes subjects to look at themselves and the world through the eyes of people who are important to them (often the parents first, followed by peers, friends and heroes, and finally ‘authorities’). There is an internalised viewpoint of others. Self-image and values originate from others. Subjects consider themselves responsible for the feelings of others (and consider others responsible for their feelings). He or she considers it important to be regarded as nice (or smart, strong, etc.) and is sensitive to criticism. Conflicts within their own group are considered threatening, because this could, in a certain sense, split one’s self (which is strongly interlinked with that particular group).

4. Self-directed (“Institutional”, Self-authoring, Modern)

Piaget believed that development reached its final stage with abstract thinking, but according to Kegan (and numerous other authors who have written on the subject of postformal thinking – such as Alexander & Langer, 1990), several other stages may follow. At the stage of self-direction, one becomes aware that knowledge is construed and that values and ethics are determined by situation. The subject is able to identify and question underlying assumptions behind stories. He or she is able to step out of their own or others’ frame of thought (a requirement for Argyris’ double-loop learning). At this stage, the subject is not autonomous, not bound to rules and conventions. The fact that others question the subject’s ideas does not necessarily create a feeling of loss of self-esteem. The subject appreciates the positive aspect of the conflict, the criticism and the differences. They feel responsible, for their own state of mind as well. They see themselves (also) ‘through their own eyes’. They are able to define boundaries. The subject will determine his or her own (learning) career based on a personal vision and will take on challenges to develop even further. They are able to switch easily between roles.

5. Transforming (“Interinstitutional”, Interindividual, Dialectic, Postmodern)

At this stage, subjects are capable of discovering transcending principles and new paradigms to solve conflicts between systems of thought, and to solve dilemmas. The subject has a well-developed ego, but is aware of its illusive character. They see themselves, while maintaining their acquired autonomy, as part of a larger whole and are consciously steering this.

The leitmotiv throughout Kegan's development theory can be defined in terms of two 'basic motives of human existence' (Hermans, Hermans-Jansen & Van Gilst, 1985): 'S', the need for self-preservation and self-expansion and 'O', the need for solidarity and being submerged in a larger whole. According to Kegan's theory, both motives intermittently dominate the individual stages in life. People must first discover that they exist as a separate entity, and then, that they are part of a social environment, after which they must break away from it by developing a sense of autonomy. If successful, the subject will finally experience subcommunity at a higher level (as an autonomous individual). A cyclic process can be distinguished throughout the five stages. Stages one, three and five are primarily about being submerged in a larger whole, while the core aspect of stages two and four is breaking away from the environment. However, this always occurs at a higher level, with the acquired skills from the previous level being taken along. One needs to acquire autonomy first before it can be surrendered. The subject must be part of a community first, before being able to break away from it. They must build a position and an ego first, before learning how to put these into perspective.

The cyclic nature of development can make it quite difficult to assess the stage at which the subject finds himself or herself. At first glance, subjects who find themselves at two different stages may display similarities. We must differentiate between your own will and standing up for your own interests (level 2) and the autonomy which is only acquired after experiencing social solidarity (level 4). Similarly, a distinction must be made between solidarity with the group which exists without ever having left a group (level 3) and solidarity as an autonomous preference and realisation (level 5). The first type of solidarity (level 3) could be compared to Marcia's foreclosure (see Den Boer & Bakker's contribution in this volume), and the second type of solidarity (level 5) with an actual identity that grew through exploration. Following this line of reasoning, a true career identity cannot be present yet during one's first real profession.

Throughout the years, the level of consciousness of many hundreds of subjects (though nearly exclusively from the United States) has been established by conducting subject-object interviews. Here are a number of results (Kegan, 1994; Hoare, 2006):

- level 3 is the average level reached by adults
- 21% of the US population reach level 4
- slightly less than half the people in the US with a higher education degree reach level 4
- according to a number of studies, women reach level 4 more often than men
- subjects who function at level 5 are rare and are never of an age below 40

Table 2 displays a concrete, rather recent example from the context of higher education. It shows us the results from research conducted at West Point, a military academy for the training of officers (Lewis, Forsythe & Sweeney, 2005). During this study, a subject-object interview was conducted twice throughout the training course among a group of 52 students in total (ages 17 to 23 at the beginning of the study, 13% women). The numbers represent percentages. This table uses intermediate levels (2/3, 3/4).

Table 2: Percentage of students per level and per grade at West Point

Level	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
2	21	23	6
2/3	63	52	31
3	16	19	44
3/4	0	6	19
4	0	0	0

The good news is that there is a clear increase in the level of consciousness. The bad news is that in grades 1 and 2 at least one in five students has stagnated at level 2. As an example, one student is rather angry because two of his mates have been expelled from school because they lied. Even after persisting with more questions, he merely repeats how much more fun it was prior to their expulsion and how those times are now gone. There is no reflection on the reason why they were forced to leave or on the school policy.

Level 3 seems to dominate the last grade. The students in this group made statements such as “*My biggest fear is to let down my platoon*”.

Not one student truly reaches level 4, not even in the last year of the program. One may wonder whether the nature of the training course affects the outcome. Students who are prepared to submit to a strong hierarchy and who are essentially prepared to kill are not necessarily representative of the entire population. However, Lewis & co. (op. cit.: 365) makes mention of a comparable study conducted among 20 students at a State University, with similar results regarding the levels of consciousness.

Conclusion

A first conclusion is that the theories described by Luken (1999) are still very much alive and that they have been supported by recent studies as well. Nevertheless, at least three aspects remain rather unclear:

- To which extent can we truly say these are qualitative steps, or should we refer to them as gradual processes?
- How can we explain the major individual differences in development rates?
- What exactly belongs to one stage and what belongs to another?

There is however a clear concordance overall. The average adult is essentially ‘conventional’ or ‘conformist’. This means that he/she lives according to behavioural patterns and standards and values which were taken from the surroundings without defining an independent point of view. Most youngsters and young adults are not capable of self-direction. What they are lacking the most is overview and autonomy. If self-direction is indeed an essential element in new learning, then this new learning is expecting something of the learner which the average learner cannot do. After briefly discussing brain research we will elaborate on the conclusions to be drawn.

5.3 Brain research

The human brain is a marvellous organ weighing less than one and half kilos. There are about 100 billion neurons in the brain (by way of comparison: the world population currently stands at less than 7 billion people). Each neuron is connected to an average of 7000 other neurons. These connections

are made through approximately one hundred thousand kilometres of wiring (axons and dendrites). That is two and a half times the circumference of the Earth. All this in one single head... Throughout previous centuries, the functioning of the brain remained a mystery. Only in the last few decades, thanks to the development of more refined techniques, the inside of the brain could finally be studied while it was functioning. Examples of this are computed tomography (CT scans) using X-rays and positron emission tomography (PET scans) using radioactive isotopes, both delivering ultra detailed three-dimensional images of the brain. Another example is (functional) 'Magnetic Resonance Imaging' (fMRI). Using ultra strong magnets and photon detection, this technique allows us to trace minor changes in blood flow.

Numerous popular scientific publications about the findings have been published in recent years, such as Johnson (2004), Goldberg (2005), Sitskoorn (2007) and Mieras (2007). In publications such as '*Hersenen jongeren niet klaar voor nieuwe leren*' (Youngsters' brains not ready for new learning) and '*Hersenen pubers niet rijp voor het studiehuis en nieuwe leren*' (Young adolescents' brains not ready for study centre and new learning), Jolles (2006, 2007, 2008; also see Nieuwenbroek, 2006) has established several links between brain development and education. Stuss and Anderson (2003) examined the relationship between the several types and levels of consciousness and focal brain lesions. Unfortunately, only a handful of other authors have established an explicit link between brain research and development theories. One that needs mentioning is the Dies Oration of Westenberg (2008), which received a lot attention from the press, and in which the author explicitly links Loevinger's theory with the brain research results by Ruigrok Prize winner Crone.

How does the above brain research fit in with this topic? In relation to the functioning of the brain, there are many puzzles left unsolved, but at the same time, a number of undisputed conclusions can be formulated:

1. The brain does not stop developing around the age of puberty, as it was often believed in the past based on the fact that a skull reaches its maximum circumference around that age. It has been known for quite some time that until around the age of 20, gyrification (i.e. the degree of 'rumpedness' of convolutions in the neocortex) increases (Luken & Vloet, 1998). Now, we know for a fact that the brain keeps growing until well beyond the age of 20. In fact, it keeps developing throughout one's entire life. New neurons may be developed even much later in life (20 years ago it was believed that one was born with a maximum number of neurons and that the number of neurons could only decrease during a person's lifetime, not increase). More importantly: throughout our entire life, new connections between neurons are established all the time via new dendrites and synapses, while other connections are 'cut back' at the same time (which is equally important). For instance, when a fifty-year-old decides to take up juggling, then this will bring about clearly noticeable changes in certain brain regions. Also, main connections between brain regions will improve through 'myelination', at least up until early adulthood. This process clusters and isolates nerve fibres, which heavily increases the connection speed ('from dial-up to ADSL').
2. When growing older, many abilities deteriorate, such as the speed of mental operations, the ability to remain undistracted, storage memory, mental flexibility, memory for new facts etc. This is replaced by other improved capacities, e.g. in the field of pattern recognition and comprehension and the ability to deal with complex emotions (Goldberg, 2005; Considine & Magai, 2006).
3. The development varies greatly between individuals.
4. The development occurs at a faster rate in girls than in boys.
5. Complex activities (this includes nearly all competences) rely on subprocesses, during which different parts of the brain are active. In order to be competent, the connections between those parts must be functioning properly.

6. The part of the brain behind the forehead (prefrontal cortex) is needed for abilities such as empathising with and understanding others, consciously feeling emotions, controlling impulses, contemplating (moral) dilemmas, gaining an overview of complex matters, being truly self-aware and integration of affect and cognition (Stuss & Anderson, 2003: 12), decision-making, thinking ahead and planning.
7. These parts – and their connection to the rest of the brain – only start developing properly after the age of 16 and they continue to do so until sometime between the ages of 20 and 30.

If we look at the conclusions drawn about brain development, it is quite understandable that the average adolescent makes impulsive choices until around the age of 18, with a great deal of attention placed on possible rewards but little attention on alternatives, long-term planning and risks. They are strongly influenced by their social environment. After this age, possibly until somewhere between the ages of 20 and 30, it remains difficult to integrate thoughts with feelings. All this and more will result in problematic planning and self-direction.

5.4 Discussion, conclusions and recommendations

Similarities and differences between developmental and brain research

The sources referred to from two varying fields display some striking similarities on a number of issues: development does not end during puberty, as previously believed, but continues well beyond that; the individual differences are considerable; development occurs at a more rapid rate in girls than in boys. In that sense, recent brain research confirms the somewhat older development theories. However, there are some differences as well. Development research based on theories by Kohlberg, Loevinger and Kegan demonstrate that major developmental steps can occur even in late adulthood. Brain research reveals little about this after the age of 30, apart from the disintegration processes later in life.

Everything points to the fact that maturing as well as life experiences (with regard to problems, limitations and dilemmas, etc.) are prerequisites for the development of a career identity and for the ability to self-direct, self-regulate and display true competence. It is yet unclear what the exact relationship is between influences from 'nature' and 'nurture' and how they affect each other. A key question left with no clear answer in both source types, is: to which degree can the development process be accelerated or promoted? The experiments conducted by Piaget and his school are not very promising. Providing extra stimuli and guidance may indeed accelerate the transition from pre-operational to concrete operations in children, though this will not lead to a permanent headstart. For instance, it is of little value to teach babies how to count or toddlers how to read. It may even have an adverse effect. In this line of reasoning, it may be useless or even detrimental to rely on self-direction or to force students to reflect on issues at too young an age.

On the other hand there are several clear indications, such as the previously mentioned study by Manners, Durkin & Nesdale (2004), that development *can* be promoted. Both developmental and brain research demonstrate clearly that development does not occur without the presence of stimuli from and opportunities within the surroundings. Brain research also shows that brains can be 'moulded' during the entire lifespan, albeit to an ever-decreasing degree. It is not clear as yet, however, how this plasticity relates to the maturing process of brain structures and connections.

Views from conference attendees and reflection on those views

On 24 April 2008, about 100 attendees at the conference on 'Career development between old and new learning' at The Hague University took part in a discussion about the (im)possibility of self-direction. The majority of participants were instructors or other staff members from MBO and HBO establishments. Many issues discussed were met with recognition, such as the fact that many students,

even in higher education, are strongly focused on tests. A relatively small number of students display a strong, intrinsic sense of motivation for the subject matter taught and are purposefully working on their personal learning and development process. Only few students have a well-founded vision on the future and their role within that future.

There was a rather unanimous optimistic atmosphere about the opportunities to help students develop the ability to self-direction. Some means mentioned to achieve this purpose were mainly in the field of culture (e.g. mistakes are allowed, addressing each other, good listening skills) and providing space and responsibility.

Furthermore, a number of examples were brought forward of learners or students who exercise self-direction. There is one student at an MBO school, for instance, who did not like being in one group and who took the initiative to be moved to a different group. These examples demonstrated the importance of the definition of self-direction. Self-direction occurs through several stages, depending on the designated room for decision-making and responsibility. The concept of self-direction goes much further than self-regulation. Self-direction is difficult and even prominent politicians, intellectuals, artists and captains of industry do not put this concept into practice. Ruud Lubbers, Philip Freriks, Hans Wijers, Hedy d'Ancona, Hans Blankert, Dries van Agt, Winny Sorgdrager, Sies Wieggersma, Wim de Bie, Henny Huisman – this is only a small selection from numerous public figures who have admitted during interviews that they are unaware of their own motives, that what they did in the past was pure coincidence or that they do not plan for the future. Thus, something is required from learners and students that even the most successful adults in our society are unable to do, or for some reason won't do.

For that matter, *self-regulation* is difficult enough as it is, given the vain attempt of some experts in the field of self-direction to not put on weight, to not get too busy with work or to not exceed the time allocated to give a lecture during a congress.

The need for development and self-direction

The other side of the story is that self-direction and the development towards a higher moral, ego or consciousness level are a mere necessity. Firstly, self-direction is necessary in view of learning output. Learning is much easier and will provide much more useful and long-lasting results when learners are able to personally select the subject matter and the method of learning. Experience tells us that when we take the passenger seat in a car, or when the driver is guided by a navigation system, we have trouble remembering the travelled route afterwards. It is much more easily remembered when we drive the vehicle ourselves. Points of recognition are captured in the brain when we make decisions (Mieras, 2007). Self-direction is a crucial element in new learning which is needed to have a chance of success in the individualised knowledge society of today (Diepstraten, 2006). It is an essential element in employability and is regarded as such by employees, employers and authorities alike (Luken, 2003).

However, the need for a personal and cognitive development process which stretches further than Piaget's formal operations is even broader. Kegan (1994) demonstrates rather convincingly that his fourth order of consciousness is necessary in order to function successfully in a modern society and that the fifth level will be necessary for a postmodern society. At a more concrete level, Manners, Durkin, & Nesdale (2004) demonstrate – based on empirical research results – that advanced levels of ego development are beneficial to one's health, marital happiness, rearing capacities, the quality of problem definition and decision-making processes in managers and self-care in the elderly. Finally, we would like to quote Taylor (2006: 215): "A glance through almost any newspaper reveals that the ill-structured problems of the modern world are not effectively solved by avoiding conflicts over ideas, depending on authorities to provide solutions, and assuming that one's own group (however defined: affinity, social, racial, religious, cultural, regional, language, political, national) is in some essential way better or righter than those from whom we differ."

Summary and criticism on the current curriculum

In summary, we can say that:

1. self-direction is currently well above the head of the majority of youngsters and of many young adults
2. it is important for them to develop this skill for various reasons
3. it is yet to be discovered to which degree it can be developed.

One of the problems lies in the fact that point 2 is generally acknowledged and dealt with, while points 1 and 3 are disregarded. Too much is based on what is desirable and not enough attention is paid to the original situation and how the gap can be bridged. It is like trying to build a bridge while only working on one side (Kegan, 1994). For instance, the instructors' handbook for the Intro program, aimed at students who are entering MBO (all four levels) states the following about their first core activity: "The purpose of this first core activity is many-sided. Participants will:

- gain insight in their personal (professional) development.
- learn how to set learning objectives and to select the appropriate learning activities and resources.
- learn to guide their personal career from a developed professional image, self-image and vision on training." (*Stichting Consortium Beroepsonderwijs*, 2007: 3)

And in one handbook, aimed at first-year students in HBO: "In the portfolio report you will need to demonstrate and make clear that – if you want to be accepted into the main section of the course – ... you are capable of self-direction, or in other words; are you capable to guide your personal development?" (Fontys, 2007: 4). And stated on the website of professional journal 'P&Oactueel': "Employees must take responsibility for their own career, mobility and employability. Each individual employee must reflect on how his or her opportunities and competences can be developed and broadened."

When the desired end result is emphasized and both the starting point and the road to be travelled are disregarded, frustration will rise among both students and instructors (as well as employees and managers). Risks include an undermined self-confidence and an increased resistance to learning. According to Kegan (1984), it is of utmost importance that the bridge is solidly anchored on both sides instead of just one. Instructors must see both sides to be able to form a bridge: they must place themselves in the position of the student and take on the latter's perspective on the world while at the same time retaining focus on the self-directed individual. To do this, Kegan believes that the instructor must have reached the fourth level of consciousness himself. If not, well-meant assignments will generally not yield the desired effect. Working with groups of people often leads to a true dialogue among level four subjects which then leads to valuable learning results. Subjects at level three, however, are more likely to think: "I better not say anything important because I don't want to run the risk of others disagreeing with me or create conflict within the group." And level two subjects will often fail to listen and will find group work to be a waste of time, as it does not lead to concrete results. In order for group work to be effective at these levels, a well thought-out setup and guidance will be required.

Reflection is a different example. Reflection assignments often seem to fail. Zijlstra & Meijers (2006:59) concluded the following on the basis of four independent studies conducted among first-year students in HBO: "Many students do not relate reflection to themselves, and education activities associated with reflection are not taken seriously but are instead regarded as a mandatory task. The response from students to the increased focus on reflection yields the same response as the rest of the curriculum: they try to survive while putting in the least amount of effort possible" (Zijlstra & Meijers, 2006:59). Perhaps learners and students are quite right when they resist reflection assignments. Research conducted by Nelck-da Silva Rosa & Schlundt Bodien (2004) shows that a rather long and

intensive program to promote reflection on literature seems to lead to a *reduced* capacity to reflect, at least among boys. Moreover, there appears to be no relationship between the capacity to reflect and the ego development stage. Dijksterhuis (2008) describes numerous examples of studies which show that conscious reflection can negatively affect the quality of decision-making.

What should it be like?

Education should not impose a standard for all students to shape a career identity and to become self-directed during their school years or academic years. It is an objective that is often only attained after the regular schooling career. However, education can and should contribute to this objective. How? A proper answer to this question will require more research and thought. The ZALC (see § 3) might help us learn more about development in youngsters and in (young) adults. It would be interesting, for instance, to examine whether there are differences between ZALC performance results from schools that are actively promoting self-direction (i.e. room to explore, room for dialogue and personal choices) and from schools that do not. Again, it would be interesting to examine whether level differences in the ZALC correspond to the development of the frontal lobes in our brain and the functioning of connections inside the brain. Another possibility would be to design an abbreviated or written version of the subject-object interview. Lewis – mentioned previously in § 3 – is currently working on this in the United States. In anticipation of further research results, a few suggestions are listed below regarding the different ways in which the education system could consider the ideas and facts brought forward in this chapter (see for example Hoare, 2006; Kegan et al. 2001; Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker, 2006):

- Do not suppress but instead discuss paradoxes. For example, the paradox of competence-oriented education and self-direction on the one hand and a school year and qualification system with closed curricula on the other, which allows for no freedom of choice or a true connection with the competences that are already present. Such paradoxes are difficult to solve at implementation level. Administrators and politicians have a great responsibility in this respect.
- Instructors must learn to assess the actual developmental level of students and must take this into consideration. For this purpose, they need to 'enter the student's mind' every so often.
- Personal contact between student and instructor might even be the most important factor to promote development in students. As Light concluded (2001: 81) from in-depth interviews held among many hundreds of students: "Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience. Graduating seniors report that certain kinds of advising, often described as asking unexpected questions, were critical for their success." Learning career counsellors, who have personal contact with students with regard to some important personal issues, can play an essential role in this process.
- Confront student with different cultures, systems of thought and with disorienting questions and dilemmas. For example, working not (only) with peers but (also) with workers, instructors and students from different grades or other courses.
- Stimulate students to pay attention to personal experiences and signals from within (feelings and voices in the Dialogical Self, see Hermans, 2006) and guide them in this process.
- Assist students in gaining an overview of their lives and of anything that was, is and will be of influence, through autobiographical assignments for instance, or through methods such as 'My System of Career Influences' (MSCI, McMahan, Patton & Watson, 2005).
- Allow students to practice the assessment of any task with unclear standards (such as analyses, interpretations) from themselves and other students.
- Structure the curriculum to gradually create more room for self-direction, or in other words, provide real room for choice and make it possible to be responsible for the choices made.

- Provide information in the curriculum about development theories to generate insight into the road to be travelled and the results it will bring; provide feedback on any progress made in this field.
- The majority of the above recommendations are also applicable to instructors: their personal development is a prerequisite for the development of their students.
- Provide more support. Development is an emotional and at times painful process. As pointed out by Kegan (1994), for instance, gaining autonomy can bring about a strong resistance from the social environment. It may even cause the subject to feel afraid of being a traitor and of being abandoned. English speaking colleagues talk about 'Teaching as care' (Daloz in Taylor, 2006: 215): "Good teaching rests neither in accumulating a shelfful of knowledge nor in developing a repertoire of skills. In the end, good teaching lies in willingness to care for what happens in our students, ourselves, and the space between us."

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6 Career Choice in Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

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In this paper, we will address career choice problems in adolescence and emerging adulthood from the perspective of identity development. This paper is written on the basis of the authors' experiences in an intervention project for young people who experience problems in their career choice and their experience as identity development researchers. In this Career Guidance Project we developed a protocol for the guidance of adolescents who experienced career choice problems. However, an increasing number of clients in this project were not adolescents, but emerging adults. We noticed that the protocol we developed for adolescents did not work very well with these older clients, and that both age groups seem to have different kinds of problems. We will address the question whether adolescents with career choice problems differ from emerging adults with career choice problems, and whether the guidance should differ between both groups. First, we will discuss the theory on identity development in adolescents and emerging adults, with a focus on the differences between these groups. Next, we will discuss the career choice protocol we used for adolescents from the perspective of identity development. Finally we will discuss our findings concerning the differences in type of problems between the two age groups, and to illustrate the typical problems of emerging adults we will present a representative case-study of an emerging adult in our project.

6.1 Identity and Identity Development

Research into identity development was focused first and foremost on the identity status models of Marcia (1966). Marcia has conceptualized identity as a "self-structure – an internal self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and individual history" (1980, p. 159). In his research Marcia focuses on the behavioral level, i.e. the process of exploration and committing oneself. Based on exploration and commitment, four identity statuses have been distinguished: Identity Achievement (commitments are achieved after a period of exploration of meaningful alternatives), Moratorium (the person is actively engaged in a process of exploration), Foreclosure (commitments were chosen without the exploration of alternatives), and Diffusion (the person has no commitments). The statuses are "modes of dealing with the identity issue characteristic of late adolescents" (Marcia, 1980, p. 161). Various authors have remarked, however, that this process neither begins nor ends with the years of adolescence (Kroger & Haslett, 1991; Marcia, 1993). Over time, new explorations may occur, giving rise to other, more fitting commitments.

In the days when Erikson formulated his theory about identity, the majority of young people we now call "emerging adults" had already found jobs and started making adult commitments such as marriage and a family. Matters of identity usually sorted themselves out during the years of adolescence (ages 12-18). With the changes in society, with its greater emphasis on individualism, all this has ceased to be a matter of course (Arnett, 2007). Societal changes have resulted in an 'extended' transition to adulthood (Côté, 2000). Decisions concerning the future and hence questions of identity are postponed, whereas young people are supposed to be able to make their own choices. Thus Arnett (2000) was led to introduce a new development stage: 'emerging adulthood', starting from the age of eighteen and lasting up to the age of 25. There is no question yet of the commitments and

responsibilities that adults take upon themselves, whereas the experimentation stage, started during adolescence, continues and intensifies. According to Arnett (2000), it is not during adolescence that most explorations for the sake of attaining a stable sense of identity are made, but during emerging adulthood. Research shows that attainment of a stable sense of identity is seldom reached during adolescence and that identity development continues afterwards. Several societal changes contribute to these developments. In the first place, more young people continue their education after secondary school, and thus postpone their working career. Also, students have to make many changes during education. Almost every year a new choice for specializations or subjects should be made. In addition, more and more students start a new study after finishing their first study. Finally, most studies do not lead almost automatically to a specific type of career. Also after the studies, many choices are possible. These developments suggest that identity development in the form of a career choice may often be postponed, as compared to some decades ago.

6.2 Identity Development and the Career Choice Process: the protocol

The way in which adolescents decide on the first step in their career choice, namely their courses of study, has been researched in detail by Germeijs and Verschueren (2006). Our protocol for adolescents is based on their research. Starting from various theoretical models of the decision-making process and from taxonomies of career choosing problems, they have conceptualized the process of choosing among adolescents as a decision-making process with a number of tasks.

First, young persons have to be aware of the necessity of making a choice, then they have to be motivated to make a decision (task: orientation on choice). In our protocol we focus on the awareness and motivation especially in the intake. We check whether it was the adolescent's own choice to enroll. If not, the intake was focused on exploration of the choice situation and the adolescents' feelings about that. For enrollment in the guidance, awareness and some motivation were prerequisite. Then there is the third task of self exploration, consisting in collecting information about themselves and a broad exploration of their context. This means the young person is asked to collect information on the various alternatives that may be chosen. The first sessions in the protocol focus on this task. By means of specific home-assignments the participants were asked to study websites of different universities or colleges, to list the studies that were described there, and to make a list of studies that attracted them and studies that they did not like at all. During the sessions, we discussed their lists, and stimulate them to become more specific, to compare studies and formulate differences etcetera. In the same way, they had to make lists of their own broad job preferences such as, is it important for you to work with people, to help people, to build something).

When from this breadth orientation a number of possible courses of study have been chosen, the next assignment follows: in-depth orientation. This task was the focus of the second part of the protocol. The assignments in this part concern searching for more information on the remaining courses. The participant was stimulated to contact the university, to talk to other students, to study the list of topics in the different courses, etc. From here the last tasks follow, which Germeijs and Verschueren call 'decisional status' and 'commitment'. Decisional status is the stage in which a certain course of study is chosen, commitment expresses the strength with which the young person feels committed to the choice of a certain course of study. In the protocol we planned a final session, several weeks after the decision was made. The participants were asked in the mean time to talk about their choice with others, and to think it over. In what was planned to be the last session we discussed whether they felt certain and confident about their choices. If not, we went back to earlier steps in the protocol, and explored what made them hesitate etc.

In the course of the project it has become clear that the protocol was very successful for adolescents, but not for emerging adults. If we consider the protocol from the perspective of identity theory, the protocol “teaches” adolescents the different skills that are needed in the different phases of commitment development. First, they are taught how to explore and collect information, both internal and external, both in breadth and in depth, next they are guided in organizing their information, in formulating criteria about what is important for them, and finally, to choose and to commit themselves. The emerging adults in the project seemed to have no difficulties with these skills from the beginning. They performed the tasks easily, but did not gain anything by doing them. Obviously, in this group other intervention techniques are needed. But which? A literature search learned that from the early eighties onwards, many interventions were developed that aim at furthering identity development (Archer, 1994; Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2002; Kurtines, Silverman, Schwarz & Montgomery, 2000; Marcia 1989). Research shows that such intervention should include both strategies aimed at problem solving skills and making choices (Ferrer-Wreder et al., 2002), and also emotionally oriented elements (Schwarz, Kurtines and Montgomery, 2005) However, no research into the effect of interventions aimed at specific identity processes has been done as yet, so that no guidelines are available for specific student counseling (Ferrer-Wreder, Montgomery & Lorente, 2003).

To learn more about the characteristics of both groups and their different needs, we investigated whether the two groups in our Career Guidance Project differ from each other and from their norm groups with regard to aspects that are important in the career choice process. Firstly we assessed identity development, by assessing the contents and the strength of commitments, and the level of exploration in six domains of life: View of life, Parents, Friendship, Studying/Work/Leisure time, Personal characteristics and Intimate relation. A seventh domain consists of the “general principle”. This general principle is a general theme that underlies the different domains and can be seen as a kind of “Leitmotiv”. Secondly we assessed the identity styles as described by Berzonsky (1989). An identity style is a preferred way of dealing with identity issues. People with an ‘information-oriented style’ actively explore and evaluate relevant information before committing themselves. People in the foreclosed status focus on normative expectations of significant others and are called ‘norm oriented’. Persons in the diffusion status tend to delay and procrastinate until hedonic cues in the immediate situation dictate a course of behavior. Thirdly we assessed coping, the preferred way of problem solving. Coping refers to a broader construct: it concerns the way of handling problems in general, not just identity issues. Finally, we assessed the occurrence of a broad range of psychological problems. To learn more about the type of problems and about potentially effective intervention strategies in emerging adulthood we present a case study: we analyzed the phases and processes gone through by Maria, a 23-year-old student who was successfully guided when she had career choice problems.

6.3 Differences between Adolescents and Emerging Adults in Psychological Problems, Coping Styles and Identity

Method

The subjects were 31 adolescents (mean age 17.5) and 46 emerging adults (mean age 22.5) who assigned for the career choice guidance. The majority of subjects in both groups was in a higher level type of education. A subject was assigned to the group “adolescents” if he or she was in secondary school, and as “emerging adult” if the subject has finished secondary school. In the Dutch educational system, secondary school takes four to six years and is followed by either a specific vocational education, or by a university study.

Before the guidance started we administered the following questionnaires. The UCL (Schreurs, Van de Willige, Tellegen & Brosschot, 1988) is a Dutch instrument that assesses coping styles. The seven

subscales are: active problem solving, palliative reaction pattern, avoidance, seeking social support, passive reaction pattern, expressing emotions, and soothing thoughts. The clients younger than 18 used the adolescent version, the others the adult version. To develop a norm score for the whole group we selected for each subject the appropriate reference age group (normal population), and averaged the norm scores for all subjects. The “Klachtenlijst” is the Dutch version of the Symptom Check List SCL-90 (Arrindell & Ettema, 1986), a standard checklist for a broad range of psychological problems. The 90 items result in scores for anxiety, agoraphobia, depression, sleeping problems, insufficiency of thinking and acting, suspiciousness, interpersonal sensitivity, hostility, and psycho neuroticism (total score). The information processing styles were assessed by a Dutch translation of the Identity Style Inventory (Berzonsky, 1989). As reference group we used the scores of 358 first year psychology students, main age between 18 and 22 (Kunnen, 2005). In addition, an identity interview (GIDS) was administered (Bosma, 1985). In this semi-structured interview, the contents and the strength of commitments, and the level of exploration were assessed in the six domains (View of life, Parents, Friendship, Studying/Work/Leisure time, Personal characteristics and Intimate relation) and in the General Principle. The interview takes about 20 minutes per domain. The questions in the interview aim to stimulate the interviewee to explore and clarify what he or she perceives as important in this domain. Following that interview the interviewee is asked to write down what really matters to him or her concerning the domain in question. A questionnaire is then applied that assesses the strength of this commitment, and the amount of exploration in the domain. The seven questionnaires give two scores each, one for exploration, and one for commitment. The commitment score reflects the strength with which a person feels committed to the commitment on the card; exploration refers to the extent to which a person is engaged in collecting information, in order to explore the existing commitments, or to arrive at new commitments in the domain in question. To compare the test scores of both groups with the general population, we compared each group with the average score of the appropriate norm group (one sample t-test). To compare both groups with each other we applied the t-test for independent samples.

Results

Compared to the norm group, both adolescents and emerging adults showed above average scores for most indications of psychological problems (table 1). The emerging adults but not the adolescents scored significantly above average on anxiety. Although the differences between both groups were not significant, the scores of the emerging adults were higher for all scales.

Table 1. Mean Scores for Adolescents and Emerging Adults on the SCL-90, Compared with Norm group

	Mean Norm group	Mean Adolescents	Mean Emerging adults
Anxiety	12.5	13.2	14.6 *
Agoraphobia	7.0	7.9 *	8.7 *
Depression	20.8	24.5 *	25.5 ***
Somatizing	16.5	16.2	16.2
Insufficiency	11.1	13.8 **	15.8 ***
Mistrust	24.2	25.3	26.0
Hostility	6.0	7.2 ***	7.7 ***
Sleeping problems	3.7	4.6	4.8 **

Difference with mean is significant: * at $p < 0.05$, ** at $p < 0.01$, *** at $p < 0.001$

Both adolescents and emerging adults scored above average on passive and avoiding coping styles (table 2). The emerging adults scored above average on all other styles, too: palliative reactions, seeking social support, expressing emotions, and soothing thoughts, and below average on active coping. In general, the emerging adults show more and more significant differences from the norm.

Table 2. Mean Coping Style Scores for Adolescents and Emerging Adults, Compared with Norm group.

Coping style	Mean Norm group	Mean	Mean Norm group	Mean Emerging
	Adolescents	adolescents	Emerging Adults	Adults
Active	17.3	17.3	21.6	17.8 ***
Palliative	18.2	18.8	14.4	18.2 ***
Social support	15.4	15.4	12.1	16.3 ***
Avoiding	13.1	16.5 **	14.0	17.0 ***
Passive	10.9	13.0 **	10.1	14.0 ***
Emotional	6.0	.2	5.6	6.7 ***
Soothing thoughts	12.2	11.8	11	12.4 **

Difference with mean is significant: * at $p < 0.05$, ** at $p < 0.01$, *** at $p < 0.001$

With regard to identity style, the adolescents scored (marginally significant) lower on information oriented style than average (table 3). The emerging adults did not differ significantly from average or from the adolescents. Both groups scored below average on the commitment scale.

Table 3. Mean Identity Style Scores for Adolescents and Emerging Adults, Compared with Norm Group

	Mean Norm group	Mean Adolescents	Mean Emerging Adults
Information-oriented	38	35.4 *	38.4
Diffuse	26	28.5	26.0
Normative	27	26.2	26.5

Difference with mean is significant: * at $p < 0.1$, ** at $p < 0.05$, *** at $p < 0.01$

Both adolescents and emerging adults scored below average on exploration as measured in the GIDS (table 4).

Table 4. Mean Exploration and Commitment Scores in the different Domains for Adolescents and Emerging Adults, Compared with Norm group

	Exploration Mean Adolescents	Exploration Mean Emerging Adults	Commitment Mean Adolescents	Commitment Mean Emerging Adults
Philosophy of life	30 ***	39 *	34 ***	49
Parents	31 ***	41 *	48	45
Friends	33 ***	37 **	49	45
Study-work-leisure	39 *	52	43	42
Personal characteristics	41 *	44	37 **	43
Intimate relations	31 ***	40 *	52	52
General Principle	38 *	45	39 *	42 *

Because the scores are percentiles the norm is 50.

Difference with mean is significant: * at $p < 0.05$, ** at $p < 0.01$, *** at $p < 0.001$

For the adolescents this was significant in all domains, for the emerging adults in four out of seventh domains. In all domains, the scores of the adolescents were lower than those of the emerging adults. This difference was significant in the domain of studies-work-leisure. The adolescents had below average strength of commitment scores in the domains of philosophy of life, personal characteristics and the general principle. The emerging adults scored below average on the domain of studies-work-leisure and the general principle. The commitment strength of both groups differed significantly only in the domain of philosophy of life.

Conclusion

Both groups score above average on the psychological problems agoraphobia, depression, insufficiency and hostility as measured with the SCL-90. Only emerging adults score above average on anxiety. Although non-significant, the emerging adults' scores are systematically higher than those of the adolescents.

Both groups score above average on avoidant and passive coping; styles that are often interpreted as inadequate. In addition, the emerging adults score below average on active coping, and above average on palliative and emotional coping and on social support. Interesting is that the coping scores for the emerging adults do not differ from the adolescents. The norm scores however, are different for both groups, and as can be seen in table 2, the coping scores of the emerging adults resemble the average scores for a much younger age.

As expected, the adolescents score lower than the emerging adults on GIDS exploration and information oriented identity style, that are both related to the process of exploring and making choices. The differences in exploration are not all significant, but they are systematic: they hold for all domains. These lower scores may explain the career choice problems in adolescents and the success of the protocol that focuses on the development of exploration.

Overall, both groups show non-optimal patterns of coping and higher levels of psychological problems as compared to the population in general. This may mean that troublesome youth is more prone to develop career choice problems. It may also mean however, that career choice problems trigger psychological problems and inadequate coping patterns.

For adolescents, the low levels of exploration and information oriented identity style may explain their career choice problems, and the success of the guidance program, because the guidance program focuses on learning skills that resemble exploration and an information oriented style of solving a career problem.

The emerging adults' exploration and information oriented identity style scores suggest that most of them do have the skills needed for making a choice. The higher levels of psychological problems and the atypical and probably less functional pattern of coping styles in the group of emerging adults suggests that this group may have more encompassing problems than adolescents with career choice problems. To shed more light on the characteristics of emerging adults with career choice problems, we will describe a representative case study in more detail.

6.4 Guidance in Emerging Adults: A Case Study

In this case study, we describe the guidance process of one typical emerging adult client in the Project. Data are collected over a five-month period, the time it took to guide her through the decision-making process. The data comprises of the questionnaires described above, session reports, completed assignments and a pre- and a post-treatment GIDS assessment. The GIDS outcomes of both assessments were compared in a descriptive way. Two independent raters scored whether the contents of the GIDS commitments had changed, and described eventual changes.

Our subject, Maria, has almost completed her studies of Dutch language and she enrolled in the Career Guidance Project because she doubted whether she wants to look for a job or take up another university course. The intake in the protocol consisted of three sessions, including administration of the tests, a general intake interview, and the first GIDS interview. Table 5 shows for each domain the content of the commitments and the exploration and commitment scores.

Table 5. Maria's Pre-Guidance GIDS Results: Commitment Contents and Scores (decile scores in parentheses).

Commitment contents for each domain	Commitment	Exploration
view of life: <i>"I have an open and positive attitude in life. I acknowledge other people and their opinions and am curious to know them. I try to enjoy the little things in life (and the big ones) and not to think ahead too much, but to live by the day."</i>	21(3)	8(1)
Parents: <i>"Good relationship: I can fall back on my parents; we respect one another"</i>	28(7)	12(7)
Friendship: <i>"Friends are for laughing with and they should always be available to each other for any problem"</i>	13(1)	16(9)
Studying-work-leisure time: <i>"Studying and work are important (arrow) main subject. Leisure time is also quite important; needn't only mean doing nothing"</i>	29(7)	18(8)
Personal characteristics: <i>"Still insecure about my looks and what impression I make on other people. Apart from that, as to character: reasonably content"</i>	13(1)	21(9)
Intimate relationship: <i>"an intimate relationship creates happiness and a sense of security. It means being yourself, counterbalancing your partner and having fun together"</i>	35(10)	11(3)
General Principle <i>"Open-minded in life: I like being with others (friends, parents, boyfriend), though with feelings of uncertainty towards them. On the other hand they may actually give you strength and make you happy"</i>	17(2)	16(8)

Maria's paramount problem was that she had almost finished her studies in Dutch language and literature and could not decide whether to take a job or continue studying. Maria seemed to have the skills needed to make choices: she reports that she makes decisions in a rational manner, weighing all alternatives against each other, choosing the one that seems best in the end. This was confirmed by the test results. She scored above average on active coping and on information oriented identity style. The GIDS results (table 5) show that Maria, as compared to students of the same age, had very weak commitments in the domains of life philosophy, friendship, personal characteristics and general principle. In the domains of friendship, personal characteristics and general principle the exploration scores were high: Maria was engaged in active exploration in these domains but had not developed any commitments yet. The commitment in the domain personal characteristics expressed satisfaction with herself, but also uncertainty. In the domain of intimate relationship her commitment was very strong, and the levels of exploration low, which indicates that in this domain Maria felt very certain. She told that she lived together with her boyfriend, and felt supported by him. The domain philosophy of life showed low levels of exploration and commitment strength, suggesting that this domain did not play an important role at that moment. In the last session of the intake phase we discussed the test and GIDS results with Maria. During the intake it emerged that Maria continually compared herself with others, mainly with her female friends. She felt that this comparing has a negative influence on her capability to choose. She accounted for the widely diverging scores in the domains of Friendship and of Intimate relationship by the fact that with her boyfriend she could be herself completely,

a feeling she did not have among her female friends. When asked if she could see a link between her tendency to compare and her inability to choose, she said that she now realized the adverse effect of this comparing on making decisions. To stimulate Maria to reflect on the session she got as "homework" the assignment to write a letter in which she reflects on what was discussed. This homework was the starting point of the guiding process. The guidance process comprised of nine sessions. In the first sessions, the protocol was followed in the same way as with adolescents. In the first phase we focused on self exploration. The client was stimulated by different kinds of tasks (such as writing letters) to explore her own interests, wishes and skills. We aimed to increase the client's awareness of herself. As can be seen below, this worked well for Maria.

Writing the letter mentioned above triggered insight and consciousness in different themes. The first theme concerned Maria's own impediments:

"I see it now. I still feel insecure."

"I've got wiser now and more confident, but today I've found out I still let my insecurities get in the way."

"Today the penny has started to drop: I compare myself too much with them."

She reflected on a number of situations from the past week, and this improved her insight into her insecurity, in the inhibiting effect of her comparison behavior and her inability to choose. The second theme in the letter concerned her wish to stop comparing herself with others. However, she did not know how to achieve this:

"It would really be great if I could get this comparing out of my system."

"If only I were a bit more confident."

"... trying to be content with myself and my choices ... If only I could bring myself to stick to them with conviction. That's what I'm going to try."

The third theme was insecurity/little self-confidence. Maria realized that she is not sure of what she wants:

"I haven't quite sorted that out yet, but ..., I thought I was sure I didn't want to start on a job yet. That's how I felt at the time. So maybe that means something. But then I do rather tend to change my mind".

Again, Maria could formulate the pros and cons of studying and a job and analyze the situation for herself. She did need any help with the practical exploration in this process. However, this did not lead to a choice. These two sessions coincided with a traineeship, the final part of her studies in Dutch language. Her traineeship experiences made her decide against taking a job. Thus, the main problem shifted to the question: what university course should she choose. She already had some ideas about possible candidates. Some of these were rational choices, subjects that would complement her present studies in an excellent way, others were emotional ones, subjects that attracted her, but have no bearing on her present studies at all. We gave Maria the assignment to collect more information on the various courses of study. With this assignment, we shifted the focus from exploration of the self to exploration of the context. This is in line with the protocol: the client was stimulated by different

tasks (such as writing letters, gathering information) to explore the contextual possibilities, such as the available schools and studies. For adolescents, the focus is on acquiring the skills of collecting and organizing information. Maria however, had these skills. Her information oriented identity style score was in the 7th decile, her active coping score between 7th and 8th decile, and four out of seven exploration scores were above average (see table 5). As can be seen below, the process of collecting information confronted her with her inability to decide, and it created confusion and chaos.

Based on the collected information, Maria weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the various studies, and made on rational grounds the choice for the study of General Linguistics. However, she kept doubts, mainly because she observed that she changed her mind so often. To give her more time, the interval between sessions six and seven was prolonged by a week. In session seven she declared she felt like being back to square one. She had found out that the duration of General Linguistics was four years instead of three, which was a great disappointment. Maria still thought the study of General Linguistics was worth considering, but she now saw more disadvantages. The first disadvantage was that she felt that she should have taken up this subject earlier, instead of doing Dutch language and literature. The second disadvantage concerned the duration of the course: she was afraid of being fed up with studying after two years. At this point we discussed that she seemed to contradict herself, because in an earlier session she had said that she wanted to continue studying. It became clear that there were no external objections against her choice: friends and relatives supported her in this choice and there were no financial obstacles, but she seemed to search for arguments counting against choosing this subject. To get clear what was going on, we gave Maria as homework the assignment to write a letter about what keeps her back. This letter showed Maria no longer has a clue about what to choose.

“... I really don't know anymore ... But I can't find it in my mind.”

It also showed she is searching for certainty. She wrote that she would rather have attended a lower educational level secondary school, because in that case she would not have had so many options for choice. Thirdly, the letter showed a negative strategy of choosing, in which other persons' opinions were the key factor. For every option Maria summed up the disadvantages, which turned out to be based on the opinions of others. The last theme in the letter was the loss of self-confidence:

“What the heck, I've stopped taking myself seriously long ago. I come up with a different subject every week and it really drives me nuts. Nobody's taking me seriously anymore, so why should I myself?”

In the previous sessions, we left the protocol. Instead of teaching and guiding the practical skills needed for exploration and choosing we turned our attention to what kept Maria from applying the skills in order to come to a choice. We used the same techniques (counseling and assignments) to explore what was at stake for Maria. It turned out that it was the making of a choice that was most difficult.

In the following sessions we started to talk about the negative strategy of choosing mentioned in the letter. Maria told that in fact she could never make up her mind. Even in answer to the question “what would you like to eat?” she didn't know what she wanted, not because she didn't have an opinion, but because an abundance of choices overwhelmed her. The negative elimination strategy helped her to lead her to the least negative option. In order to change her focus on the negative side, the assignment for the next session was writing a letter about things she likes, things that make her

happy. The letter was to show Maria using a positive approach and putting herself in the centre. Maria started this letter with:

"This is going to be a positive letter, so I start with a positive Hi!"

At the start Maria was rather skeptic in her letter and clearly found it a hard task:

"... Only later on we're going to have a look at what I can do and what my possibilities are. So let's just do a little daydreaming. Seems easy, is rather hard though."

Initially she wrote about "something with people" and gradually made this more specific. It appeared that Maria knew quite well what she wanted and what she liked. Striking too is that, whereas in previous letters and during previous sessions she considered other people's opinions important, she stucked to her own mind in this letter. In the next session Maria declared that eventually she quite enjoyed writing the letter. We discussed all the positive points that Maria mentions in the letter, while attempts were made to find university courses/professions to go with them. Maria mentioned psychology and education, which she mentioned before, at the start of the guidance sessions. She remarked that these keep coming to her mind. At the end of this phase, Maria's decided that she would either choose psychology or education. She felt she would not need any guidance for the choice between these two.

Instead of focusing on the techniques and results of gathering information, we focused on psychological processes that held Maria back from finding and choosing for what she really wanted. The assignments helped her to get insight in her inadequate strategies, to overcome them, and to make a choice. The final phase in Maria's guidance coincides with the final phase in the protocol: the 'decisional status' and 'commitment'. A gap of several weeks has been left between the sessions to give the client sufficient opportunity to let her decision sink in and to start feeling more committed to it. Maria has gone into the details of courses, psychology and education.

"If you want to find out whether it's any good or not, you'll have to experience it."

She was going to enroll for a course of psychology. She decided to keep her decision to herself till the course starts, in order to safeguard herself from the influence of others. She felt clear in her own mind as to what she wants, but she wanted to leave it some time to mature. The opinions of others might bring back her doubts again. After the last session of the guidance we made an appointment for the final evaluation and the second appliance of the GIDS. We also asked Maria to write a letter in which she reflects on the guidance and gives her view of it. Shortly before the evaluation session, Maria had enrolled herself in an introductory course in psychology. She felt satisfied with her decision to take up psychology and was happy with it. When asked what made her to make this choice, she said that what has been important was firstly a growing understanding of her self during the guidance sessions, secondly having learned to approach things positively. When looking back Maria told that for a long time she thought she would never find a way out, owing to her despair and self-doubt. During the guidance sessions in which she was to ponder things making her happy and touching her, it was as if a switch was touched. To Maria this switch meant being able to choose psychology.

"Yet, in spite of my choice being emotional, practical matters have also played a role."

This quotation shows that both aspects, affective as well as rational ones, have been involved in her choice. In her final letter, she told about her realization of her comparison behavior, and that she still found this hard to cope with. As she put it:

“... In spite of my becoming aware of comparing myself to others ..., very difficult to account for my decision towards friends and family. I don’t explain myself, because I no longer want to, but I do feel the urge.”

Changes in Commitments during the Guidance

Comparison of the GIDS results before and after the guidance showed that in every domain the commitment contents have changed (table 6).

Table 6. Maria’s Post-Guidance GIDS results: Commitment Contents and Scores (decile scores in parentheses)

Commitment Content for each domain	Commitment	Exploration
<i>View of life</i> “I really view life more positively and feel I am my own girl now, and I realize it’s more fun to live by the day and enjoy the little things.”	25 (5)	7 (1)
<i>Parents</i> “I can always call on my parents. And the funny thing is: I don’t necessarily need them and our relationship is getting more on an equal level (they can call on me more often now).”	20 (3)	11 (7)
<i>Friendship</i> “To me the notion of friendship is difficult to grasp. When exactly do you call someone a friend and when are you a friend yourself. I might be satisfied with my friends and with myself as a friend, but that’s not how I see things just now.”	4 (1)	24 (10)
<i>Studying-work-leisure time</i> “I appreciate studying in general. I like learning things and will keep doing so during my next course of studies and my work afterwards. Still, I don’t want to start a job. I’m going a hundred percent for my studies and the leisure time that comes with it.”	28 (7)	11 (2)
<i>Personal characteristics</i> “I shall always remain slightly insecure (especially about looks) and compare myself with others. I’ll always be a perfectionist and keep planning ahead. But knowing your weak points gives you a chance to handle them better and temper them and it enables you to cope with criticism better.”	16 (1)	19 (8)
<i>Intimate relationship</i> “I am really happy about the relationship with my friend. I can be myself, feel well and strengthened. The only thing I want to keep alert to is getting bourgeois. I compare my relationship with that of people around me.”	32 (10)	11 (3)
<i>General Principle</i> “I have grown more confident and independent. I know what I want, what I can do and what my weak points are. It helps me viewing life positively and be myself. Only in the domain of friendship I haven’t quite worked things out yet.”	24 (4)	13 (6)

In the domain of View of Life the commitment content did not change much. During the pre-measurement Maria tries to enjoy the little things in life, during post-measurement she realizes so even more and actually succeeds in it. There seems to be a change from trying to doing. The increase in commitment score suggests that she feels more committed in this domain. With regard to her parents Maria's commitment with them has become more one of equals. The strength of commitment score has decreased. In the domain of Friendship, the commitment scores became even lower and the exploration scores higher than before. The ideas she had before the guidance have vanished. Maria no longer knows what she understands by friendship. She seems to be eagerly looking for new commitments in this domain. The commitment in the Studying/Work/Leisure time domain sounds more dedicated and specific than before. The exploration level has decreased. A commitment seems to have developed. The second commitment in the Personal Characteristics domain may be described as more specific and more self-aware than before. The lack of self-confidence as described during the first measurement is still there, the commitment is still weak and the exploration high. Little change has occurred in the domain of Intimate Relations. The commitment remains very strong, with below average exploration. In the second commitment she added her new realization that he compares her relationship with that of others. The General Principle commitment in the pre-measurement refers to others as source of strength and of security. In the second assessment, the source of strength seems to be internal, and Maria is more specific about what is uncertain.

6.5 Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

In this study we aimed to get more insight in characteristics of adolescents and emerging adults with regard to career choice problems and the kind of career choice guidance they need. In the first study we found similarities, but also some interesting differences between both groups. For adolescents, the low levels of exploration and information oriented identity style may explain their career choice problems, and the success of the guidance program, because the guidance program focuses on learning skills that resemble exploration and an information oriented style of solving a career problem. The emerging adults' results suggest that most of them do have the skills needed for making a choice but that they may have other problems and need other types of guidance. In this second part we therefore described a typical guidance process with an emerging adult. Also Maria did have the skills needed for exploring and comparing alternatives. Her career choice problems seemed to be rooted in feelings of insecurity, and a dysfunctional urge to compare herself to her friends. As the commitments in the pre-measurement GIDS results showed, this insecurity did not only play a role in the Studying/Work/Leisure time domain, but in other domains as well. The tasks in the protocol that aimed to train exploration skills did not work for Maria: she already had those skills. For her, it was the very comparison made with the various other domains that triggered the increase of her awareness in other domains and a re-formulation of the commitments' content. Also the changes in Maria's case are not limited to the domain of studying. In general, her post-guidance commitments express more awareness and are more specific than the initial ones.

If the results in this study can be confirmed in other studies, this means that emerging adults in general need other types of career guidance than adolescents. Of course, the data presented in our first study concern averages. We also saw some adolescents who showed high levels of exploration and an information oriented coping style, and who needed a type of guidance that was comparable to Maria. However, if Maria's case is in some way representative for a larger group of emerging adults, this may mean that for emerging adults it would be more important to include other domains in the guiding process as well and to focus on more general psychological functioning. With adolescents our guidance was usually limited to one single domain: study-work-leisure and to specific skills.

An important question is whether the process described is idiosyncratic to this particular emerging adult, or whether it has a more general validity. As regards Maria's specific problems with making choices and comparing herself with others, it is not likely to be generalizable. However, Maria's situation resembles the description of Shulman, Feldman, Blatt, Cohen and Mahler (2005) that "transitions are no longer successively manageable sequences and passages, but are now characterized by fluctuations, discontinuities and reversals, and uncertainties." As emerging adulthood grows more and more prominent as a stage of life, the attendant problems will occur with increasing frequency. Although further research will have to prove in how far the present findings can be generalized, the present research provides new insights into the kind of problems that may occur, thus making the first move towards the development of intervention methods specifically designed for this stage of life.

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Career guidance in vocational schools: how do students and teachers perceive and use the personal development plan and portfolio?

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Internationally, there is a growing recognition of the importance of career education and guidance in schools (Hughes, Bailey & Mechur, 2001; Watts & Sultana, 2004). Schools increasingly acknowledge that they have a responsibility in guiding young people towards lifelong learning and lifelong career development. In many countries this is evident, for example, in the inclusion of career education in the curriculum of schools, which incorporates aspects such as career awareness, career exploration, and the development of career management skills. There is a trend across several countries to expand guidance services vertically across all grade levels, no longer concentrated at particular cut-off points where choices on subject clusters or studies are normally made. Career guidance in schools increasingly becomes developmental in orientation (Sultana, 2004).

7.1 Career learning becomes important

In the Netherlands, a similar development is noticeable and coincides with the implementation of competence-based education in vocational education. Especially schools for vocational education have started implementing competence-based education to better meet the demands of the labor market. In competence-based education the actual competences needed for working in practice, rather than academic disciplines, are the starting-point for curriculum development (author, 2008). Competence-based education schools have welcomed a more self-directed, student-centred approach in which the learner is made responsible for his or her own learning and career path, and in which teachers are seen as coaches who guide students along their way (Biemans, Nieuwenhuis, Poell, Mulder, & Wesselink, 2008). The school is regarded not only as an institute that focuses on getting learners qualified, but also as 'a career centre' in which students acquire competences such as being able to reflect on personal ambitions and motives, and taking action and initiative to direct their own career development (Geurts, 2003; Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006). To realize this, many schools are implementing career guidance as an integral part of competence-based education and are using or implementing instruments such as portfolios and personal developments plans to help students develop these so-called career competences (Kuijpers, et al. 2006).

One of the aims of these recent innovations in vocational schools has been to increase motivation and empower learners within and beyond the school. Another argument is that young people need to be prepared for an ever-changing society. Many authors argue that the increasing focus on service and knowledge (management) in our society requires cognitive and self-management competences so that workers may fulfil complex occupational roles and manage the demands of contemporary life (see for example Defillippi & Arthur 1994; Giddens 1991). This requires individuals to learn throughout their lives and to be flexible in fulfilling different occupational roles. Arthur (1994) states that for an increasing number of employees, the 'boundaryless career' – a career that extends beyond the borders of the current employment and beyond individual boundaries (into extra-organizational networks) – is a reality. Workers organize their careers independent of traditional organizational boundaries.

According to Handy (1995) in the future jobs will only be temporary and people will move from one contract to the next based on the strength of their portfolios of achievement. According to Handy, we will enter the age of 'portfolio careers', in which continuing employment depends on the evidence that we provide for a wide range of skills, understandings, and qualities. Sociologists also argue that young people are required to make more individual decisions than in earlier times, due to the demassification these youngsters face (Walther, 2006; Diepstraten, 2006). Another argument for the implementation of competence-based education and a stronger focus on career guidance is that many youngsters in vocational schools face problems around (personal) identity development and making choices for the future. This is not unique to the Netherlands (Neuvel & van Esch, 2006; Den Boer, Mittendorff & Sjenitzer, 2004) but also counts for other Western European countries like the United Kingdom (Banks et al., 1992; Law, 2000) and Germany (Walther, Bois-Reymond & Biggart, 2006).

In order to meet these societal demands, some scholars argue that learners need to acquire professional competences, competences that not only comprise 'know-what' and 'know-how', but also 'know-why' (Doorewaard 2000; Defillippi & Arthur, 1994). In other words, the changed society requires individuals to have a sense of direction and identity (Wijers & Meijers, 1996). Developing a sense of direction and identity is not easy (Kuijpers, et al., 2006; Wijers & Meijers, 1996). It involves reflecting on personal motives and identity and allowing insecurity to be part of the learning process (Coffield, et al., 2004). Developing a sense of direction should be a reflective process, i.e. not (only) based on a set of learned and internalized rules of action, but on critical assessment of the situation and options available, because the individualization and flexibility of labor relations continuously require that the individual responds to unpredictable situations (Kuijpers, et al., 2006). If the development of a sense of direction and identity is regarded as an important aim of education, a powerful learning environment is required in which students are stimulated to reflect on their motives, values and ambitions for the future (Coffield, et al., 2004).

Obviously, there have also been critiques on competence-based education, in particular on the idea that people should be self-directed and autonomous in order to cope with a boundaryless career, and on the assumption that reflection is 'the key to everything'. Sennett (1998), for example, presents a less optimistic view. He observes that employees often become entangled in a flexible labor market: stability in employment and jobs are perceived as a sign of inflexibility or weakness. Some employees transfer between jobs without knowing whether this will be to their advantage or not. Sennett also argues that frequent (re)shuffling of members of the workforce can break bonds between workers and can destroy solidarity. Other scholars are concerned that there is an overemphasis on reflection. Kuijpers and Meijers (forthcoming) addressed the potential pitfall of what Foucault (1975) – following philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) – called a 'panopticum'. When students are forced to reflect, and are at the same time not taken serious by the school and teachers in a sense that the teachers do not have the time to reflect with students and/or to discuss products appropriately, students will feel that reflection is an useless, albeit enforced process. As a result, students will react in the same manner as they react to the curriculum they do not see as relevant: they will try to achieve maximum results with a minimal effort. Back in the eighties Hargreaves (1986) already highlighted the possible danger of using instruments such as a portfolio as a device for surveillance and control and not as instruments that really empower the individual or his/her professional development. Criticism has also been aimed at the relevance and suitability of competence-based education to 'at risk' learners, who (in the Netherlands) are likely to be enrolled in vocational education. A relatively high number of students in Dutch vocational schools (compared to other types of education) originate from lower socio-economic and/or minority backgrounds; these backgrounds are characterized by values, beliefs, rules and interaction patterns that can differ much from what students encounter in school (Geurts & Meijers, forthcoming). Also, a relatively high number of students with learning disabilities is present

in vocational schools (Eijndhoven & Vlug, 2006). Young people at risk often find it difficult to learn in a self-directed manner and experience less support in constructing their lives and careers (Walther, 2006).

In this study, career guidance and the use of career guidance instruments will be investigated within the context of competence-based vocational education. In the following section we will discuss career guidance and research on the use of career guidance instruments. After this discussion, the research questions will be presented as well as the methodology that was used to answer them. Finally, the research findings will be presented in addition to a reflection on the findings, strengths and limitations of our study, as well as implications for future research and practice.

7.2 Integral career guidance: using the personal development plan and portfolio

Schools that implement competence-based education often use a form of career guidance that can be seen as 'integral career guidance'. Integral career guidance is not only aimed at preparing students for vocational education, but offers continued support during their education, and is aimed at developing career competences such as reflecting on one's ambitions and capabilities, or networking. Integral career guidance consists of a series of connected instruments in combination with activities such as assessments, intake procedures, personal development plans and reports that demonstrate student reflection. Of central importance is the portfolio, in which all the information derived from the other instruments and activities comes together. Integral career guidance is provided by teachers who have an extra task in career guidance for which time is assigned. In this form of career guidance, teachers are directly responsible for the supervision of students.

Two of the most commonly used instruments in this type of career guidance within vocational and prevocational schools are the personal development plan and the portfolio. The purpose of the *personal development plan* is that a student learns to reflect on his or her own strengths and weaknesses, and direct his or her own learning process by setting up personal learning goals (Reynaert et al., 2006). Usually important questions to be answered in this plan are: 'Who am I as a person?', 'What do I want in my future (career)?', 'What are my current strengths and weaknesses?', and 'What do I need to do to develop to reach my goals?'. A *portfolio* is often a collection of documents and other evidence illustrating progress towards a goal (Larkin, Pines & Bechtel, 2002). Portfolios are regarded as valuable in that they provide evidence of performance and because they promote self-development and learning, in part because students are expected to reflect on what they have done and what progress they have made towards a goal (Wright, Night & Pomerleau, 1999). Because of the continuous nature of portfolios and the demand they make to be actively involved, it is assumed that portfolios and personal development plans encourage students to develop self-reflection and to take charge of their lifelong learning. They allow students to take ownership and thereby promote a sense of responsibility (McMullan, 2006).

McMullan (2005) reported that portfolios can be very effective as assessment and learning tools, provided that both students and mentors receive clear guidelines on and comprehensive support on how to use them. They should be designed in such a way that they are relevant, clear and user-friendly for both students and mentors. Broadfoot (1998) addressed the effectiveness of the Records of Achievements used in the UK, and emphasized the importance of usability and credibility as well. She argued that these aspects, together with the expertise of the teachers, are important to create ownership, which influences the perceived and actual value they have for students. Driessen

et al. (2003) also reported on factors contributing to portfolio effectiveness, including a supportive academic mentor system to coach the student, a clear portfolio structure allowing students to determine content and form, organization of the portfolio around student self reflection, and an early and unambiguous introduction of the portfolio in the curriculum. The support or coaching of students as a crucial factor has also been mentioned by other researchers, such as Elshout-Mohr and Daalen-Kapteijs (2003). They stated that the effectiveness of a portfolio not only relies on its design and implementation, but even more on the quality of coaching the students. At the same time, Elshout-Mohr and Daalen-Kapteijs (2003) argued that many teachers are not sufficiently competent in fulfilling this new role.

Research on the effectiveness of personal development planning is less common and often focuses on specific cases, for example on projects for special target groups or specific places (see for example Bullock & Jamieson 1998). According to Clegg and Bradley (2006) understandings and practices of personal development planning vary quite widely in and between schools and this diversity is characterized by ill-defined concepts, a variety of functions, ill-researched implementations and/or dependence on a specific context, for instance the higher-education sector. Although there are no general reviews that investigate the effectiveness of personal development plans, there are issues discussed by authors that contribute to the success of this instrument. Ward and Richardson (2007) addressed a few critical success factors for personalized learning plans, one being 'learner engagement'. Another factor stressed by Ward and Richardson is the need for reflection on function of the plans, such as the stimulation of learning processes and the recording of outcomes of those learning processes, thereby enabling both learners and tutors to revisit (and re-negotiate) them. Bullock and Jamieson (1998) furthermore argue that the value of one-to-one discussions between tutors and students is crucial, and the quality of the personal development planning process was thought to rest, to a great extent, on the skills and enthusiasm of individual tutors (see also Whiteside 1994 in Bullock, and Jamieson 1998).

7.3 The Dutch situation

The use of instruments such as portfolios and personal development plans for career guidance is relatively new in the vocational and prevocational education context in the Netherlands. There is a lack of empirical evidence on the impact of these instruments in this context to date. An exception is research by Kuijpers et al. (2006) which focused on the influence of the learning environment on the development of career competences of students in vocational education. This research indicated that a powerful learning environment for the development of competences such as reflecting on personal ambitions and taking initiative to direct your own career development, is one in which a student can experience authentic, occupational practice, in which a student is able to exert influence on the content and progress of the curriculum, and in which the career learning process is being evaluated and discussed in a dialogue between students and teachers. However, this research also showed that many schools find such a learning environment difficult to realize. A more practice-oriented curriculum was often present, but schools failed in giving the students more freedom within the curriculum, as well as in actually achieving a reflective dialogue. Finally, their research did not provide any clues as to why these schools failed to establish such a learning environment.

Even though (more) evidence is available from a higher-education context, the (secondary) vocational and prevocational education context differs in many respects, for instance in terms of the type of learners enrolled. As was argued, a higher percentage of at-risk students can be found in vocational schools. Students are also younger and pursue education at a lower level. Finally,

there is little empirical evidence concerning students' perceptions on the use and effectiveness of career development instruments for career guidance and whether these perceptions differ from those of teachers and counselors. This study, therefore, is a first attempt to examine these issues and to investigate the perspectives of teachers, career counselors and students with respect to career guidance and the role of career guidance instruments in vocational and prevocational education.

7.4 Method

This study provides a first description of how teachers, students and career counselors in vocational schools perceive the role of portfolios and personal development plans as a part of career guidance. These perceptions are analyzed for the beliefs, practices and uses of the instruments by respondents in Dutch vocational and prevocational education. The research questions that will be investigated are:

- How are instruments like personal development plans and portfolios used in career guidance as perceived by teachers and career counselors in a small number of vocational and prevocational education cases/schools?
- How do students in this context perceive and use these instruments?
- What differences and similarities can be found between the cases/schools investigated?

Because of the exploratory nature of this study and the lack of prior research in this particular context a qualitative approach was taken in the form of case studies. Case studies are particularly useful in situations where a problem or phenomenon needs to be investigated and described in its real-life, situated context, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident, or when the implementation of a certain innovation needs to be investigated (Yin, 2003). Case studies can also be used to develop new theories (Glaser & Straus, 1967).

Three schools participated in this study. Case one was the first year of a Juridical service studies, level 4 of vocational secondary education. Respondents for this case were four teachers: the portfolio coordinating teacher, a teacher assistant responsible for portfolio coaching and two (mentoring) teachers took part. Also, eight students enrolled in the first-year of participated in the study. Juridical Service is. There is a strong focus on practice-oriented learning, (self-) reflection and student self-responsibility. Students are expected to formulate individual learning goals in a personal development plan, and this process is being coached by teachers. Students have to create a text-based portfolio in which assignments and written reflections provide evidence of their learning and are thereby collected. Students are supposed to have planned 'career conversations' with their career guide (teacher) every eight weeks; during these conversations personal development plan and portfolio are to be discussed.

Case two was the first-year of a Business and Marketing studies, also level 4 of vocational secondary education. Respondents in this case were two teachers, one career counselor and six students. Since 2005, Business and Marketing has taken on a competence-based approach. Students have no books, only a laptop with access to several digital sources. Students are involved in projects, together with a small group of their fellow students. These projects emphasize practical skills and learning at the workplace and focus on self-responsibility in learning and work. Business and Marketing studies has a well-designed career guidance system: there is a digital portfolio, including a digital personal development plan. In career guidance conversations with career guides (teachers) every eight weeks, the personal development plan and portfolio of student are being discussed.

Case three was the third-year of a Business and Administration studies, a level 2 study in *prevocational* secondary education. The respondents for this case were three teachers, one career counselor

and nine students. Since the beginning of 2006, a 'transition portfolio' has been implemented. The transition-portfolio is an instrument used by several prevocational education schools in the Netherlands in order to improve career decision making and career planning processes. The portfolio contains assignments that help students to obtain a better image of themselves and the beliefs they have about different professions or work. Its goal is to create a better transition from prevocational to vocational education by supporting students in their choices, and by stimulating communication between schools for prevocational and senior vocational education.

In all cases, data were collected by conducting individual, semi-structured interviews with students, teachers and career counselors (or a staff member in a like function). The interviews were open and informal in nature, but the researcher monitored a list of topics or questions that would be covered. The teachers in the cases were selected because of their involvement in career guidance. They were directly responsible for the career guidance of students. In all cases, career counselors had a more indirect role: they were available to students and/or teachers when extra career guidance was needed or development problems arose.

To answer the second research question, students were interviewed about their future plans and actions related to their career. This involved questions such as: 'What are you planning to do after graduation?'; 'What do you do to obtain a better image of what you want to do or become in the future?'. Additionally, questions related to the (use of) instruments like the personal development plan or portfolio. Example questions were: 'Can you tell us something about the goal of the portfolio?'; 'Do you think the personal development plan is useful?'. To answer the first research question, teachers and career counselors were interviewed for their perceptions of the role of instruments for career guidance and the career guidance system. Questions that were asked were for instance: 'Can you tell us something about the goal of the portfolio?'; 'What is the role of the personal development plan in career guidance at your school?'

Interviews were recorded on audiotape with the consent of the respondents. After transcribing the recorded interviews, data were analyzed according to a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) using Atlas-ti. In a grounded theory approach the researcher formulates categories and relationships between categories based on observations from the data rather than from theory (e.g. bottom up or inductively). The first author assigned open codes to the fragments she believed were relevant. These codes indicated a more general or conceptual idea shown in a given fragment and were formulated during the analysis. A code formulated was for example 'personal contact with the student'. Codes were added until saturation emerged. In a next step, strongly overlapping, equivalent or unclear codes were deleted or merged within larger categories.

In order to establish reliability, a trained research assistant read and coded the transcripts of three randomly selected interviews independently. After coding, codes were compared critically between the researcher and the independent rater. Differences in the two analyses were discussed and when differences were identified, relevant parts of the transcripts and memos were re-read and discussed extensively in order to achieve consensus. If doubt remained, codes or fragments were not incorporated into the final coding scheme. During the final stage of analysis, the researcher explored whether categories identified in the open coding phase could be related to each other. These findings were finally compared with existing research in order to validate findings theoretically. After analyses of the separate cases, a cross-case analysis was done, in order to detect differences and similarities between the cases (third research question).

7.5 Results

In this section, each case will first be described separately and afterwards we will compare the results of the three cases together.

Case 1: Juridical Service studies (vocational education)

All interviewed teachers indicated that the portfolio was being used as an instrument to collect records of achievements of students and that it contained assignments on learning things about yourself (Who am I?). The portfolio also contained documents with reflections by students on the assignments they had done in their daily schoolwork (How did I do? What should I improve?). One male teacher explained that the portfolio was being used to keep track on one's development, and to collect evidence for this purpose:

"A part of the portfolio is about self-responsibility with respect to the learning process. Students have to collect things themselves and provide evidence."

Another female teacher argued that the portfolio is an important means to achieve more student responsibility:

"It helps them by giving them something to grasp, or a kind of structure, to organize things."

A third, female teacher added that reflecting on things done is not sufficient, and that a personal development plan for students is needed as well. She believed focusing at future goals and steps taken to achieve such goals to be of great importance:

*"From reflections on what has been done, points for improvement will become evident. In a personal development plan they [students, *ibid*] should discuss these points and indicate what learning goals they have and how they would like to achieve these goals."*

According to this teacher, personal development plans are focused at developing a realistic self-image, and at setting up learning goals for mentoring conversations:

"Students have to learn what their real talents are, and many of them have a self-image that is not realistic. When entering the career guidance process you must know who you are, what you want to learn and what your talents are."

Another female teacher added that personal development plans refer to building a model of oneself in the future:

"In the personal development plan students are building a model of what they want to become."

All teachers, however, mentioned these instruments only work when being used in face-to-face contact with students:

"You have to ask a lot of questions, and sometimes 'penetrate mental barriers' to really understand or motivate these students."

"For a good developmental process in terms of the career, you have to supervise students, coach them, talk to them."

"I talk a lot with them [students, ibid], not only in personal guidance conversations, but also in the classroom during lessons. I go sit with these students and talk with them to get to know them really well. Important is: keep asking questions!"

Many students in this school perceived the portfolio as an instrument that was meant to collect evidence about what was done and something that had personal meaning. According to them, it could be used for example for job application:

"It is an instrument that you can use to collect evidence about what you have accomplished in school, but also about who you are as a person and what your working experience is."

Although most students valued the portfolio positively in terms of collecting evidence about their personal development, the majority did not use it for making decisions about their future (career). A few students argued that the portfolio could be used to reflect on the things done and learned:

"You could use it for something for the future, because you can look back at what you have done and in what way you have improved..."

This, however, was not mentioned as a core function of this instrument and the instrument was not frequently used for this purpose either. The personal development plan was used by students for setting learning goals, and sometimes for making choices about the future, and was seen as part of the portfolio. The personal development plan was seen as relevant, because it focused at student as a person and at guiding students' personal development, even though it did not always focus at career goals. According to students, the personal development plan focused mostly at behaviors such as impulsiveness, time management, or things they found difficult about a certain project. Every eight weeks, students had a conversation with their career coaches about their personal development and their portfolio. Some students found these conversations helpful, also with respect to career issues:

"This person helps you with personal things, but also with things at school. Yes, I also talked with my guide about what I want to do in the future, he often asked me about this!"

Other students did not believe these conversations were helpful, because they were organized less frequently than intended or because the relationship or contact with the teacher was not perceived as warm, safe or supporting:

"My career guide does not know me at all, but that is also because I have had three different career guides this year."

Students believed that the coaches who supervised them everyday during projects were very helpful because they were very familiar with students. Students argued that they often talked to or asked these coaches about their future ambitions and also possible professions, or for example about the norms and values that are part of certain professions. One student argued that if a teacher does not show interest in the portfolio, it will not be perceived as useful:

"I am working very hard to complete the portfolio, but I could even write down nonsense... She just looked at it for five minutes and said 'okay fine'. I thought: 'why did I put so much effort into this if she is not interested anyway!'"

Case 2: Business and Marketing (vocational education)

All teachers as well as the counselor in case two believed that instruments such as a portfolio or a personal development plan could be helpful for guiding students in their career development. The career counselor explained that the portfolio had a broader function in the school than the personal development plan. In the portfolio, evidence of achievements is also being collected. In her opinion, the portfolio could be used by students to reflect on things learned or achieved, and to discover their own developmental path:

“Students can use their reflections to indicate how they perceive the world, school and themselves. These insights could be used in, for example, a job application.”

One male teacher argued that a portfolio should have the function of stimulating self-direction and reflecting on achievements:

“The portfolio should have the function of stimulating self-direction in career development, for example, and to help students reflect on what they have done.”

In the school, a large digital system was implemented with multiple instruments for guiding the career development of students. It provided an opportunity to insert personal learning goals (personal development plan) and to collect documents that demonstrate achievements electronically (i.e. electronic portfolio). Interestingly, this system did not seem to be used by teachers for coaching students:

“No, I do not use the portfolio, it is a digital thing that the student takes with him or herself during his or her career path. (...) No, I do not use it for career guidance. Well, I just don't use it. It is developed by someone far away from actual educational practice, and it does not work for me.”

The female career counselor confirmed the lack of use of instruments:

“None of the students completed questions in the portfolio about themselves. And yes, this means that the teachers did not stimulate or assess this either.”

One male teacher used personal development plans as a means to give students more responsibility for their own learning and career:

“By obliging them to complete this tool, they are being forced to think about themselves. [...] it is something that provides structure as well.”

This teacher believed that it was more efficient and effective to talk to students and make notes:

“It is an issue of depth, the digital system does not allow us to deepen discussions with students. That is something that can be done by actually talking to the students.”

All teachers argued that lack of time constrained them in having quality discussions with students:

"There is not much time available. I want to talk to the students, but in just 15 minutes you cannot have deep discussions with students. And we are so busy during the day with the implementation of competence based education, developing scripts etc... that we hardly have any time for students."

All students of case two argued that instruments like personal development plans or portfolios were present, but were not considered valuable, or were only used for monitoring course results and collecting credits:

"Well, actually, I believe they are extremely useless, this personal development plan and personal action plan. Why would I use it? Only because it gives you the credits you need..."

"Nobody takes the personal development plan seriously."

"I use the portfolio to collect study results, my credits."

The majority of the students also confirmed that personal development plans or portfolios were often not on the agenda during career guidance conversations:

"No, in the career guidance conversations we do not talk about the personal development plan. It is more focused on how well you are doing concerning your studies."

Some students believed that thinking about learning goals once or twice, individually and without substantial feedback in career guidance conversations, makes no valuable contribution to career development. The students also felt conversations with teachers or coaches about their personal interests or opportunities, or future ambitions hardly happened:

"I do not talk with my teacher about things I can improve in my personal development plan. Neither do I talk about things that have to do with my future profession."

They felt uncomfortable with the fact that teachers did not have time to talk with them or to help them.

"You are forced to do a lot by yourself, but sometimes you need the teacher for something. But they are so busy that you never get to talk to them. And getting an answer to your question always takes a lot of time."

Case 3: Business & Administration (prevocational education)

The majority of the teachers in this case argued that the goal of the transition portfolio was for students to become more active in thinking about choices for the future:

"The portfolio is an important means to combine several activities, it frames career guidance. Students are more active, make several assignments with respect to thinking about their future career."

One male teacher argued that the digital transition portfolio was an important means of collecting all things students have done for their career development.

“Through the portfolio, students can see their own development, which in turn motivates them. Especially students in prevocational education have always heard or perceived that they are ‘less’ than others. Now they are building on something of their own, which only gets bigger and more beautiful.”

The idea at this school was for students to work independently on their portfolio, in order to stimulate them to reflect on their own career, to influence their self-direction, and to encourage them to take their own initiative. Two teachers perceived the digital portfolio as an important instrument for communication, used to share information with, for example, an institute for vocational education, or with parents. In the instrument, students can justify their choices for a school for vocational education. One male teacher argued that students liked the idea of a digital portfolio, because it allowed them to exchange information with fellow students, parents and friends at home:

“It is tangible for students, it works better than a conversation or advice from a student’s mentor.”

Students in this case believed the transition portfolio had different goals. Some students thought the portfolio was connected to assignments related to personal development and future, and could be used as a showcase portfolio for the transition to vocational education:

“I collect evidence of things I have done, so my next school can see what I have done here.”

Other students argued that the portfolio could be used as a means to communicate digitally:

“The goal of the portfolio is that it is easier to send homework to the teacher digitally. Especially for students who do not have a printer, this is very handy.”

Many students commented that they had to complete assignments, but that these were not used in discussions with their mentor about their future ambitions:

“For the portfolio, we have to do things such as searching for information on the Internet, doing tests, etc.”

“For the portfolio we completed an assignment, about what is needed for the work you want to do. But we did not talk about the assignment afterwards, we hardly ever do that.”

“If you want to talk with a teacher, or your mentor, about the future or things you want to do or become, you have to ask yourself.”

*“I talked with X [mentor, *ibid.*] about what I wanted to do, but that was just five minutes or so...”*

Cross-case comparison

In case one, instruments were used in combination with a ‘personal approach’. Teachers as well as students believed the portfolio and personal development plan were useful, but that a personal conversation and investment in a relationship (showing interest, focusing on personal issues and being available for the students) were conditional for high-quality career counseling conversations. Compared to the other two other cases, students in this case used the portfolio most effectively and were most satisfied about its intended function(s). Almost all students regarded the portfolio as an important means to collect evidence about personal development, and as something that could be

helpful for job applications or ongoing studies. These students regarded the personal development plan also as an important means to support personal development. Approximately half of the students believed the portfolio could be used to direct their own career development and to help them reflect on their own ambitions and future.

Teachers and counselor of case two had similar ideas to case one, that personal contact and reflection is of central importance for the development of career competences. However, they experienced difficulties in establishing contact with one another. A major digital system was implemented, but this system was not used by the teachers, because they felt that (among other things) it was built by someone not familiar with educational practice. Teachers argued there was not enough time to talk with students and students complained that teachers were always busy. They felt that teachers did not have enough time. None of the students perceived the personal development plan or portfolio as useful instruments for personal career development. Almost all students argued the personal development plan and portfolio were only 'completed' because of the credits needed to pass exams.

Teachers and counselor in case three regarded the portfolio as a means to collect assignments focusing at career development, but did not mention personal or reflective conversations with students. They believed the assignments in the portfolio to be sufficient for stimulating students to reflect on future ambitions. These findings are in contrast with case one (and to some extent case two), where teachers emphasised the importance of a dialogue with students. In case three, approximately half of the students thought the portfolio was a useful instrument, because it helped them to collect and present achievements and activities, and because it could be helpful when entering vocational education, to show(case) what has been done. Very few students perceived the portfolio as an instrument to help with career or future choices, and some students argued the main goal of the portfolio was to facilitate file sharing (homework) between student and teacher. The portfolio did not affect students' reflection on their career or future ambitions.

7.6 Conclusion and discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the perspectives of teachers and career counselors on the use of personal development plans and portfolios in career guidance, and the ways in which students perceived and used these instruments. The study investigated these perceptions through individual, semi-structured interviews with teachers, counselors and students in three cases, one prevocational school and two vocational schools. The main findings of the study were:

- a) majority of the teachers and counselors perceived portfolios and personal development plans as instruments to collect evidence on student development, to stimulate self-responsibility or self-direction of students, and to support students in reflecting on identity and future ambitions; and to set up learning goals to achieve this;
- b) portfolios and personal development plans were often used instrumentally (cases two and three) but not to support career dialogues; the instruments were used by students mainly to collect information about themselves, but information was not used in conversations between teachers and students to stimulate reflection, and;
- c) if instruments were not used in a context of dialogue, students perceived them as irrelevant and refrained from using them to reflect on identity or future plans.

If teachers used portfolios and personal development plans as a basis for a career dialogue (as in case one) students were more likely to appreciate the instruments and to reflect on their identity and future ambitions.

These findings correspond to findings by for example Driessen et al. (2004) and Elshout-Mohr and Daalen-Kapteijns (2003), who argued that a proper design of the portfolio in and of itself is insufficient for effective use. The quality of mentoring or coaching students in using the portfolio is very important, but teachers often lack the competences to achieve this. The findings also correspond to the research by Kuijpers et al. (2006), who found the actual dialogue between student and teacher on career development were often not present, but at the same time argued that these dialogues were an extremely crucial aspect of career guidance.

How can we explain the limited and often inadequate use of portfolios and personal development plans and the absence of a dialogue on career development? The cases revealed some of the factors that hinder the realization of a reflective dialogue on a student's career, such as time available to actually talk to students and the number of planned career conversations (which can be considered part of a school's management policy). The second case also suggests that teacher (and student) ownership over the creation and use of instruments (like portfolio and personal development plan) may stimulate them to actually use them in career guidance. These factors show alignment with factors mentioned in education-improvement literature for successful implementations of innovations in general, such as school culture, transformative leadership by the management (allowing teachers to become change agents and by giving them ownership), and organizational conditions (time, opportunity, materials) (Sammons, Hillman & Mortimore, 1995).

There are some practical implications that can be derived from the results of this study. First of all, implementing instruments aimed at stimulating reflection on career guidance should be accompanied by quality guidance conversations with students. This is particularly important for vocational and prevocational schools, because their students may be considered disadvantaged to some degree and tend to have more difficulty in planning and reflecting independently. They also tend to need more teacher supervision to engage in a reflective process. Schools have to invest time (for teachers and students) in order to realize individual, one-to-one dialogues. In addition, schools should invest in training teachers to develop coaching competences for supporting students in their reflective processes. Finally, when schools decide to implement career guidance instruments, teachers and career counselors should be given ownership and leadership during the development process in order to investigate what is useful to them and what they need in order to realize quality career guidance practices.

Future research should describe and analyze the factors that stimulate (or hinder) the use of career guidance dialogues. Why do teachers in case one, for example, emphasize that dialogue is so important, and that contact with students is crucial? And what do they do to realize reflective dialogues? What kind of dialogue between career guide and student is needed to realize development of career competences; what are characteristics of a high-quality dialogue between teacher and student; how can a portfolio or personal development plan be used to set up and retain a good dialogue between student and teacher? And what competences should teachers have (or develop) to realize such a dialogue? The results of this study do indicate some particular elements that may be important for such a dialogue, for example showing interest in students, focusing on students' personal ambitions or characteristics, giving students a feeling they are appreciated. Kuijpers et al. (2006) have argued that, in addition to the above elements, such a dialogue should focus on students' practices and learning experiences, and on steps that students can take to achieve these goals.

Nevertheless, the aforementioned questions require more in-depth study and systematic observation of career guidance conversations between career guide and student, which are beyond the scope of the present article but could be part of future research.

The present study was subject to a few limitations. This study was small in scale, included only one year of the curriculum per case, was conducted at particular schools for vocational and prevocational education and with particular departments within these schools. We studied first year students enrolled in programs in vocational education, and third year students in prevocational education. Moreover, participation to the study by teachers (and students) was voluntary, and it seems likely that particularly students and teachers open to reflection and competence-based education were sampled. Therefore, conclusions cannot be generalized to other years and departments or to the cases in general, nor is it possible to make an in-depth comparison between vocational and prevocational education. Furthermore, the present study only investigated (self-)perceptions of students and teachers; it remains to be seen if these perceptions can be confirmed with other sources of data, such as actual observations, school documents or more quantitative approaches (surveys, outcome measures).

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8

How to work inquiry-based? Career learning in vocational training at secondary vocational education level (MBO)

Annemie Winters

'Non scolae, sed vitae discimus'

(Seneca, Roman philosopher, 5 BC – 65 AD)

More than 2000 years ago, Roman philosopher Seneca succinctly defined the meaning of schools in the sentence above, which translates as: "We learn not for school, but for life". The basic objective of schooling and education is exactly to prepare young people for the challenges they will face throughout their (working) career. Nonetheless, the majority of students in the vocational education system appear to have hardly any notion of why they are learning – except for the purpose of getting a degree. They have no clear desire profession-wise and neither does it occupy them (Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006; Zijlstra & Meijers, 2006). This is closely related to problems with motivation and unqualified early school leavers.

For quite a long time, the fact that most youngsters are not learning for life but only for school seemed hardly problematic. As it was, education was about transferring relatively stable professional knowledge and skills in a traditional framework of standards and values (Meijers, 1995; Wijers & Meijers, 1996; Kuijpers & Scheerens, 2006). However, as a result of the increased freedom of choice due to the individualisation and meritocratisation of society, individuals are faced with a growing pressure to make choices. And as society provides less and less direction (demonstrated, for example, by the unpredictability of careers; see Arthur, 1994; Defilippi & Arthur, 1994), the individual is expected to portray more and more self-directedness both in the labour market (Savickas, 2000; Kuijpers & Scheerens, 2006) and in society as a whole (Giddens, 1991).

Self-directedness is the ability to identify oneself – this implies a voluntary and long-term commitment – with people and organisations, to achieve a plan of action on the basis thereof, and to effectively implement this plan (Meijers & Wardekker, 2002). This covers more than mere cognitive skills. Naturally, the individual must be capable of making informed choices and be prepared to do so, while renouncing the immediate satisfaction of his or her own needs, so that a more long-term perspective can be developed (Brown & Lent, 2005). To achieve this, the individual must be able to find relevant information, take this in and draw conclusions from it (Sultana, 2004; Bardick et al., 2006). However, the individual must at the same time be capable of and be prepared to reflect in a critical manner on the relations established during primary socialisation and on the relations established, whether or not consciously, at a later stage. The individual must not be afraid to face the insecurity resulting therefrom and to connect – from within this insecurity – with real people and institutions (Wardekker, Meijers & Wijers, 1999). This requires a much different, more literary approach. First and foremost, individuals need to gain (more) insight into their own key values in life as they emerge from their own life history and their own life narrative (Wijers & Meijers, 1996; Savickas, 2001). Furthermore, it is about learning how to productively deal with emotions overall (Hochschild, 1983; Doorewaard, 2000) and with negative emotions in particular (Kidd, 1998), as they are inherent to distancing oneself from previously established (often rather unintentional) relations, c.q. accepting insecurity. Thus, self-

directedness can be defined as the ability to discover one's own life theme (Van Maanen, 1977) and to relate it to a social role (Law, Meijers & Wijers, 2002).

For this reason, when wanting to stimulate the competence of self-directedness, vocational education will need to develop not only the brain (theory) and hands (skills), but also the heart. And in order to do so, the educational system will need to transform itself from an 'industrial training factory' into a 'career centre' that considers itself a service provider (Geurts, 2007). The question remains how educational learning processes and associated counselling should be organised for the school to become a career centre. We will elucidate this in the paragraph below.

8.1 Career learning in vocational education

A school becomes a career centre (Geurts, 2007) when it pays great attention to 'career learning', i.e. the development of career competences (Kuijpers, 2003) and a professional identity (Meijers, 1998). A large-scale, nationwide study was conducted previously to find evidence for factors that may influence this (Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker, 2006; Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006). The results demonstrate that a powerful learning environment for career learning does not correlate with the deployment of instruments and techniques, nor – surprisingly enough – with the presence of a school dean. In addition, organising classroom discussions about schooling choices and career choices, testing students on their career choice interest and organising individual meetings with a dean or mentor do not appear to contribute to the development of career competences and a professional identity. In brief, acquiring career competences and a professional identity is not about deploying certain means or techniques.

It is, however, about a career dialogue at school and in practice, i.e. a conversation between a student and a trusted adult (and at the school as a career centre, this would preferably be an teacher, dean and/or mentor), which explicitly discusses the impact of the experiences – gained by the student through practical assignments and work placements at school and outside of the school environment – on his or her life and working career. It is about an explicit relationship between relevant experiences of the student from the professional/labour market and the emerging self-concept and professional identity. An essential factor in this process is the stimulation of both an internal dialogue focusing on personal meaning, and an external dialogue focusing on the social meaning of labour (see Van de Loo, 2001). Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker (2006) demonstrate that dialogues about careers at school and discussions in practice both contribute to the formation of three career competences, being career reflection (i.e. reflection on capacities and motives), career development (i.e. exploring career opportunities and making conscious choices) and networking, *and* to using these competences in the framework of actual choices and learning experiences. Both dialogues have an even greater impact on the development of career competences and a professional identity than personal traits. It seems that a professional identity is developed mainly through the exploration of employment opportunities and by making well-founded choices with regard to one's (schooling) career (= career development). Again, it shows that the dialogue to which a student is invited at school and at his or her work placement is of great importance. Students entering such a dialogue dispose of a much better developed professional identity than students who are unable to do so.

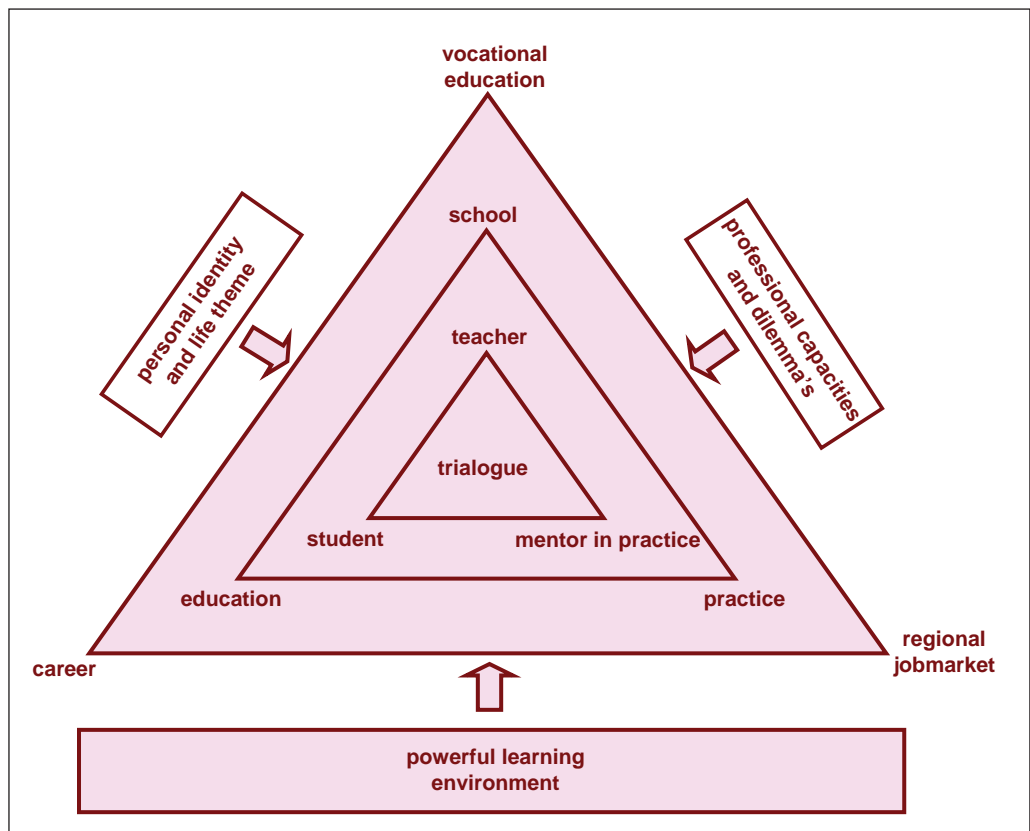
The study conducted by Meijers, Kuijpers and Bakker (2006) also reveals that, on average, no career-oriented dialogues are currently held with students in schools for pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO) and secondary vocational education (MBO). Despite considerable investments in recent years to make schools more practice-minded and even practice-based under the framework of introducing

competence-based education, little investment has been made in changing the school culture (Bruijn et al., 2005). This is where the idea arose from the research group Pedagogics of Professional Development at The Hague University to conduct a three-year research and development project that is explicitly aimed at realising this transformation in the school culture. A more detailed explanation is provided below.

8.2 Project ‘Career learning in competence-based education’

In a project called ‘Career learning in competence-based education’, three partners are joining forces to develop, design, test and implement a methodology for career guidance in vocational education. This project originated in the research group Pedagogics of Professional development at The Hague University (?), which also looks after the research component. KPC Group (www.kpcgroep.nl) is responsible for developing the instruments. The secondary vocational education (MBO) school where career learning will be inventoried and promoted is ROC De Leijgraaf (www.leijgraaf.nl). The Platform for Vocational Education (HPBO), a partnership between several parties from the Dutch vocational education, has granted a subsidy. The objective is to facilitate changes in the school culture, with (more) focus on inquiry-based education in addition to practice-based training. This requires self-directedness from students, where they can utilise their own experiences to co-shape their personal training path. The teacher does not have a passive spectator role but fulfils the role of coach, guiding the student’s development.

Figure 1: Triologue illustration



The basic principle is that inquiry-based education with great focus on the student's career presupposes an intensive partnership with regional businesses based on a 'shared responsibility' (for more information on this process, see Van Dam, Meijers & Hövels, 2007, among others). The basis for this type of partnership is a triologue; a conversation between three parties, i.e. school (teacher), business (mentor in practice) and student, as illustrated in the figure above. This triologue can be observed at micro, meso and macro level and deals with the themes mentioned in the bars in figure 1 (the arrows indicate whose expertise must be compiled for the discussion). If the triologue aims at bringing the student to exercise career self-directedness, then it must enable the student to gradually formulate a response to three questions: (a) what type of person am I?, (b) what type of work suits me?, and (c) can I be the type of person I want to be in my preferred field of work? (Wijers & Meijers, 1996; Meijers & Wijers, 1997).

To answer the first question, the triologue will need to discuss the student's life theme and – in continuation thereof – the life history and the life narrative of the student. The second question can be answered by explicitly discussing the social meaning of real work: which social needs will this work fulfil and does the student want to commit to these needs? In order to answer this question, it is important to discuss the characteristic professional dilemmas in this field of work (Meijers & Wijers, 1997). And finally, the answer to the third question requires a dialogue about the development of professional competence in the field of work concerned. Desired and required professional competence is a result of two factors: the development of the market for which a business or institution 'produces', and the development of technology. A discussion on both these developments enables the student to form a true image of future changes in working conditions. It goes without saying that in addition to these topics, which are significant for the development of the competence of self-directedness in students, it is also important for both the student and the school as a business to discuss the student's existing competences and the ones yet to be acquired.

This triologue discussion is currently being held very rarely, and least of all in a proactive manner (Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker, 2006; Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006). Nowadays, when a student does share the table with his mentor from school and/or practice, the conversation is mainly held *about* and *to* the student and hardly *with* the student. Career counselling generally involves a monologue; when career advice is offered, career choice test results are announced, and feedback is provided about the student's performance.

To create a more reflective career-minded triologue, the resistance to reflection often displayed by youngsters must be conquered first and foremost (Law, Meijers & Wijers, 2002; Zijlstra & Meijers, 2006). Motivation psychology demonstrates that the two main factors in this process are active participation by the student in the discussion and co-management of the discussion by the student (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Active participation and – in continuation thereof – a transition from theory to practice are promoted by basing the discussion on the actual experiences of the student in a professional practice (Bailey, Hughes & Moore, 2004; Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989; Duffy & Cunningham, 1996; Lodewijks, 1995; Simons, van der Linden & Duffy, 2000). Co-management of the discussion is promoted by providing the student with concrete options during the discussion in such a way that reflection does not become a purpose in itself but rather a means to guide the (schooling) career (Weick & Berlinger, 1989). In this framework, De Bruijn (2006) talks about custom work from a didactic-psychological and pedagogical-didactic perspective. When a student is allowed to and is able to make a personal contribution to the discussion and when this contribution is valued by the teacher and by the mentor in practice, there is a considerable chance that the student will begin to trust his or her partners in the conversation. Trust has a major positive effect on the development of career

skills (Krumboltz, 1996; Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999) and on the reflective side (Bardick, Bernes, Magnusson & Witko, 2006) of the career learning process.

8.3 BPV conversations in practice

The abovementioned study by Meijers, Kuijpers and Bakker (Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker, 2006; Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006) among Dutch prevocational and vocational education (VMBO + MBO) schools demonstrated that career competences and a stable professional identity can only be developed in a learning environment which incorporates practice-based and inquiry-based education, and where a career-minded dialogue can be held about the personal and social meaning of the students' experiences. Vocational training placement (BPV) may be the best place for students to obtain concrete practical experience. The question remains whether the mentoring part of vocational training conversations has room for an inquiry-based perspective and a career-minded dialogue.

We attempt to answer this question, among others, through the research component of the project 'Career learning in competence-based education' mentioned above. We aim to do this by outlining an image about BPV conversations⁶ that is as balanced as possible by combining three complementary research methods: a questionnaire survey (in which the three parties involved look at elements from the training course under the research framework), group interviews (in which the three parties involved and managers from the field of education and practice are free to explain their personal framework) and the analysis of concrete BPV conversations (which objectively records what truly occurred during the conversations). We have listed the main conclusions below.

Inquiry-based education?

The *questionnaire survey* examined the perception of students and their mentors from the field of education and practice with regard to the inquiry-based nature of the training course. On a scale of 1 to 4, students provided a score of 2.2 on average. Two-thirds of those experienced little or no co-management in their learning process (score <2.5; of which 42% <2), only 8% entered a higher than average score (>3) on the inquiry-based nature of education. School counsellors are even more negatively inclined than the students with average scores on the inquiry-based nature of the training course of 2.14 (mentors) and 1.95 (BPV counsellors). On average, mentors in practice evaluate the inquiry-based nature of the course in work placements as more positive, cf. their score of 2.75.

When we focus on the actual practice of *BPV conversations*, an analysis shows that merely formal conclusions are a good indicator already of the degree to which the conversations are considered to be inquiry-based. The average duration of the observed BPV conversations was 30 minutes, with major individual differences (varying from 10 minutes to one hour). The student is only talking during a relatively small part of that time (21% on average) and this also applies for the mentor in practice (24% on average), while the teacher's share in the conversation is very high (53% on average). Looking closer at content – i.e. not the person who is *talking* but the person who is *leading* the conversation – the ratio becomes even more extreme: no less than 57% of what is being said are items on the agenda of the teacher/school, while the contributions from the mentor in practice and the student remain limited to 11% and 5% respectively (no clear guidance for the conversation in 27% of cases). In terms of the inquiry-based nature of the discussions, these results are rather poor. Furthermore, the results from the questionnaire survey confirm this conclusion: the large majority of students (55%), teachers (63%) and mentors in practice (89%) state the teacher as the one leading the discussions on

⁶ Given the exploratory nature of the study, it was a conscious decision to restrict the definition of BPV conversation to "a conversation between student, teacher and mentor in practice in view of vocational training".

schooling careers. Those figures are clearly smaller in the case of mentors in practice (26% – 30% – 6 % respectively) and students (18% – 7% – 3% respectively).

To make a differentiation, we refer to the questionnaire survey once more. 78% of students state that they are not able to make a selection from a variety of assignments during their training, or that they are left to their own devices (18%). Only 8% indicate that they are being assisted in selecting the most suitable assignment. Nearly one quarter of students stipulate that they do not have the opportunity to work on their own learning requests; one quarter of students say that they do have that opportunity but they don't know how to go about it. 39% indicate that they have personal learning requests but that those relate to future parts of the training (this also emerges during group interviews, from students as well as their mentors in practice: *“What they want to learn is mainly based on learning items from previous work placements and on assignments to be completed for school”*). Another 12% think that learning requests primarily relate to what they personally like doing.

Almost three-quarters of school counsellors is of the opinion – similarly to the students – that students do not have the opportunity to make a selection from a variety of assignments during their training. Again, as with the students, only a minority of school counsellors (11% of mentors, 4% of BPV counsellors) believe that students are being assisted in their selection of the most appropriate assignment. However, 45% of mentors in practice believe that this *is* the case in practice. The response from school counsellors to the question whether students are able to work on their own learning queries is similar to that from students. A smaller percentage of school and practice counsellors (0-5%) than of students believe that students have learning queries that relate to what they like doing personally.

Finally, the participants were asked about the degree to which students are invited to discuss how they are gradually learning to take responsibility for their learning process. BPV counsellors seemed the least optimistic in their response (see table 1).

Table 1. Taking responsibility for the learning process

	Education		Practice	Student
	Mentors	BPV counsellors	Mentors in practice	Students
No responsibility from students	9%	4%	0%	11%
Students are left to their own devices	9%	39%	13%	24%
Counsellor indicates how to	55%	46%	49%	44%
Invited to discuss how to learn to take responsibility step by step	27%	11%	38%	21%

This reveals that almost half the students and counsellors indicate that when it comes to taking responsibility for the learning process, counsellors are telling students how to do this; thus instructing more than teaching how to learn. Mentors in practice state that this aspect is considered important. During group interviews mentors in practice state but due to lack of time, students are only able to indicate briefly what they would like to learn during the BPV (obligation to co-operate, possibly at the expense of counselling).

Career-minded dialogue?

In order to take into consideration other methods of career guidance than BPV conversations alone, the former were included in the questionnaire survey as well. It appears that a lot of time is spent at schools on conversations with students who are having trouble and who are likely to drop out of school: two-thirds of counsellors indicate that this takes place on a weekly or monthly basis. According to 40% of counsellors, individual conversations about training take place at the school on a monthly basis. According to 57%, individual conversations with the subject about learning how to make conscious, suitable and future-minded choices do rarely take place or not at all (1 to 4 times every year). During group interviews, students confirm that career choices are hardly discussed: according to the students, the teachers tend to stop searching more deeply for the underlying motivation as soon as a student seems to have made a choice in training.

The questionnaire survey also asked *how often and with whom* students explicitly discuss *their schooling career* during their training. Students responded that they mostly discuss this with fellow students during group discussions. They discuss this least of all with a dean; three-quarters of students have never even spoken to a dean. Neither do they talk much to schooling career counsellors; three-quarters of students state to have talked to a schooling career counsellor very rarely or not at all. They talk almost equally to subject teachers, mentors from school and practice. Yet, one-third of students state that they have never spoken to a mentor from practice or subject teacher about their schooling career. And another 30% has hardly ever done so. Not even half of the students indicate that they discuss their schooling career with their mentor on a regular basis (at least once a month).

Despite the fact that almost two-thirds of students indicate that they never or hardly ever discuss their schooling career with a mentor from school or practice, many counsellors provide a more positive response to this issue. 60% of mentors and 87% of mentors from practice indicate that they discuss this with students on a monthly and sometimes weekly basis, while 45% and 38% of students agree with this respectively.

What exactly is being discussed during a BPV conversations? Does it touch the subject of careers, and what are the other subjects brought up for discussion? BPV analyses showed that the majority of the conversation (40% on average) is dedicated to issues that do not fall under one of our predetermined content categories (and are therefore not included in the questionnaire but are supported by results from group interviews). In particular, these issues include processing of administrative obligations, such as explaining the work placement overview and completing lists on which so-called competences – a term used in that context for the school's training objectives – are ticked. However, this does not lead to a meaningful conversation. When it does lead to a meaningful conversation, a considerable amount of time is dedicated to the *training course* (an average of 32% of the total duration of the conversation). The results from the questionnaire survey and the group interviews support this conclusion. More specifically⁷, they mainly cover training objectives that are not seldom brought forward by the school in the form of competence checklists. This concerns mainly summative (41%) and much less formative (12%) evaluation. To put this into proportion, students are asked less often about how they are doing in their work placement (33%, of which 25% in general) or at school (14%, of which 9% in general).

The *students* – their private life and hobbies – hardly ever seem to be a topic of discussion during BPV discussions (0% on average). These topics may be discussed briefly during informal moments of the actual conversation, but it seems that mentors from school and practice do not believe that this type

⁷ The percentages now represent the ratio of time dedicated to training.

of information fits the formal framework of BPV conversation. The questionnaire survey showed a striking difference between the beliefs of students and those of their mentors (supported by results from group interviews): despite the fact that nearly all mentors claim they are truly interested in the students' lives, students experience this to a much lesser degree.

The remaining time is divided between content categories 'career' and 'subject' (an average of 14% each). Of that 14% of time dedicated to the *subject*, hardly any time (4%) is dedicated to the developments in the field of education. Slightly more time (41%) is spent on problems and generalities in the specific field of work, but yet the majority of time (55%) is dedicated to the expectations with regard to the professional conduct of work placement trainees and future employees. From the questionnaire survey also emerged that mentors hold the belief that the discussions are mainly about professionalism and about the developments in the field of work the student is being trained in, but little about the professional activities that would suit the student and how the student could learn to make more suitable choices.

Of all the *career competences*, it appears that qualities and career guidance are the main topics of discussion (39% and 40% of the time dedicated to the career respectively), which means a – superficial – assessment of the subject matter which the work placement trainee does or does not have adequate command of and what steps need to be taken next. If the career is discussed any further, the discussion mainly focuses on either the motives of the work placement trainee (motives, 13%), or on what work looks like within a specific field (work exploration, 7%). Rarely does it cover the importance of contacts to be able to get established within a certain field of work (networking, 1%). The results of the questionnaire survey lead to similar conclusions: on a scale of 1 to 10, students show an average score of 6.2 when it comes to career reflection (qualities and motives), 6.1 with regard to career development (work exploration and career guidance) and 5.9 with regard to networking. By way of comparison: the (V)MBO study (Kuijpers & Meijers, 2006) showed an average of 6.7 for career reflection, 6.0 for career development and 6.1 for networking. Furthermore, the current study demonstrated that career competences are to be explained mainly by the career-minded nature of the programme organisation, i.e. inquiry-based and problem-based education: students who are able to gain more challenging practical experiences and who experience the freedom to choice with regard to their learning path tend to be more concerned with their career competences. The questionnaire survey also revealed that the student's career is discussed mostly during conversations with the school mentor. We refer to the contribution by Mittendorff to this volume to find out more about a study specifically aimed towards this type of discussion. Our questionnaire survey did demonstrate that the outcome of conversations on one's (schooling) career is seldom a starting point for the organisation of work placements.

In addition to the content of BPV conversations, researchers also examined their *form*. More in particular, they examined the relation between informative, affective, reflective and activating components. The component discussed the longest (26% on average) during a BPV conversation seems to be the *affective* component, as in a(n) (positive or negative) evaluation of the student. Evaluation now typically seems interlinked with the assessment of training objectives, which is why the *informative* component also appears to take up a considerable chunk of time (an average of 16%). These results can be linked to the conclusions from the questionnaire survey, which demonstrate that students are mainly positive about their trust in the mentors from school and practice, the trust received from those mentors in the students' qualities, the advice and information given about various work situations. Many students have a rather negative opinion on the information provided about continued education, choice options and their private life.

The questionnaire survey runs parallel with the analysis of BPV conversations when it comes to the limited share of *reflective and activating* components (8% and 6% respectively⁸). Contrary to the belief of school and practice mentors, students are of the opinion that they receive little motivation during the discussions to think about their future and to undertake activities that they are afraid of. During the conversations, students are presented with advice from their mentors in the form of a value judgement, yet the step towards the students' growth is not explicitly made: the discussion continues without mention of the student being invited to reflect on the message or to undertake something in that regard. This implies that the entire essence of the BPV conversation as a formative evaluation is threatened to be lost. Even in group interviews, some teachers state that the career development of students is only covered sketchily and rather unintentionally during the training course. Students are often left to their own devices to draw conclusions and to link relevant experiences. The students add to this that there is a large difference between the mentors individually: "*one will look up things for you while another won't*". Teachers also report that schooling career guidance is dependent on the efforts of motivated individuals. It lacks a ROC wide vision and a plan of action, and there are too few options in practice.

Finally, the analysis of BPV conversations with regard to *relational characteristics* revealed that students are mainly being talked *to* (65% on average) and *about* (21% on average), and hardly *with* (9% on average). A qualitative description of a typical BPV conversation hardly shows the student as a valuable discussion partner. The student rather seems to be caught between two fires, where he/she can either remain passive or (only) respond to what is being said. As there are too few opportunities for the student to express their opinion, it is impossible to pick up their opinion during the conversation.

8.4 Conclusions: bottlenecks turning into focal points?

The objective of this overview was to create an overall image of BPV conversations as they are organised at MBO level between students and their mentors from school and practice (triadogue). The main conclusions are listed below.

The basic principle is that there can only be a true dialogical learning environment for career learning when students are stimulated in an environment that combines a problem-based and inquiry-based nature with a dialogue about the thoughts and feelings of the student regarding experiences or choices. Ideally, these elements are joined together during the BPV conversation. However, the questionnaire survey, group interviews and the analysis of actual BPV conversations all indicate that the potential of a triadogue is often left unused.

With regard to the inquiry-based nature of education – on the eve of the introduction of competence-based education in MBO schools – there is still a lot to be gained. Students state that during their training, there is no opportunity for them to make a selection from a variety of assignments or to address their own learning queries. If they do get the opportunity, then they are mostly left to their own devices. Nearly half of both students and mentors indicate that mentors are telling students how to take responsibility for their own learning path; i.e. providing instructions rather than teaching how to learn.

At school, the majority of time is spent on discussions with students who are having trouble and who threaten to drop out of school. Individual discussions with the student about learning how

⁸ Attentive readers will have noticed that a large section of the BPV conversation (approx. 44%) is not discussed: the remaining time is dedicated to administration and information for mentors.

to make conscious, suitable and future-minded choices do not take place very often. In fact, the student's career is discussed mostly during conversations with the mentor from school. At a *formal level*, students contribute relatively little to the BPV conversation. The dialogue is primarily dominated by teachers: on average, they do most of the talking and they are the ones leading the conversation. At a *content level*, this guiding role seems to be founded in the school agenda (training > subject and career > student), which is often established in the form of an instrument such as the work placement map or the guiding principle of the conversation. This instrument stipulates the expectations/requirements from the school's perspective and, in the framework of the preparation of departments for the introduction of competence-based education, implies that attention is paid to the competences of students. In practice, the result seems to be that BPV conversations are becoming a formalised event where administration has the upper hand over a conversation with content. The instrument is not very inviting for a discussion with the students about competences but appears to serve its main purpose as a checklist in the framework of summative evaluation.

This does not mean that career competences are not brought up for discussion. However, they seem to be discussed in a rather traditional, scholastic context. In this respect, we must also comprehend the focus on professional conduct (subject) and career guidance (career). The education system anticipates the modified requirements of the labour market, yet in its traditional culture of transfer. Despite the attention paid to professionalism during the dialogue, this does not necessarily mean that there is room for a dialogue about the professional activities suitable for the student and about how he/she can (learn) to make more suitable choices. At the *level of form*, this translates into the relative predominance of the informative-affective component over the reflective-activating component. In practice, mentoring mainly implies providing a broad base of professional knowledge and offering expert assessments on the students' skills, and is less seen as an opportunity to make students reflect on their practical experiences and to motivate them to try new things.

Finally, this study quantified at a *relational level* that students are indeed mainly spoken to and about, but hardly with. The fact that students are seated at the table with their school and practice mentors during the dialogue does not mean that they (are allowed to) participate as an equal partner. In addition to serving a role as a means of assessment, the objective of the conversation is to transfer expert opinions from mentor to student.

In summary, a student's schooling, BPV and career still seem to be separate topics (for now), brought up individually during various conversations and rarely linked to one another. There is no sign of continuity in the realisation of personal ambitions of students. The most important conclusion is that new learning requires a new context as well, and as yet, no such culture shift has occurred. The dialogue as outlined in the theoretical section is currently (still) inexistent. Based on the above analysis we have tried to define a number of underlying problem areas. The BPV conversation is not about talent (development) and future ambitions of students because of the reasons below:

- from the school's perspective: it is not the objective of BPV conversations. The BPV conversation is basically about making a (relevant) assessment about whether or not the student is suited for the requirements of the job, while competence-based education will reverse the roles and will try to reveal the professional tasks that fit the student's qualities.
- from the student's perspective: it is deemed too intimidating. There is a field of tension between the BPV as a learning situation and the BPV as a means of assessment, in which the relationship of trust between the participants in the dialogue plays a crucial role (see theoretical section also).

- from a practice perspective: there are other priorities. In practical training, counselling a learner in a professional context is a responsibility shared with the school as an educational establishment. This responsibility currently remains divided (with little harmonisation) rather than shared.

With reference to the project 'Career learning in competence-based education', the change in culture will take place step by step. For managers and policy makers, but especially for mentors in school and/or practice inspired by this report, we have provided a starting point by summarising the main points of our theoretical framework in the following PLAN for ACTION:

What – content?

- P present the following themes:
- L larger than career guidance, also work exploration
- A attention to what the student can do (quality) *and* wants to do (motive)
- N networking

How – form?

- A activate (activating)
- C compliment (affective)
- T think (reflective)
- I inform (informative)
- O
- N not to or about the student but WITH the student...

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9 Career learning and schools

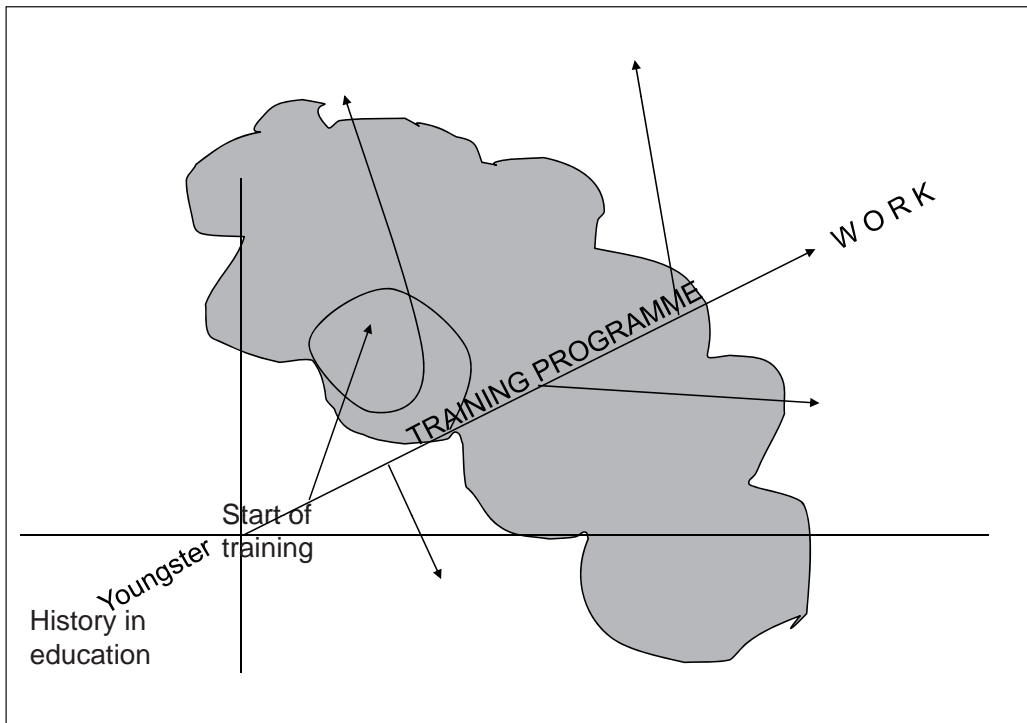
Peter den Boer & Jantiene Bakker

The labour market is changing drastically. Various authors define this transformation differently, namely as the transition from an industrial society to a service or information society, the transition from 'life time employment' to 'life time employability' or from a stable and static to a turbulent and dynamic society. These shifts are considered to be revealed by the strong increase in employment within the services sector, a decline in (growth of) employment in the industrial sector and a great variability with regard to function-content. It is assumed that globalisation is one of the contributing factors. These shifts should also lead to an increase in the number of job changes and changes in job descriptions. There was little empirical support for this theory earlier on in this decade (see Jellema and Lokman, 2001; Brown & Keep, 2000). More recently, though, some empirical support was found for this effect (see the labour market prognosis 2008-2013 from the Dutch Centre for Work and Income (CWI)). The general idea is that businesses are operating within a turbulent environment and that they are facing an ever-increasing competition within their sales area, continually changing consumer demands and an ever-growing rate of technological development. Based on OSA panel data (Organisation for Strategic Labour Market Research) among others, Brouwer, Van Zwin and Winkels (2001) concluded that 'within organisations, the increased knowledge intensity in production and the growing importance of social skills in job functions affect (..) the requirements placed upon employees. In order to maintain their position with their current employer, or to obtain a different position elsewhere, employees must keep up and develop their competences'. Nowadays, knowledge itself has a shorter lifespan: the knowledge acquired during education and training will only last for approximately 5 years whereas a few decades ago, it would last for 20 years on average. Simultaneously, true labour is becoming more and more invisible to young people. As opposed to not too many decades ago youngsters in our current society have much more freedom of choice: you no longer automatically become a carpenter simply because you are the son of one. Parallel to that, though, they are now missing a connection. Labour – especially more sophisticated labour (such as engineering and technology) – has largely disappeared from the day-to-day environment of today's youth.

9.1 Career learning

Given the above, it is no longer surprising that not only in general education but also in vocational education, many youngsters have no clear idea about the direction they want to take at the beginning of their vocational training, or even when they have already partly completed that training (see Doets & Westerhuis, 2001, for instance). Neither is it surprising that one of the main causes for students to change training courses is that they realise that the image they had at the start of the course does not match reality (Eimers, 2006). Generally speaking, we could say that after primary school, youngsters do not know what they are being trained for, or they have some incorrect idea about the profession they are being trained for. A dark cloud hovers between them and the field of work where some young people get lost and where many of them only find their way blindly and after many rambles. This is represented in figure 1.

Figure 1. A dark cloud hovers between youngsters and work



For decades, it was believed that providing young people with information is an adequate way to allow them to have a peek and see what lies beyond the dark cloud. In a stable (or fossilised) society this assumption is true. In this context, professions are fixed, professional requirements are clearly defined (even laid down in law in some fields) as well as the path to be taken to get there. In a society in motion, this is a lot less likely to be the case. In these conditions, the nature of a profession often changes and professional requirements change (professionalism no longer suffices; communication is gaining importance, etc.). In these conditions, other paths than the ones used up to recently become interesting, as people have gained experience that is relevant to the profession and to the development thereof. The latter has become an important element profession-wise. The development of a profession is not (or no longer) linear to an increasingly detailed knowledge base, but has become unpredictable. Young people need to find their way in this context of changing (meaning of) professions. Information is abundant. In the Netherlands, websites such as *kennisnet.nl*, *schoolweb.nl*, *opleiding en beroep.nl* and *leren.nl* show that. There is probably too much information. No one has a clear overview on this, least of all 12 to 18-year-olds. If, in addition to that, the information cannot be linked to some job experience (knowing what all those nice words and sentences mean in day-to-day practice), the information will become meaningless. It will not serve young people in reaching their goals. In fact, it might even distance them more from their goal. Ultimately, making a career choice in a society in motion is not a one-off process, but requires an ongoing process of making choices. This process certainly does not revolve around the objective information provided.

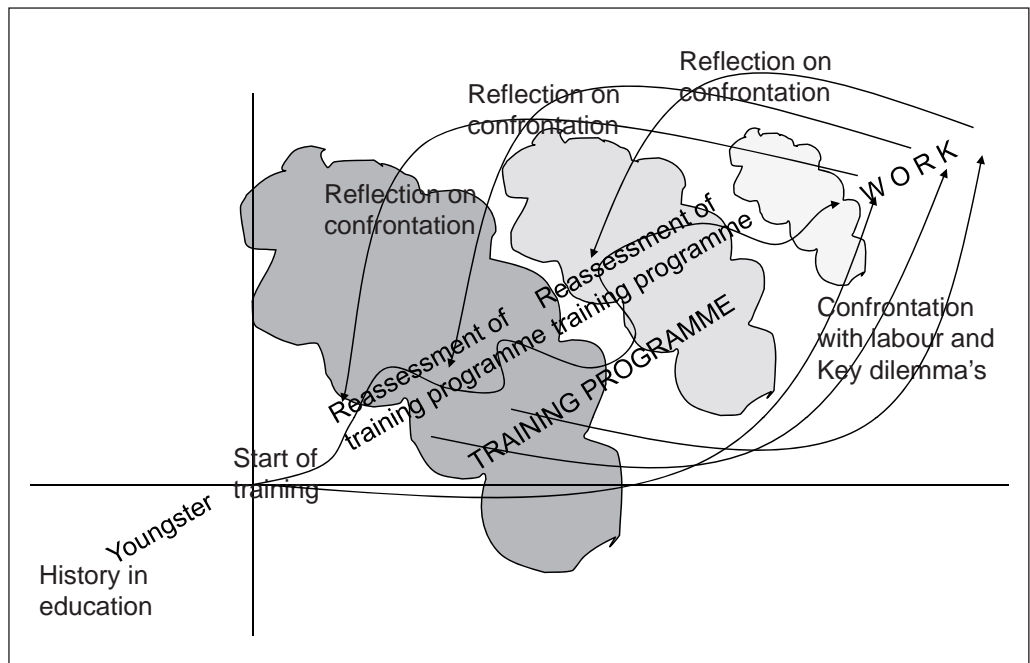
For this reason, several authors have been advocating experience-based learning for quite a few decades when it comes to career choices. This was the beginning of finding new answers to the key questions of career learning: 1) how should we be assisting young people in looking beyond the dark

cloud between themselves and the world of labour, and 2) how can we help them give meaning to what they (have to) learn.

Concepts of career development

Meijers (1995) introduced the concept of professional identity in the Netherlands. Together with Wardekker (Meijers & Wardekker, 2001), he developed a model on identity development for which they derived from Marcia (see Bosma et al., 1994). Based on empirical research, Marcia concluded that exploration is one of the driving forces behind identity development⁹. Exploration means seriously experimenting with directions in life. Meijers and Wardekker developed a model through which they explain this process of experimenting and thus the transformation of what they refer to as 'boundary experiences' into knowledge about the self. Crucial in this process are two types of dialogue that are mutually interwoven: internal and external dialogue. The essence of the internal dialogue is for the individual to acknowledge the emotional responses the experience provoked and linking them to the experience. The core of the external dialogue is for the individual to give meaning to the experience in dialogue with others. Youngsters can develop a professional identity only if they are confronted with labour that allows them to have (boundary) experiences. Through reflection on these boundary experiences in internal and external dialogue, they gain insight on who they are and what they want to achieve job-wise. This is represented in figure 2. We elaborate on this below where we link the schematic processes to the career competences as distinguished by Kuijpers (2003).

Figure 2: How can we help young people look beyond the dark cloud?



⁹ The other one is commitment. Opinions differ about the content and meaning of the latter. They are too profound to be thoroughly discussed in this article. For further details, please see Meijers and Wardekker (2001) and De Boer, Jager and Smulders (2003), among others.

We can provide young people with insight into the world behind the dark cloud by enabling them to confront the key dilemmas within a profession¹⁰ during work placements (Kuijpers refers to this as work exploration). On their own, these confrontations will have little impact, which is why they need to be reflected on by these young people: what does this experience mean to me and what do I want to learn from it? Kuijpers refers to this as reflection on capacities and on motives in particular. The role of education lies in adequately dealing with acquired knowledge about one's self. We will discuss this further in the next paragraph. We suspect that this process is not a one-off or singular process: recurrent confrontations with practical dilemmas will result in better insight into one's own abilities and identity.

9.2 The role of education

In their study on learning careers and career learning in (pre-)vocational education, Meijers, Kuijpers and Bakker (2006) make a connection between the educational organisation and design, career competences and the development of a professional identity. They show that the development of career competences is related to the development of a professional identity and that together, these are related to:

- improved learning motivation,
- reduced tendency to drop out (according to students),
- better choices (assignments, work placements and training courses) in the sense that they are better suited for each student individually.

Furthermore, they show that the educational organisation and design contribute to the development of career competences. Basically they show that having career dialogues during practice and in school is the main contributing factor to all career competences. In their research into the development of a professional identity, Den Boer, Jager and Smulders (2003) showed that *only the interaction* between the acquisition of (boundary) experiences *and* the processing of those (through dialogue) results in the development of a professional identity; the development of a professional identity results in the development of self-direction¹¹. This research also shows that the students mention their teachers only a relatively small number of times as being the person with whom they discuss their boundary experiences. They conclude that schools *can* play a role in the formation of a professional identity and self-direction, something that they currently fail to do.

Meijers et. al. (2006) summarise their findings concerning the contribution of the organisation and design of education to the development of career competences into four characteristics that should be inherent to education, namely: 1) reflection, 2) dialogue, 3) education being both practice-based and 4) inquiry-based. We will discuss these briefly. The main characteristic is the reflective nature of education. This can only emerge through a serious dialogue between the teacher, the student and the supervisor on the workfloor. A career dialogue contributes to the development of career competences and to the use of these competences in making choices and gaining learning experiences. However, a solid career learning environment will not be formed when the participant is only given the opportunity to have a dialogue with counsellors at school and in practice about his or her career path. A solid career learning environment also needs to be inquiry-based and practice-based. Education being inquiry-based implies that the participant has a say in his learning process, mainly by being offered different choice options. A true dialogue starts from a certain equality and from having a 'voice' in the learning process. Education being practice-based means that the participant is given

¹⁰ This is not about performing actions but much more about confronting key dilemmas within that profession. These dilemmas include (a mixture of) ethical, financial and quality-related issues (cf Mok, 1974).

¹¹ Self-direction was operationalised into 'making well-balanced choices with regard to training and labour'.

the opportunity to do various work placements in care, business and industry. The dialogue will then discuss topics such as the practical experiences gained by the participant.

Thus, a solid career learning environment for the development of career competences and a professional identity is an environment in which the participant is given the opportunity to gain real-life practical experience, influence the content, progress and assessment of his (career) learning process and enter into a dialogue about his learning experiences based on trust. The ultimate goal of this dialogue should be to make participants competent in actively shaping their career (Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006). In summary, career learning involves the following elements (see table 1):

Table 1: Overview of key variables in career learning at individual level and school level

Student	Education
Kuijpers (2003) Career competences:	Meijer, Kuijpers and Bakker (2006) Characteristics of career learning:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on capacities • Reflection on motives • Work exploration • Networking • Self-direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflection • Dialogue • Practice-based • Inquiry-based •

Career learning environments in practice

A limited number of authors studied the way in which the education system puts these career learning criteria into practice. First and foremost, Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker (2006) have researched the extent to which these principles have been executed by ten precursor schools in pre-vocational and secondary vocational education. An analysis of the extent to which the curricula are inquiry-based reveals that five out of those ten schools are creating individual, customised learning paths. Out of the remaining five, four are doing something about self-direction based on the outcome of reflection, which can not be called individual customised learning paths, though the gradual shift from teacher to student in the responsibility for learning has proven to be a success in one school. In other words: a number of places have started offering custom training.

A recent study conducted in the province of Zeeland by Bakker, Nijman & Den Boer (2007) demonstrated that the current status for each school type varies greatly, but that the ambitions – especially in (pre-) vocational education – remain high. This study examined the province’s current status based on the abovementioned elements of career education. A written questionnaire conducted among 115 subjects¹² revealed that of the four elements mentioned, the subjects believe that inquiry-based education is put into practice the least (see table 2).

¹² Teachers, guidance counsellors, team leaders, coaches, mentors and other career guidance staff in almost all VMBO, HAVO, MBO and HBO schools in the province of Zeeland.

Table 2. Teacher scores on four career learning elements in Zeeland

	Average (standard deviation)
Dialogue teacher – participant	3.47* (.62)
Extent to which curriculum is practice-based	3.40* (.73)
Reflection	3.40* (.69)
Inquiry-based career guidance	2.84* (.65)

N=115. Averages based on a scale from 1 = 'not at all' to 5 = 'very often'. * = significant variance from neutral average 3.00.

The table further shows that in the province of Zeeland overall¹³, the subjects believe that more than average attention is paid to reflection, dialogues between teachers and participants, and practice-basedness. Inquiry-based education receives less than average attention. Putting inquiry-based education into actual practice is considered a difficult task. Nevertheless, schools do have the ambition to be more inquiry-based. This was examined using a model description on career guidance¹⁴ (see overview below) to enter into a discussion with schools about their current status and ambitions. All 115 subjects were asked to indicate, based on the seven different models, what they believe the current status is at their school and where the school's ambition lies with regard to career guidance. This question was also asked to their leaders during individual interviews.

- 1 No career guidance : 'Wouldn't you be better off taking a different course?'
Throughout the course, no attention is paid (yet) to career guidance of participants. Occasional feedback to participants. Few choice options. Possible practice-based education through work placements.
- 2 Advice: 'A meeting with the career counsellor might help?'
Throughout the course, little attention is paid (so far) to career guidance and if so, it mostly takes place through individual meetings when a participant appears to struggle (threat of dropping out). Drop-out participants are referred to a career advice centre/career counsellor where career choice tests are conducted. Few choice options. Possible practice-based education through work placements.
- 3 Written method: 'Is everything still going OK?'
This is primarily based on a method for career guidance which uses mainly written career assignments. For instance, personal development plans and portfolios are used but few discussions take place on reflection through the written instruments. Possible referral to career advice centre. Some practice-based education through work placements.
- 4 Professional competence profile: 'Do you fit in with your work?'
Career guidance is mainly geared towards reflection on the development of competences from a certain professional competence profile. Reflection on the set of competences takes place through

13 This includes both schools in (pre) vocational education (pre-vocational education, secondary vocational education and higher vocational education, abbreviated in Dutch into vmbo, mbo and hbo) and secondary general education (abbreviated in Dutch into havo).

14 These models were founded on a combination of six models taken from 'Van decaan tot levensloopbaan. Een onderzoek naar de toepassing van loopbaanoriëntatie en -begeleiding in het (V)MBO' by Bakker (2005) and three career learning environments from 'Krachtige loopbaangerichte leeromgevingen in het (V)MBO: hoe werkt het?' by Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker (2006).

discussions on behaviour and attitude. Advice is provided on how the participant can meet the profile description. Practice-based education with little self-direction.

- 5 Solid learning environment: 'Well done, what would you like to do next?'
Participants are mainly motivated to complete the course successfully by regularly providing positive feedback and by offering theory lessons based on real-life situations. This positive feedback leads to awareness about one's own competences and to a realistic professional/self image. Participants carry a greater responsibility for their learning process. Practice-based and partly student-led education.
- 6 Exploratory career perspective: 'Is this type of work suitable for you?'
The participant's career is the focal point during the entire training course. Participants are continually working together with teachers on discovering their capacities and motives linked to career opportunities. Practice-based within and outside the school environment, many choice options and a frequent dialogue on careers.
- 7 Partnership: 'What do you need?'
The participant's career path is the focal point; the course enters into a dialogue with the participant. Past, ideal, personal and professional development are the starting points of the training programme. Practice-based and inquiry-based education with a frequent reflective and future-minded dialogue based on the career path.

The results from this study are represented schematically in figure 3. In this figure, school types are classified under the model that the subjects believe best represents the current situation. At the time of the study (end of school year 2006-2007), most school types in Zeeland fell under model 2 (a good talk with the student if there is a problem) or 3 (a written method for career guidance). Subjects from (pre)vocational education also selected model 4 (geared towards meeting a professional competence profile) or 5 (solid learning environment) as the most commonly used model.

The analysis of the ambitions of the schools, basically revealed two policies: a consolidation policy and a policy of drastic change. The schools in general education mostly opted for the first policy, the schools in (pre)vocational education for the second. However, the differences are small and there are large differences between (and also within) schools, regions and school types.

Furthermore, there are differences within schools that aim for a consolidating or a modified course, and in particular within schools who want to take a different course. Some schools opt primarily for the enhancement of their curriculum being practice-based; others opt for practice-based and inquiry-based education, while some schools aim to put the entire career path of participants at the centre of their objectives (as opposed to the schooling career or job career only). Overall, this study indicates that the biggest problem lies in the organisation of inquiry-based education. We will discuss this in more detail in the paragraph below.

9.3 Inquiry-based education

What is inquiry-based education?

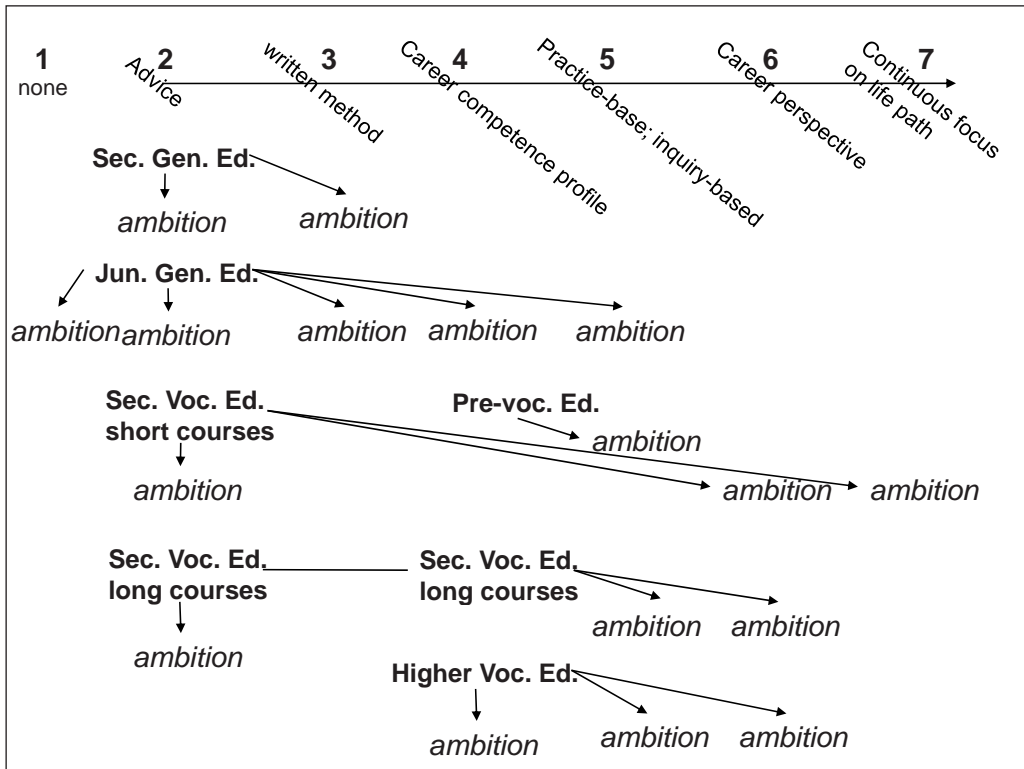
Inquiry-based education simply means that the inquirer is guiding the process. Some forms of education (such as *lederwijs* in the Netherlands) put this idea into practice. The basic assumption in

most forms of (vocational) education is that inquiry-based education is impracticable because the inquirer – the student – lacks overview and is therefore unable to guide the learning process.

The key is to help students ask the right questions. Essentially, schools should ask each student two questions upon school entry (and continue to do so throughout their learning path):

1. What do you wish to acquire here?
2. How can we assist you during that process in the best possible way?

Figure 3. Current status of career guidance and ambitions per school type in Zeeland.



Source: Bakker, Nijman and Den Boer (2007)

How can we assist you during that process in the best possible way?

As mentioned above, most students do not have an answer to the first question. Nevertheless, the entire education system is organised around the assumption that students *do* have an answer to this question, which also shows in the decision made by many schools when wanting to offer inquiry-based education. A great number of schools opt to make their range of courses more 'transparent' to allow students to select the best course possible. In other words, students are provided more insight into the range of courses on offer, how these are related (which subject is a prerequisite for which other subject, etc.) and how much room there is for personal choice. Here, the assumption is that, based on the available information and regulations, students are able to create a package (from modules, majors and minors or otherwise) that suits their needs and which leads to a certificate with civil effect. In this respect, Geerligs and Smulders (2003) differentiate between custom supply and ready-made supply – a distinction that relates to the position of supplier versus inquirer. Custom

goods presuppose – unlike the supply-based thinking of ready-made goods – a different relation between the manufacturer and the consumer of a service of product.

Forms of inquiry-based education: standardisation and custom supply

Deriving from a diagram by De Vries (1997), Smid (2001) demonstrates the consequences of a custom supply on the relation between trainer and participant and between designer and teacher (see table 3). The diagram shows a clear turning point between the first three and the last two rows. Each one of the first three forms constitutes a form of 'guided supply' with an increasing level of refinement. Following the custom supply metaphor, there is a growing ready-made supply yet not a growing custom supply. The last two forms, however, are both a form of 'custom supply' as they are both based on the inquirer. This is in keeping with the questions that every student should be asked – as stated in the previous paragraph. The objective is to gain insight into what the student wishes to accomplish at the school, which requires the supplier to swap positions and to start thinking from the point of view of his customer as opposed to that of the courses supplied. Only when the request from the student has become truly clear can the question be addressed of how this student's request can be satisfied in the best possible way. Naturally, this process does not address every detail at once: not every student knows what type of professional he or she wishes to become after just one confrontation with a professional practice. This process takes time. It is therefore important to initiate a confrontation with a professional practice early on in the course and it is also important to begin with a broad supply, which can then be concentrated further towards the learning requests signalled by the student.

Table 3. Level of custom supply (from De Vries, in Smid, 2001)

Level of custom supply	Process type in front office	'Customer' roles in the process	Personnel	Type of building process
Pure standardisation	Participants acquires and consumes, trainer delivers, instrumental relationship	Buyer, unknown consumer	Informer, salesperson, trainer who is able to deliver the same product over and over again	Building from a fixed product definition
Segmented standardisation	Participant makes selection from assortment, creates training package	Buyer, consumer not anonymous when making choices	Salesperson, choice support trainer is part of the assortment	Building on a range of choice options
Custom standardisation	Participant requests, trainer compares with customer profiles	More explicit question of training, no longer anonymous consumer	Account manager = client for back office generating the course	Building on standard components (e.g. modules)
Tailor-made custom supply	Service provider uses customer contact to keep improving the proposition	Customer is fully known	Relations manager, reflects on customer data, required for (re)construction of the programme	Building components, sometimes acquired from elsewhere, always remodelled
Purely custom supply/ tailor made programming	Symbiotic partnership	Distinction between customer-supplier is nearly non-existent	Relations manager is also the designer	Building on designer skills

A purely custom supply requires a great deal of professionalism and designer skills from the teachers and requires students to be actively involved in the design of their learning path. In this framework, custom supply should provide students with what they need in order to:

- become who they want to be
- qualify themselves (obtain a certificate with civil effect)
- get the absolute best out of them.

This should be shaped in such a way that students can gain self-knowledge c.q. a professional identity based on boundary experiences (work exploration) and through the processing thereof (reflection on capacities and motives). This way, they should be capable of self-direction.

Shaping a custom supply within schools

The next step required from schools towards a custom supply is rendering their supply more flexible. Essentially, this is about aligning the back office with the students' requests. When the requests from students become (more) clear, the question arises how these requests can be dealt with in the most adequate way. De Bruijn & Van Esch (2001) differentiate between the following forms of flexibility:

- intra-organisational flexibility, tangible (rooms, inventory) and intangible (professionalism of teachers),
- flexibility of training paths (accessibility, supply of diverging and converging paths and flexibility of transitions between these paths),
- flexible if the curriculum (in space, time and between individuals),
- pedagogic-didactic flexibility (intake, course selection counselling, problem-based learning, open learning, independent learning, etc.).

Each one of the above forms plays a role in the formulation of a response to the student's request. Bakker, Den Boer and Nieuwenhuis (under preparation) demonstrate that this involves seven fundamental dilemmas c.q. themes which each school needs to decide on or for which they need to find a solution in order to deal with student requests effectively and efficiently.

First, we need to gain insight into the objectives of increased flexibility. In most cases, the general idea of what an organisation should look like is based on a blueprint and not on the steps that will lead to achieving those objectives. In the framework of career learning, the concept of increasing flexibility – in line with the questions above – is about facilitating paths that enable young people to develop their career competences and their (initial) professional identity. On the other hand, it is about facilitating a path through education programmes that fits in with what the person has found out he or she wants to achieve and which, in addition, leads to a qualifying degree. In practice, it is about organising confrontations with a professional practice as early on in the course as possible and throughout the entire course, as well as organising decent discussions that deal with the topic at hand. It is also about continuously (re)designing the education programme based on the desires that result from these discussions.

In order to operationalise these objectives, it is necessary in terms of efficiency – this is the second point made by Bakker, Den Boer and Nieuwenhuis – to be able to predict the paths that will be chosen by the student and to know the extent to which these predictions will be accurate. These predictions occur at three levels, being (1) the student's level: which learning paths suit which student (characteristics)?, (2) the level of the group of students (the cohort): how certain can we be about how the group will behave, how many students will be changing courses, etc.?, and (3) the level of educational activity: what will it cost the student (on average and in which range) to successfully complete an education activity (completing a subject, obtaining a certificate or degree)? Based on these predictions, the educational establishment is able to plan the use of instruments to serve the students as best as possible. Bakker, Den Boer & Nieuwenhuis conclude that an expert system, on

which basis these kinds of predictions can be made, is lacking in the majority of cases. Based on previous experience, it is most certainly possible to predict a number of requests, needs and desires of youngsters. The better we know the person, the easier it should be to make such predictions. Most likely, the teacher can sense at a very early stage whether or not the student has a feeling for a certain profession. This implicit knowledge deserves recognition *and* examination.

Third, it is important to ensure permanent intake and assignment of students. Throughout education, it must be verified on an ongoing basis whether the young person is still in the right place, whether or not the programme is suitable, whether it will lead to the desired results at the end of the ride, etc.

Fourth, Bakker et. al. conclude that the assignment to paths is probably not that difficult for the majority of students, provided that there is enough information available and that an appropriate response can take place. In all probability, the rule of 80-20 applies. For those 20% for whom it is not easy to make arrangements, proper facilities will be required to find out why it is difficult to organise a path for these youngsters and what is required for the path in question.

The fifth element is that of realising flexible paths, which involves a balance of money, student requests and personnel. In this respect, thinking in terms of roles is perhaps more effective than thinking in terms of tasks and working hours. Furthermore, it is important to include the contracting out of tasks as a serious alternative in the efficient and effective organisation of learning paths.

Sixth, increasing flexibility must be achieved at an overall level and not in just one department. In this respect, the *SOOP* model might be helpful. *SOOP* encompasses an integral approach towards Systems (digital and non-digital), Organisation, Education (content) and Personnel (competences). Lagging behind in one of these fields will lead to stagnation into a more diversified form of education.

Finally, there are a number of significant system conditions. In this respect, we refer to the mandatory assignment of all students to a specific training programme and the settlement of schools' accounts based on static qualities (especially inflow and degree output). Those include elements that will hamper a more flexible approach.

Forms of custom supply in practice

Schools deal differently with the seven themes above. In a recent study, Waslander et al. (2007) demonstrated that schools act in a pragmatic manner when bringing custom supply into effect. They weigh up efficiency against effectiveness: realising their personal vision on education as best as possible with limited resources. Waslander concludes that there are four different types, namely Guards, Radical Customisers, Differentiators and Economisers.

The schools classified as Guards reduce the problem of custom supply by making a clear-cut selection at the gate. This type of school offers only a few choice options. A mentoring system is often in place to provide more individual attention and more personal contact with students. This compensates the lack of custom supply. By reducing heterogeneity (guarding against diversity), these schools escape the dilemma of effectiveness versus efficiency.

'Radical Customisers' are most often very small schools, which provide the ultimate custom supply. Where, when, with whom and how learning takes place is determined by the student. The only prerequisite is that the student is present during certain hours. To make this ultimate custom supply possible, these schools often tap extra funding through volunteers, through extra subsidies due to dropouts, and through donations and/or paying participants. In their own way, these schools escape the dilemma of effectiveness versus efficiency also.

The third group, the so-called 'Differentiators', primarily use a system of education modularisation with the objective of motivation and activation. These 'shopping mall high schools' provide the participants with a wider range of choices and responsibility in order to achieve their goal. The strategy they use is one of delaying the moment of disconnection. They opt for possible combinations of mandatory and optional modules by:

- setting a range of tasks and a deadline: the student chooses when and how the task will be performed;
- offering mandatory modules in the morning and optional modules in the afternoon, for instance;
- combining mandatory and optional segments from other grades and levels;
- combining mandatory and optional modules from their school with modules from other schools, which reduces the learning path.

The fourth group, i.e. the 'Economisers', operate on the basis of diversity in teaching materials and learning activities and less on the diversity in targets and content. They implement an increase in scale by designating several teachers to larger groups. This requires a suitable location for larger groups, study groups and students who operate individually. The mandatory segments present the participants with themes, which can be processed to their own liking (how, where, with whom, etc.). The strategy implemented is that of an 'economy of scale' and an 'economy of scope'. Waslander notes that this strategy works for the schools in question as they hold a monopoly position within a certain region or large administration. Partly because of this, it is also possible to build these schools from the ground up. Diversity (as a possible first step towards custom supply) is mainly aimed at by schools through fitting in with the learning style and via choice options through modularisation. More profound inquiry-based education is difficult to organise and these forms require some substantial organisational changes. The next paragraph provides more details on the preconditions that play a role in this process.

9.4 Preconditions for change – a glance at directing innovation efforts

Organising career learning is a far-reaching operation. The actualisation of inquiry-based education appears to be particularly difficult. Despite having the ambition, the vocational education system is struggling with combining examination requirements and practicability. In general secondary education, the ambition to provide more inquiry-based education is not so prominent. This can be explained by the fact that in general secondary schools, students are guided much more by the examination requirements formulated in abstract theoretical phrases.

Experience has taught us that the reforms discussed are exceptionally difficult to put into practice and will require a major effort from the organisation as a whole. Even so, reform projects often lead to disappointing results: in the majority of cases, new knowledge has been acquired at the site of the reform project, but very rarely does it make a lasting impression. The old, trusted working method and familiar routines quickly regain their position. An expansion of the learning process within the organisation towards other training courses, sectors, etc. or even outside the organisation remains mostly non-existent.

(Nieuwenhuis et al., 2008) show that innovation will only result in long-lasting learning processes if there is a clear strategic focus at organisational level and at training team level. The above mentioned project defines five rules of thumb for innovation, which will be highlighted briefly in the paragraphs below.

1) Innovation must be embedded in a learning vision

The schools' management have a significant task at hand in outlining and developing the strategy. The innovation projects need to fit in with the vision and the strategy to prevent the project from gradually 'evaporating'. Concretely, this rule of thumb brings us to the following recommendations for schools:

- ensure the presence of a clear thread throughout all reform activities embarked upon; limit the number of spearheads.
- couple this clear thread with (financial) facilities while being very strict: only allocate funds to the projects that are in line with the vision. Weigh up each project proposal against the collective vision. Always ask yourself: Will this project assist us in realising our goals?
- link projects to one another through the vision, and link people to the vision, to projects and to one another. In particular in larger schools, the rule applies that plenty of intensive communication is required for a consistent and congruent policy to come into force.
- generate school-wide awareness about the amount of time and money involved in the innovation project. The need for direction will soon become clear and the organisation can create a basis for the stringency required throughout a number of stages, which is often currently lacking.

2) Innovation requires a consistent cyclic motion

Many schools take on these reforms with great enthusiasm, which then fades away throughout the year, after which they take on a new project with similar enthusiasm the following year. In the majority of cases, they also fail to assess the previous project before embarking on the next. It is important that the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (Deming, 1986) is completed. In brief, four phases play a role in each innovation process: Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny (Boonstra in Nieuwenhuis, et al. 2008). The Discovery phase is about exploring one's motivation, one's strong points and linking them to the reform. The Dream phase is about making dreams more explicit, while the Design phase is about an approach of change. The fourth phase of Destiny ensures the establishment or 'anchoring' of the reform in day-to-day practice, and this at the site of the experiment as well as throughout the organisation as a whole. Each one of these phases needs its own type of guidance, which needs to leave sufficient room in the first two phases. During the third phase, boundaries must be in place to guide the reform. The fourth phase involves a certain level of strictness.

3) Innovation must be closely linked to developments outside the organisation

Reform is not solely an internal education matter. In the majority of cases, developments 'outside' the organisation are the cause for reform. Subsequently, reforms have consequences that affect the 'outside'. Co-innovation with chain partners is currently gaining esteem, also in the vocational education system. Schools are beginning to develop education in conjunction with businesses and other establishments. It requires flexibility from the school and from the training teams to be able to deliver the custom supply needed within that chain. Thus, flexibility will then become a part of professional quality. However, in anticipation of this, process innovation will have to be in place in order to establish flexibility and responsiveness. Process innovation also necessitates a certain direction of innovation efforts.

4) Innovation requires controlled room for creativity

Innovation requires creativity for the actualisation of new solutions: transforming external changes into new productive processes. Certain (creative) unrest is needed, though within the designated framework (see the above paragraph 'innovation must be embedded in a learning vision'). Too much creative unrest may result in a thousand new ideas but will leave little room for developing one single idea into a productive one.

5) Innovation must lead to the sustained transformation of professionals' routines

Teams operating in an efficient and effective manner will have developed collective adaptive routines, which are flexible operational patterns that have proven their efficiency through experience. Those operational patterns contain a great deal of knowledge and experience: pedagogical-didactic, professional and business knowledge proven to be effective in the eyes of the working community. In this respect, innovation can be regarded as a sustained transformation in routines. However, teachers tend to rely on their 'old' routines and they show no inclination to bend to each new reform. It requires a gradual transition towards new professionalism on the basis of support and of room for negotiation between the individual and the organisation with regard to the development of a new identity (Wenger, 1998; Holmes, 2004).

Keeping in mind the above rules of thumb, innovation in education towards custom supply and towards key focus on the participant's career may have a chance of success.

9.5 Summary and conclusions

In this chapter we stressed the importance of career learning, we showed how education can contribute to it and what conditions are needed to realise career learning in schools.

Having an idea of one's life path and especially being able to handle key dilemmas in one's career gives meaning to learning; it is in the core of it. The way in which this idea is put into practice will be different for each student. Even when put into practice this will not automatically make professionals out of students. But professionals without a core are no professionals at all! Having an idea of one's career is not the same as planning one's career. Career learning is experiential learning. The core of career learning consists of each student finding out how he or she will give meaning to the key professional dilemmas. Career learning takes time; it should be integrated into education at an early stage.

In this chapter, we demonstrated that career learning succeeds or fails through the realisation of a number of education features. Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker (2006) refer to reflection, dialogue, practice-based and inquiry-based education. Actualising the first two does not pose that much of a problem. However, realising the third characteristic turns out to be quite a different task for the general education system. Research conducted by Bakker, Nijman & Den Boer (2007) demonstrates that the third characteristic is certainly being worked on, even though the quality of the results is not always obvious. The actualisation of inquiry-based education appears to be the most difficult task. We know that:

- inquiry-based education is not the same as a process that is guided by the inquirer (student); in most cases, the student lacks the necessary overview to do this;
- schools often interpret inquiry-based education by providing a ready-made supply. The educational offer is a close-knitted structure based on which the student (whether or not supervised by a teacher) is able to assemble a personal package. However, this does not constitute inquiry-based education;
- custom supply is very demanding on the teacher, the student and the educational organisation overall. Therefore, inquiry-based education is most likely to consist of a hybrid form between one-to-one counselling sessions, increased flexibility in the back-office (schedules, rooms, teachers) and other forms of custom supply (see De Bruin and Van Esch, 2001)

- organising the back-office requires knowledge on the basis of which predictions can be made about student inflow and outflow, so that schools are able to weigh up costs and profit (see Bakker, Den Boer & Nieuwenhuis, under preparation).

On the one hand, career learning is about facilitating the path of youngsters towards the development of their career competences and (an initial) professional identity. On the other hand, it is about facilitating a path across educational programmes that fits in with the student's discovery of what he or she wants to achieve and which furthermore leads to a qualifying degree. Practically speaking, career learning is about organising confrontations with a professional practice as early on in the course as possible as well as throughout the entire duration of the training, and about organising adequate reflections to deal with these issues. It is also about adapting the educational programme to the desires expressed during those reflections.

If these issues are addressed, there will be a significant change in status in the current education system. It means that professionals – teachers, support staff, management – will need to expand their usual routines by adding new ones, which will require a major effort from the educational organisation overall.

For that matter, career learning has a mirror-effect. For career learning to succeed, it must first be given meaning by teachers. The latter currently possess a series of workable, trusted routines, which form the core of the working community, as these routines have been tried and tested in practice. Changing these routines requires re-negotiation with professionals about their professional identity. It is expected that boundary experiences (acquired through reform experiments, for instance) and the adequate processing thereof will be the deciding factors for (new) knowledge gained by teachers about themselves within their professional situation and thus also for the success of the reform (career learning in students) (see Holmes, 2004 and Geijsel & Meijers, 2005).

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10 Life themes and career learning

Gerard Wijers

In our education system, two forms of learning and teaching, so-called old learning and new learning, are widely debated. While old learning focuses on the teacher, the transfer of knowledge, and on subject matter, new learning concentrates on the pupil and on the development of the pupil's capacity to relate subject material to his or her own motivation, interests and talents (his or her self-image) and to acquiring the necessary competences for a future occupation. New learning is under fire, few targets are achieved and frustration is rising among teachers and pupils/students.

In this chapter, I wish to underline the importance of being in touch with the depth of one's own experiences. It is my belief that pupils/students who know how to get in touch via a so-called life theme, are better equipped to face the demands of new learning. I hope my contribution will aid the advancement of new learning, of which I am a true advocate.

First, I present a poem to clarify my understanding of 'being in touch with the depths of one's own experiences'. Next, I will provide a practical translation of the opportunity for contact as described by the poet, and finally, I will add both a theoretical and a methodical background.

10.1 An illustrative poem

In the poem below, Martinus Nijhoff uses a metaphor to describe how to make contact with the depths of oneself and how this possibly affects his life as a poet. First, I let Nijhoff speak in his own words. Then, I present an interpretation of the poem in the framework of new career learning.

The Child and I

*I went fishing one day,
I felt despondent.
I made between the flags
with a hand an air hole in the duck-weed.*

*Light rose up from underneath
out of the black mirror ground.
I saw an untread garden
and a child standing there.*

*He stood at his writing table
writing on a slate.
The word under the pencil
I recognised, it was mine*

*But then he has written
Without haste and diffidence,
All which I in my life
Will ever dream to write.*

*And each time that I nodded
to show that I knew,
he let the water quiver
and it was erased.*

(Translation by Cliff Crego and Gerard Wijers)

Interpretation

- 'Despondent': many people feel this way at the beginning of their career path.
- 'Fishing water': the stream of experiences of the "I" character.
- 'The duck-weed': the cultural and social – civilised – representation of one's life experiences. The usual superficial platitudes and clichés about the self and about the world.
- 'Made an air hole': pushing aside the superficial structure of life experiences to date to make room for research into the deeper and yet undefined layers of the soul.
- 'Fishing': examining the depths of one's experience of life. More profound self-reflection.
- 'I': the subjective aspect of the self. The observing aspect of the self as opposed to the objectified part of the self, with which the "I" can or cannot identify and can manifest and distinguish itself in the world.
- 'Black mirror ground': natural, often unconscious depths of one's experiences; reflects the natural character of emotions and urges. The moon is an ancient symbol for the law of nature which operates in living beings.
- 'Untread garden': reference to the garden of Eden in which man and woman still appeared in their original, natural way. Untread means that the reflecting, conscious self did not tread this place before.
- 'Light from underneath': intuitive clarity from one's own depths.
- 'A child who sat there': original child that the "I" once was, still connected with nature (his forgotten fish-child).
- 'Writing (fish-)child': inner source of inspiration for all the career performances of the poet.
- 'The word under the pencil, I recognised was mine': remembering the original self. Something like Plato's anamnesis: remembering pre-birth knowledge in someone, who had ended up outside the boundaries of the Athenian Sensus Communis. Something that has been there all the time is only now getting through to the consciousness. This is comparable to the much-cited experience of Proust when he dunked a biscuit into his cup of tea. The taste prompted a similar memory from his childhood. The writer came to the startling realisation that there was a significant difference between then and now: his childhood experience was so much richer than the one he had as the adult he had become. During the counselling process, this self-recognition often presents itself when making those things more explicit that had remained implicit/undefined up till then throughout the experience of life. It seems that upbringing, socialisation and education go hand in hand with forgetting the original state of being which can be rediscovered, "Le temps perdu et le temps retrouvé".
- 'Each time that I nodded, to show that I knew': the conscious, adult self gains knowledge about himself and about his career opportunities through contact with his own depths.
- 'He let the water quiver': the quivering water is referring to the emotional and motivational quality of the inspiration alongside the cognitive aspect.
- 'And it was erased': After the reception of the message, the poet's consciousness is becoming empty, leaving room for new experience.

Conclusion

Reflection on the depths of one's life experiences may lead to the discovery of intuition as an inner source of knowledge about the self and of inspiration for a suitable career perspective.

10.2 Practical translation of the poem

I often ask my students – the majority of which are career advisors – if they could briefly ponder the issues they worry and get emotional about. After some reflection, every student is able to come up with one or two of these issues. While no clear definition is provided, they are able to clarify which issues they are moved by based on some examples. In the vast majority of cases, these are very broad issues, such as justice, freedom of choice and conquering hurdles, yet in the context of each person's individual life narrative, those issues take on a whole different hue and meaning. After more in-depth reflection and communication, it appears that most of these issues have been rousing emotions since early childhood, and even now, talking about these issues still moves people to tears. Furthermore, it is striking that the number of these so-called life themes in each person's life is very limited, very rarely exceeding one or two, and that those themes have influenced and still influence the work they do.

With regard to my career clients, I take on a more systematic and thorough approach: we run through the various life stages and domains of the client, drawing from his or her episodic memory, and we dwell upon persons, issues and events in which he/she was emotionally involved. In the issues we have discussed and clarified, one or more recurrent basic patterns can be discovered quite easily, despite getting older and despite all the related changes in the person's life situation. These stable patterns in what makes people emotional were already implicitly present in the memories of the past. However, by paying attention to these patterns, they become more explicit and are put into words, thus subjecting them to further reflection and communication.

In other words: the stable patterns in the emotionally charged life experiences are thematised into life themes. Life themes provide coherence and direction to the overall experience of life, in which they serve as a leitmotiv. As emotional experiences signal what matters and what is valuable to the individual, we are able to derive values from these life themes, which people want to and can identify with. Often, this allows for the core of an identity acquired through reflection to be established, "I am someone who worries about freedom of choice; to whom freedom of choice is a value".

Identification with such values also marks an appropriate direction within society, i.e. the sector working on the realisation of these values.

It is interesting to note how life themes seem to be linked to talent; it appears that people have the potential within them to work on the realisation of their values.

Using your intuition is essential for entering the process of reflection and communication, from the very first indication of emotionally charged experiences, to values, identification with these values, work direction and work identity. These experiences have to be named, or in other words, they have to be interpreted into a meaning to that individual. The question 'What does this mean to me?' often allows an intuitive response only: "It feels like 'something to do with freedom' or I feel this association and it feels right". It is about direct sensitive knowledge with no foundation in any reasoning process. The result is of a hypothetical nature: "I presume it is like that".

I hope that by now, the reader has noticed the analogy between the fishing "I" in the poem and the reflection on emotionally charged life experiences. The poet finds the fish-child, as a source of professional inspiration, in the depths of the water, underneath the duck-weed. In the depths of his/

her experience of life, the student or client finds a connecting pattern which offers value, a work identity and inspiration. Yes, even the latter. Psychologist Csikszentmihalyi revealed that people who are working on their life theme have regular flow experiences, losing themselves completely in their work, which shows a strong affinity with inspired work, working from an inner drive. Where does this drive come from, where lies the origin of life themes?

According to Csikszentmihalyi and career psychologist Savickas, life themes stem from frustrating experiences during one's youth. A significant need from the growing child for freedom of choice, for instance, is continuously thwarted by a shortcoming in his/her upbringing. This frustration gives rise to a great deal of negative emotions, a strong desire for what is lacking, and to positive emotions through stories, movies and fantasies about satisfying this need.

Personally, up until I graduated as a psychologist, I experienced a thwarted need for a coherent and vivid concept of reality. After I had proclaimed this concept to life theme and value, I worked on its development for myself and others, based on motivation, interest and my frequent use of intuition. Savickas also pointed out interesting dialectics in working with life themes: what starts out negative during the course of life – accompanied by frustration – will turn into something positive and satisfying.

10.3 Theoretical background

Making contact with nature within oneself, in the depths of one's own experience of life, does not occupy poets and career psychologists alone. The entire process of modernisation, that peculiar development of European culture from Renaissance times onwards, is about reorientation towards nature and about how people deal with this. Through science on the one hand, leading to technological control over nature in the outside world. On the other hand, via some philosophers and artists who have immersed themselves in their own nature and in the possibility to live in harmony with it. I would like to cite a few of those philosophers to help clarify how learning through contact with one's inner nature is a well reflected phenomenon and also, that this learning process has previously been related to finding and following one's own morally justified life path.

The first that spring to mind are Rousseau and Nietzsche with their plea for re-establishing contact with the noble savage and the vital Dionysian source within oneself. However, I will limit myself to Spinoza, our fellow countryman, and to our contemporary Charles Taylor, as I believe their arguments are somewhat more balanced and thus more convincing.

In his major work, 'Ethics', Spinoza deals with human emotion – he uses the term 'affliction' – and describes how we find ourselves in a state of 'bondage' through the power of emotion. We can free ourselves from this undesired state through a better use of our mental ability. Via intuition and reason, we can learn to comprehend our emotions as a system of signals that provides reliable information about the extent to which our actions are in harmony with our inner active will for self-preservation. Spinoza refers to this will for life as our 'conatus'; he believes our conatus is a derivative of the force which moves nature as a whole: 'natura naturans'. In nature, everything is governed by law, including our inner active will and emotions. The human life path in nature is fixed and can be known through reflection on our emotional experiences. This insight allows us to consciously walk our path in harmony with the law of nature. By comprehending the necessity of nature and by acting accordingly, we can free ourselves from the bondage of emotions, which involves a feeling of joy. Thus ends my reading of Spinoza. His philosophy fits in well with my narrative about career learning and provides

philosophical-theoretical support. Spinoza did realise that applying his philosophy is a difficult task and that it requires an effort which most people find too much trouble:

“If the road I have shown to lead to this (to consciousness and inner peace, G.A.W.) is very difficult, it can yet be discovered. And clearly it must be very hard when it is so seldom found ... But all excellent things are as difficult as they are rare”.

Thus goes the famous last sentence of the Ethics. Does that mean that this form of career learning is too difficult to be applied widely throughout the education system and throughout the practice of career guidance? I believe no such thing. Heine once said that Spinoza’s philosophy is something for future times and I gladly agree, on the understanding that the future has already begun. These days, we are learning to think through and discuss our emotions; the strong expansion of psychotherapy certainly contributed its part. The successful reception of the Spinoza-based emotion theory by psychologist Frijda indicates that Spinoza’s time has come.

Then there is philosopher Charles Taylor. In his widely read and strongly praised ‘Sources of the Self’, he writes a history of the modern western identity. He defines this identity in his preface as “the senses of inwardness, freedom, individuality and being embedded in nature”. In chapter 17, the culture of modernity, he writes:

“There was something quite new in this return to nature. We return to nature, because it brings out strong and noble feelings in us. Nature draws us because it is in some way attuned to our feelings, so that it can reflect and intensify those we already feel or else awaken those which are dormant”.

Spinoza and Frijda argue that our emotions are part of nature. Taylor provides a plausible interpretation that through the course of the modernisation process, it is discovered that nature is a source of identity and morals in the individual. It is up to the individual to get to know and learn how to use this source. Using the ‘more subtle language’ of art, the individual can learn to interpret and express what emerges from that source. This defines the so-called ‘ethics of authenticity’, which Taylor believes to be typical of modern culture. According to traditional beliefs, the source of identity and morals (life path) lies high above and outside us, and our connection to the source (God) occurs through the agency of a hierarchy of authorities. The ethics of authenticity, on the other hand, argue that the source lies deep within the individual and that it is only accessible by him or her.

Old learning, with its emphasis on the learning authority of the teacher, shows similarities with the traditional notion of the source of knowledge, identity and morals. New learning is more in keeping with the ethics of authenticity. Psychologist Dijksterhuis’ best selling work ‘*Het slimme onbewust-, denken met gevoel*’ (The clever unconscious – thinking with emotion) is in line with the ethics of authenticity. The unconscious appears to have an incredible, much more reliable data-processing ability than our conscious, rational thought process, in particular for complex tasks. So, he also refers to an inner source, hidden in the depths of the unconscious.

10.4 Methodical focal points

The form of career learning discussed in this chapter requires first and foremost that the pupil/student/client develops a certain familiarity with his or her own inner world. It is important to focus on one’s own stream of experiences while remaining as open-minded and unprejudiced as possible.

A phenomenological attitude which suspends all judgement on what is perceived, is appropriate. A frequently used term these days is mindfulness, a form of attention training derived from Buddhist meditation practices, aimed at a clear perception of one's experiences.

Rogerian counselling techniques are also very useful as it focuses the attention of the learner on the clear perception of his or her own emotions and on wording these emotions in such a way that it leads to satisfying results that feel just right. Thus, not only does the individual learn to name and comprehend his or her emotional experiences, but he or she also gains insight in his or her own interests which the emotions refer to. People will be able to learn to stand up for their own interests and will discover which social sector will best serve their interests. This implies an increased awareness of identity and direction, and of maturing.

Charles Taylor already pointed out that 'a more subtle language' – the language of art – is more appropriate for interpreting and expressing one's emotionally charged experiences. "The Child and I" illustrates this proposition: little words evoke strong images and feelings which lead to reflection and which are moving and not easily forgotten. New learning in general and career learning in particular may benefit from the use of artistic forms to stimulate and support the intended process of reflection and expression.

New learning largely depends on the ability of the learner to interpret personal, initially obscure experiences. This brings us to the discipline of hermeneutics, the principle of interpreting seemingly important but often obscure human expressions and experiences. I do not believe it is a coincidence that the surge of ethics of authenticity in our modern western culture coincides with the development of hermeneutics as a method of science. Applying the principles of hermeneutics to the process of shaping new (career) learning is a matter of course and is likely to be fruitful.

10.5 Conclusion

Until pupils, students and clients learn how to fish from the depths of their own experience of life, as a part of new learning, the surging waves of criticism on this education reform will not subside.

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11

Career dialogue: About learning to talk (and) about learning to choose

Marinka Kuijpers

Counselling interviews in which the counsellor talks *with* the learner and not merely *to* the learner about topics such as the learner's strengths, values and future vision will contribute to active career development, a greater learning motivation and more suitable choices made by learners (Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker, 2006). This is important, as active career development is required from learners to prepare themselves for modern employment (Kuijpers, 2007) and for solving a number of problems in contemporary vocational education. "Less-than-optimal educational choices, unnecessarily high numbers of early school leavers, insufficient use of students' capacities and inflexibility in the education system are costing the Netherlands 7 billion Euros each year", reads the conclusion from a study by the 'Nationale Denktank' foundation (Elsevier, 9-10-2007).

However, the education system seems to (have to) make a choice between guided learning through a standard package, and training courses based on self-direction by the learner, which often turn out to be of the 'figure it out yourself' variety (Taks, 2003). Neither case promotes flexibility in training, the use of capacities, and an improvement of learners' choices. This chapter discusses the choices made by learners and the role of counselling in that process. The basic principle is that during counselling interviews, which mainly focus on the career development of learners, students learn to make more conscious decisions and more suitable choices for today and for the future. We examine more closely what a counselling interview with a main focus on career development looks like and how it differs from other counselling interviews or other parts of conversations. The chapter starts with a leitmotiv, which can be used by counsellors to relate significant experiences of students to their career development.

11.1 Choosing is not an easy task

How exactly do learners go about picking an education? Several studies demonstrate that learners make their decision primarily by crossing off items of a list (Neuvel, 2005). They are making a choice based on what they don't want; they are making a decision based on what is left on the list when everything they *don't* want has been crossed out. Their decision is not based on what they *do* want and on what they are willing to put effort in. Recent research shows that a wrong selection in educational courses is the main reason among students putting their training on hold or for switching courses (Zijlstra & Meijers, 2006). With regard to choosing the wrong course, most (former) students state that the image created during the information session did not match reality or that they failed to think their decision through. As recently as this year, research conducted at MBO establishments revealed that nearly three-quarters of the participants would select a different school or would consider doing so, while half the number of participants would choose a different training course or would at least consider it (Voncken & Breemers, 2008). Other research also confirms that the career choice of learners is not a well-thought out process. Learners do not have a realistic view on employment and are hardly aware of their own capacities and aspirations (Den Boer et al., 2004; Luken & Newton, 2004; Bakker et al., 2007).

The quotes below from a number of students at a PABO (pedagogical academy) establishment and from students in MBO (secondary vocational training) illustrate the problem that comes with making a career choice. Despite the fact that PABO students have already dealt quite substantially with the profession they are training for (in contrary to most students in other vocational training courses), they do face problems when making a career choice as well. These are some responses to the question 'How did you go about choosing this course?':

"I was attending secondary school. Then I took an MBO training course in 'Design'. Afterwards, I realised that I didn't like the prospect of working in an office so I decided to look at training courses on the website of the Hague University. This is where I found information on PABO and it seemed like a fun idea to take on a course."

"Well, I always wanted to be a teacher. I never actually put serious thought into this. I commenced my training at HEBO (economics) here at the Hague University but it was all a bit too serious for my liking and I also disliked the atmosphere among students. So I had to choose another option and that's when I thought: "I'll give PABO a try."

"This took quite some time. First I finished secondary school. Then I went to university where I took a course in information technology. I discovered rather quickly that I wasn't really that interested in information technology and in spending the rest of my life working from a desk. Then I worked for half a year and I decided to train in Social Pedagogical Assistance. Well, I did that for two years, but then decided that it was too hard in the sense that it required a lot from me mentally and that I took a lot of those problems home with me."

In conversations with students from various disciplines at a regional training centre in secondary vocational training, students described the problems they encountered when they had to decide on an education (Kuijpers, Winters & Meijers, 2008). The interview report reads as follows:

One student studying economics explains that students who do not know which direction to take, end up choosing for economics, because it is considered a broad course which allows you to choose any other field at a later stage. However, this student had previously commenced a sports training course, but found out halfway through the year that it was not what he had expected. He knows that the teacher was mainly the one to blame, as the latter had given too rosy a picture about the course. The student now wants to complete the course and not discuss it any further, because he does not want to start having doubts. He will only select a new course when he will be deciding on a HBO (higher vocational education) course. He is still unsure about how to prepare for this decision.

The students indicate that the topic of career choice is hardly ever discussed at school. They do make educational choices but have no idea why they are making those exact choices. Neither is it being discussed. Talents and qualities are not a topic of discussion. The discussions are more about what students need to complete in the course and whether they have or haven't completed everything. When asked what they would do to be taught how to make better choices, their response is: "anything", including reflection reports, discussions on reflection, and assignments.

The above statements are not exceptional. Students and teachers often assume that learners are personally responsible for and well capable of making choices, despite the fact that research shows that the contrary is true. In order to learn how to make the right choice, it is important for students

to develop a realistic self-image, professional image and future vision and that they practice making choices so that they can learn from it. In our education system, however, this occurs very rarely (Meijers, Kuijpers & Bakker, 2006; Winters, Kuijpers & Meijers, 2008).

11.2 Making choices need to be learned

If one of the tasks of the education system is to teach learners how to make choices, then it will not suffice to provide counselling only at the time of making schooling and career choices. The student may make a good decision (product), but the learner will face the same dilemma when the next decision arises. And making those decisions does not end when the training course is over: jobs are not invariable and the number of choice options in the job market is strongly increasing. To illustrate: in 1976, there existed approximately 5,500 occupations and 2,000 functions, while in 2003 we have 1,073 occupations and approximately 23,000 functions (Vreugdenhil, 2007). A cyclical process of experimentation and learning is required due to the unpredictable nature of a career. Youngsters must be enabled to recognise and utilise their capabilities, opportunities and desires. This requires a number of specific competences (Blustein, 1992; Dawis, 1996; Savickas, 2001). Research conducted among VMBO (pre-vocational education) and MBO (secondary educational education) students in the Netherlands demonstrates that there are three different career competences: career reflection (reflection on qualities and motives), career self-management (work exploration and career control) and networking (Kuijpers & Meijers, 2006). These 'career competences' are developed and utilised within a specific learning environment.

In order to gain experience, experiment and obtain a realistic image on work and labour, it is important to render the education programme (partly) practice-based (Cohen-Scali, 2003). The learning psychology emphasizes that reflection is crucial in practical learning (Mott, Callaway, Zettlemouers, Lee & Lester, 1999). However, research showed that young people are very opposed to reflection (Law, Meijers & Wijers, 2002; Zijlstra & Meijers, 2006). Active participation and (co) authority in one's own learning process are essential to conquer this opposition (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Learners need some choice options to facilitate active participation. Or in other words: the organisation of the programme must be inquiry-based. Inquiry-based programme organisation provides a learning environment in which opportunities are created for students to make choices in their learning process, so that reflection is not a purpose in itself but rather an instrument to help guide the (learning) career (Weick & Berlinger, 1989). But the benefit of inquiry-based learning only becomes apparent if freedom of choice and reflection are combined, as reported by researchers at the Kohnstamm Institute during an interview about new learning (Volkskrant 19 May 2007 about Oostdam, et al. 2006).

Thus, reflection plays an important role in practice-based and inquiry-based education. But are young people capable of reflection? Recent neuropsychological research showed that the brain of young people is not ready or mature enough to be able to see the long-term consequences of the choices they make. Young people can therefore not be expected to initiate their own reflection process (also see Luken's contribution to this volume). The same study showed that the brain could be trained to reflect through practice. Counselling both teachers and parents is a vital part of this process (www.hersenleren.nl). Jolles (2006) concludes that dropout rates diminish when counselling is provided with regard to schooling and educational choices. However, counselling must be aimed towards raising awareness in learners about their own capabilities and towards teaching them how to make well thought out decisions. From an educational-psychological point of view, self-direction, i.e. the competence of 'career self-management', is also linked to counselling: "All research in this field

[self-guided learning, MK] demonstrates that non-counselled learning or learning with very little counselling is not effective”, Kirschner says in the *Volkscrant* journal, 19 May 2007.

If the education system wants choice-making to be a (learning) process as opposed to a one-off choice on schooling and career, career counselling will be required in the form of a dialogue between learner and counsellor, who is then also part of the learning process with a focus on the future (Arrington, 2000; Watts & Sultana, 2004).

11.3 Talking differently and more often

People’s careers change, and this puts new demands on career counselling. When a job used to be considered mainly as a source of income, matching a person’s qualities with the requirements of the organisation was the number one concern (Pere, 1968). Thus, traditional career counselling mainly consisted of providing training advice and job information (Erickson & Schults, 1982). These days, a job is also considered to be an opportunity to give meaning to one’s life. From this perspective, it is important for individuals to be able to justify their actions as personal choices and, with this in mind, to search for personal beliefs and ideas (McCash, 2006). Modern career counselling is about connecting identity with work. For this reason, reflection exercises and reports are often part of the programme, yet they are discussed very briefly. Self-reflection or guidance becomes a purpose in itself that can be marked, as opposed to an instrument to give direction to what and how learners are learning (Vreugdenhil, 2007). Counselling interviews do touch the topic of what students are doing and how they got there. But the focus is mainly on what students are incapable of, instead of reinforcing their qualities. Furthermore, counselling interviews rarely cover why students are doing something and why they are doing it a certain way, while the question ‘why’ is crucial for finding out reasons and motives (Stevens, 2002).

A recent study on effectiveness in career counselling provided more insight in the counselling components that are of importance (Geldard & Geldard, 1999; Murphy & Ensher, 2001; Patton & McMahon, 2006). An effective counselling discussion consists of five components:

- affective component: building a good relationship based on mutual trust;
- informative component: providing correct and relevant information to offer several alternatives;
- reflective component: the ‘constructing of meaning’ factor;
- activating component: the ‘agency’ factor, and finally
- networking component: negotiation, network development and network access.

These components are in close keeping with the results of a study into career-minded learning environments in VMBO and MBO establishments (Meijers et al. 2006; Kuijpers et al., 2006a). The reflective, pro-active (career control) and interactive (networking) career competences are precisely the components brought forward in international studies to be raised in career discussions.

The reflective component in career discussions is about creating new awareness and relating it to opportunities. The following principles play a role in reflection (Giddens, 1991; Kidd, 1998; Stevens, 2002):

- reflection takes place from within a specific context: a discussion on reflection typically deals with recent experiences and events that matter to the learner and have made an impression.
- it includes abstraction: examining whether certain things that were (not) going well in this situation are identifiable in other situations as well, in the past, outside of school, etc. to establish whether it concerns a characteristic (quality, motive) of the person. An active thought process is initiated

during which the subject learns to comprehend feelings, contrasts and discrepancies, which then leads to an expanded or modified awareness of the subject within his or her environment.

- new insights about oneself within one's environment are linked to the future by relating them to one's future vision and aspirations. Reflection is all about self-development.

Career reflection relates to the strengths of a person that are to be utilised and enhanced (qualities) and to the motives that are the driving force and that determine what the individual would like to work on. Teachers from classrooms with a solid learning environment have the following opinion about this (Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006):

(about reflection on qualities) "We use a drill to dig for positive qualities in order to reinforce them as quickly as possible."

The basis is formed by what learners are good at. Students are stimulated to achieve the minimum in areas they are not good at, and to excel in areas they are good at.

(about reflection on motives) "It is not about 'what do you like?' but about 'where do you want to focus your efforts?'"

Teachers search for subjects that touch their students, that motivate them and for which they are 'willing to suffer'.

The activating component relates to counselling that instigates the learner to take action, either through work exploration or by taking actual steps towards optimising their career. One teacher said the following about work exploration:

"It is important for students to be in a place where they can experience what is required of them for that particular type of work and whether they are in the right place. Children often aim too high. You have to take students seriously. Look at the qualities one needs and come up with areas in which the student could develop further. In the end, it is about making sure that the student is happy, that he or she is functioning well and that they know why they end up in a certain position."

One teacher said the following about instigating activities for making choices and actualising these choices:

"We aim at making the learning process an exciting one. We find limitations and challenge students to take a step beyond their fears."

In this case, students cannot opt for the easiest road by completing assignments that they already expect to be able to complete. Teachers stimulate and counsel learners to take on challenging and helpful activities, within or outside the school environment:

"You have to find out what students know and what they are able to do outside the school environment. When you formulate an assignment that requires certain objectives to be met, then the school should not be asking students to do things that they are already doing at home. This would take away their motivation. It is a culture of constantly keeping up-to-date with their developments."

The networking component consists of counselling in negotiations and in network development. The counselling aspect also opens doors to new networks. The learner learns how to build and maintain contacts in internal and external job markets aimed at career development.

11.4 Career dialogue: from achieving minimum training requirements to getting the most out of learners

Through several current studies into the career development of learners, we are trying to get a better view on the (career) discussions held with learners at school by means of questionnaires, interviews and video footage. Our analyses demonstrate that these conversations typically cover six topics: current status overview, administration of the learning process, learning progress, development of professional skills, emerging crises and the career itself.

Current status

It is clear that the current status is being discussed during the counselling interview when questions are asked such as: 'How are you going?', 'How did you go?' and 'What did you think of it?'. The learner will not give a lengthy answer to these questions and the counsellor does not dig further for a response from the learner. The learner uses single word responses, such as 'good' or 'okay', a brief sentence, such as 'I liked it' or a general description, such as: 'I did OK but it took a lot of effort.' 'Luckily everyone was nice.' 'They helped me get it finished.' The counsellor usually responds to this with one single expression such as 'good', 'nice' or 'pity' and sometimes a general phrase. The most typical feature of the part of the conversation about the current status is that the meaning of experiences and what they mean to the learner remains unclear.

Administration

The administrative part of the conversation is about filling out forms, checking whether everything went well and whether everything has been completed, and discussing any further (administrative) steps required. An example is the marking of competences based on forms filled out by various actors: "I see that the practical training counsellor passed you on customer friendliness, you got a 'good' there and I also believe you can do it. I will give you a pass mark and I will write it on the form." Typical for the administrative part of the conversation is that the reason why and how some objectives were (not) met is hardly discussed at all.

Learning progress

The conversation about the learning progress often focuses on the objectives of the course. It is about what the learner has achieved with regard to the mandatory objectives of the course and what he or she has left to do. Learners may be asked what aspects they have dealt with and how. They receive feedback from the counsellor, sometimes in the form of questions. A discussion about learning progress allows students to see where they are currently at in the course. The minimum requirements are the starting point and the focus is mostly on what the learner still can and should improve; what the learner does not yet master.

Professional skills

The part of the conversation about professional skills relates to the actions and the attitude that matter for the subject's performance in a specific profession or in a specific work situation.

Crisis

A conversation about crises is characterised by the demand for a direct approach. Examples are: the learner is about to drop out of school, has a conflict, does not have a work placement position, is not doing well at all in the course, is experiencing serious private problems or is faced with a decision that makes him or her feel powerless.

Career

Not every counselling interview with students is at the same time a discussion on careers. A career discussion distinguishes itself from a learning progress discussion by emphasizing the strengths/ talents and ambitions/passion of the learner. A career discussion is based on the learning progress and learning experiences (at school and in practice) and aims at gaining insight about oneself. During the conversation, the learner is guided towards relating successes to disappointments in the learning progress and learning experiences with previous experiences: in other subjects, projects, performances, work placements, in private situations, during out-of-school activities. Experiences from a specific situation are used to gain insight into the qualities of the learner that distinguish him or her from others, and into values that truly matter to the learner: how people interact, how problems are dealt with, for instance. Values are often expressed through certain rules of life: principles that form the basis of your actions. Some rules of life are:

- Stand up for yourself
- Become influential to achieve your goals
- Strive for success
- Be geared towards results
- Enjoy yourself as much as possible, you only live once
- Create joy in your life
- Develop your talents
- Be guided by new opportunities
- Think and act independently
- Make autonomous decisions
- Strive for inner harmony
- Enjoy beauty and wisdom
- Be helpful
- Share your feelings with others
- Conform to standards
- Follow the rules of the community

Content of the career discussion

A career discussion deals with personal rules of life and relates those to the rules that apply in a broad range of work situations. Furthermore, a career discussion is aimed at the future. In terms of objectives in learning, this would mean that one dwells on what the learner has learned (about himself) and on the learning objectives that emerge from that. A basic principle is that the learner knows what he is learning, what he wants to and can learn.

Career discussions differ from discussions on professional skills by paying explicit attention to the creation of a realistic and suitable image on jobs and on the future. It is less about how the student can acquire the values and standards of the profession and more about how the *personal* values of the learner fit in with the values that are applicable in various work situations. During a career discussion, students become aware of the demands and the culture of the profession for which they are being trained, and they compare different work situations within and outside of that profession with their own capacities and ambitions. Part of the career discussion is about discussing the steps to be taken by learners to gain more insight about themselves and about the type of work that suits them best, about organising (learning) experiences and gathering supporting facts that can be used towards a better future. Finally, a career discussion is about networks: who is able to assist the learner in these steps, how should the learner approach, use and maintain a network contact).

Table 1. Content and format characteristics of counselling interviews

	Content: topics of discussion	Format: method of discussion
General inquiry	General impression of the learner's performance	Inquiry
	Functional problems	Inquiry or statement
	Private circumstances	Inquiry
Administrative	Marking actions/competences that have been accomplished	Conclusion
Learning assessment	Progress at school	Exploration, conclusion
	Feedback about functioning in specific situations or about specific actions	Exploration, statement
	What the student has learned in a specific situation	Test
Subject-oriented	General impression of practical experiences and problems	Inquiry or statement
	Required knowledge, skills and attitude	Exploration, conclusion
Crisis	Problem at school, during work placement or in private situation	Listening, advice, action

Career dialogue	Qualities/talent/strengths/developmental aspirations/job (activity) opportunities Superficial: what can/can't you do? In-depth: what is 'the best of yourself'?	Valuation, confrontation, exploration, learning to reflect
	Motives/values/passion/ambition/bond with job (activities) Superficial: 'what do you enjoy doing?' In-depth: search for 'what are you willing to put effort in?'	Validation, exploration, learning to reflect
	Vision on demands, culture, opportunities, developments and challenges in jobs Superficial: which activities take place in a job? In-depth: what are challenging developments and values in a job?	Examination, activation
	Activities to actualise ambitions, organise learning experiences, examine choices. Superficial: short-term and incidental actions In-depth: activities to get the best out of yourself and to use the best of yourself in future times	Activation
	Quantity and quality of networks. Building and maintaining network contacts Superficial: short-term and incidental use of network contacts In-depth: learn how to network	Networking

Table 1 is a brief summary of the above and provides information about the typical form of discussion for each topic (see next paragraph for more details).

Format: from monologue to dialogue

The format of a career discussion is characterised by its dialogical nature and differs from (parts of) conversations in which – often through a monologue – advice, feedback, and information are provided. Advice, feedback and information are of importance primarily when they fit in with the student’s question or experience, in a crisis situation for instance, in an evaluation of actions or lack of knowledge about a particular subject required for the next step. A dialogue focuses on examining thoughts, feelings and behaviour. It is about the learner’s career and this is what the conversation is built around. The learner has a say on the topic of the discussion and on how the discussion can be of assistance to the learner. The counsellor refrains from solving problems and instead examines, together with the learner, several options that may help the learner along.

A career dialogue is different from a testing interview, in which the counsellor conducts tests to find out whether the student is sufficiently knowledgeable about a particular subject. It is also distinct from an inquiring, exploratory and concluding (part of a) conversation, in which two people merely keep each other informed. The format of the dialogue is appreciatory, confrontational (presenting contradictions in expressions and/or behaviour, question the realistic nature of thoughts), exploratory, aimed at learning to reflect, activating and network-inducing. The dialogue is about talking *with* the learner and not *just to* or *about* the learner. Some of the conditions for having a career dialogue are that the counsellor must show concern about the well-being of the learner and that he must show genuine interest in the issues that truly matter to the learner. Furthermore, it is important for the learner to trust that he or she is taken seriously by the counsellor, that the counsellor treats what is being said as confidential and that the counsellor is fully equipped to support the learner in his or her (learning) career.

Leitmotiv examples for career discussions based on experiences

The starting point for a career discussion is a concrete experience that matters to the learner. Rules of life and future visions can be examined based on experiences that create a feeling of enthusiasm or misery, for instance. This could be an experience during a work placement or during other practical training situations, a conflict about learning or about work, a choice that the student is faced with, etc. Aspects described in the paragraphs above have been classified in leitmotiv examples for career discussions (table 2). The leitmotiv can be used as a handle for the conversation, as an assessment of a previously held career discussion or to initiate a conversation about how to conduct a career discussion.

Table 2. Leitmotiv examples for career discussions based on experiences

Preparation	Think about possible objectives of the discussion, questions that need to be addressed, and what the discussion should result in. Read through notes from previous discussions. Find information about the discussion (info).
Conversation Contact	Counsellor displays concern, interest and professionalism. Counsellor takes the student seriously.
Determine the objectives and outcome of the conversation	Determine the objectives of the discussion together with the student: what would make the discussion worthwhile to the student. Always keep the objective in mind throughout the discussion, except when another issue weighs up more.

<p>Analyse the experience</p>	<p><i>Portray an important experience</i></p> <p>Ask clarifying questions about behaviour, feelings and thoughts. <i>Relate to other experiences.</i></p> <p>Make a connection with other events (outside of school or in the past). Relate to other aspects: portfolio, learning line, previously acquired competences (EVC), personal development plan, work placement</p>
<p>Reflection on qualities and motives</p>	<p><i>Give meaning to experiences in the framework of career development</i></p> <p>Try to generalise and bring the discussion to a more abstract level: qualities and motives.</p> <p>From 'what can/can't you do' to discovering 'the best in yourself'</p> <p>From 'enjoyable' to rule of life</p> <p>Value successes; list the things the student is good at.</p> <p>Confront in case of discrepancies.</p> <p>Validate standards and ambitions.</p> <p>Connect with what makes the student pause and with what moves him/her. Dreams as well as realistic opportunities are discussed.</p> <p>Balance between feelings and thoughts, between charge and release.</p> <p>Allow the student to have more questions than answers for the time being.</p> <p>Relate to the future vision.</p>
<p>Work exploration</p>	<p>Motivate the student to explore (the pleasant and less pleasant sides of) job activities and relate to personal (in)capabilities and ambitions.</p> <p>Motivate the student to examine professional identity, professional dilemmas, developments in the field and the culture of the organisation and to relate these to personal values and standards; what suits the student.</p> <p>Provide relevant information on training or on job markets. As a counsellor, do not provide any information you are unsure of. Counsellor assumes an active role in the joint search for information and experiences.</p> <p><i>From 'which activities does the job involve?' to 'what are challenging developments and values in a job?'</i></p>
<p>Career self-management</p>	<p>Motivate the student to think about action in view of the career: new steps towards reflection, job/training exploration, gaining new experiences.</p> <p>Student chooses action that has been found to be useful, feasible and challenging to him/her (also with respect to choices made previously).</p> <p>Challenge students to do something they want to learn but are afraid to do. It must be clear to students how their activities are helping their (learning) career.</p> <p>Relate to gathering evidence on qualities, motives and network contacts in the portfolio (process and product).</p>
<p>Networking</p>	<p>Take every opportunity to mention the importance of networks and of using and expanding these networks. Discuss how to establish and maintain contacts.</p>

<p>Wrapping up</p>	<p>The student starts every discussion from planned actions based on knowledge about himself/herself and/or the learning request.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make clear agreements about the student's activities -Make clear agreements about your role as a counsellor (find out things, join the student, arrange things, set up tasks, etc.). -Evaluation of the discussion: briefly discuss the learning experience: Which new ideas have you acquired? What have you found out? What did you think of the atmosphere during the discussion? <p>Feedback about how you experienced the discussion as a counsellor: valuation and confrontation with regard to student input.</p>
<p>Reporting and reflection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes about focal points of the discussion, agreements about activities for student, about counsellor's own activities and about the evaluation of the discussion. • Reflect on counsellor's (in)capabilities throughout the discussion, take new steps if needed.

11.5 Career dialogue in practice

Several VMBO and MBO schools are working on establishing a career dialogue between counsellor and student and even a triologue between practical training teacher, school counsellor and student. Below, I present the outcome of the initial numbers from a VMBO school and an MBO school, both participants in a project aimed at implementing a triologue (Kuijpers, Meijers & Winters, 2008; Kuijpers, 2008). The VMBO study involved 202 students, and the questionnaire was also filled out by 13 mentors of 188 of these students, as well as by 22 teachers and by 12 coaches. The study conducted at the MBO school involved 485 students, 50 ROC counsellors and 73 business counsellors. This chapter concludes with some results from these studies with regard to the format and content of counselling interviews.

Which type of discussion (or part of a discussion) takes place?

School counselling mainly focuses on discussions with students that seem to have a problem and that are likely to drop out. Individual conversations with students to teach them how to make conscious, suitable and future-minded decisions are a rare occurrence or even non-existent. At the MBO school, students appear to discuss their learning career mostly with fellow students during group discussions. Nearly two-thirds of students indicate that they never or rarely discuss their learning career with a mentor or counsellor in practice; many counsellors believe the opposite is true.

Format of the discussion

Students experience a low level of (co) authority throughout the discussions. At the VMBO establishment, only one-third of students experience co-authority to a certain degree during their (learning) career discussion. The vast majority of counsellors indicate that they are the ones who determine the content of the discussions. At the MBO school, students believe that they are given more co-authority during discussions with a counsellor in practice. It is significant how practical training teachers at the MBO school indicate that they are mostly the ones who steer the conversation. The content of the triologue, the conversation between student, teacher and practical training counsellor at the MBO establishment – as agreed by most subjects – is primarily determined by the teacher.

The discussions are mainly of an affective and informative (assisting) nature. The reflective and activating components (career-mindedness) receive less attention during the discussions, as indicated by both students and counsellors at the VMBO school and at the MBO school.

Students at the MBO school tend to be more positive about the assisting nature of the discussions in practice than at school; while students at the VMBO school indicate the opposite. VMBO students mainly feel positive about the trust they have in their counsellors at school. VMBO students are the least positive about the level of interest shown by counsellors in the students' lives.

Counsellors in VMBO and MBO, at school and in practice, indicate that they motivate students to think about their future and to excel. Students believe that this is not the case at all. Students and counsellors in MBO agree that the discussions are hardly in-depth with regard to what students find really important.

Content of the discussion

The discussions are mainly about the training course, as expected. The career of students is mostly discussed during conversations with the counsellor at school. Individual conversations with counsellors are primarily about the students' learning progress and less about their self-image and future vision. They are even less about actions on work and career. The majority of students at the VMBO and MBO schools are of the opinion that the following topics are discussed very little or not at all:

- what occupies them (counsellors agree on this)
- their dream about the future
- their talents (on the contrary, counsellors believe that this topic is discussed)
- the type of work that suits them (counsellors agree on this)
- the next possible step in their training that fits in with their desire for the future (counsellors agree on this)
- how they can apply experiences from outside of school to their future
- how students can establish contact with people who can help them and their career (networking).

The most discussed topic is the question why the student wants to take up a certain subject.

The triologue (conversation between teacher, learner and practical training counsellor in the framework of practical training in MBO) mainly covers the subject of professionalism. More so than the individual conversation, the triologue discusses the occupational developments in the training field of the student, but to a lesser degree does it discuss the job activities that would suit the student and how to make suitable choices. Counsellors in VMBO agree that the topic of how to make suitable choices is discussed rarely or not at all.

Capabilities of counsellors: basis and capacity

Counsellors discuss the training progress of students more than the students' careers. How do counsellors experience the basis of and their own capacities in shaping career development? More than half of the counselling teachers at the MBO establishment and 70% of the teachers at the VMBO school are of the opinion that the organisational basis for career counselling is inadequate. Counselling teachers miss the support from management in particular. According to many counsellors at the VMBO school, support from colleagues is highly lacking as well. Counsellors in VMBO and MBO also experience little *basis*; they feel insufficiently equipped to provide career counselling. In general, counsellors are of the opinion that there are not enough opportunities to develop themselves in learning career counselling. Counsellors from work placement businesses generally believe that

they possess adequate knowledge, skills and experience to be able to counsel students properly throughout their (learning) career.

Despite the fact that the basis and the capacity seem to be there to a certain extent only, it does appear that counsellors do discuss career development with students more when they are in an environment where the basis and capacities are more apparent. Counsellors in VMBO who experience a stronger basis and more capacities for career counselling are more likely to discuss the self image and future vision with the student, as well as jobs and career actions. The study conducted at the MBO establishment indicates that counsellors talk more with students about jobs and career actions if they believe to be better equipped for conducting such career discussions.

11.6 Conclusion

The learning process, practical experiences and the career of students still appear to be separate issues, brought up individually during discussions and rarely interlinked. Schools that are actively working on providing more in-depth counselling interviews with more content are capable of operating primarily in a helping manner. This was supported by a study that described ten good practices in regards to this matter (Kuijpers, Meijers & Bakker, 2006). Discovering talent and passion and the type of work (culture) that fits in with this, challenging students to prove it and to learn how to make the right choice, step by step, seems to still be one bridge too many to cross. However, several learning situations do experiment with these issues. Future will tell which (groups of) students can be prepared properly for the type of work for which they are expected to exercise self-direction during their learning process, so that they can anticipate changes in work situations and construct a meaning for it. Therefore, students must learn how to make choices and how to talk, while counsellors must learn how to talk about learning to choose.

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Self-direction in careers is becoming ever so important. Hence schools are making a considerable investment in career counselling. Nonetheless, the results have been rather disappointing so far. Is it because we demand too much of students' brains, as suggested by many on the basis of recent brain research? Or is the use of instruments such as the Personal Development Plan and the portfolio inadequate for the promotion of reflection and self-directedness? Do we not make a clear enough distinction between the learning capabilities and needs of different groups of pupils? Are instructors in the current education system at all prepared to and capable of making maximum use of the career instruments available? And – last but not least – is the education system as an organisation capable of creating a proper career learning environment? The authors examine these issues in a probing manner, supported by recent research data and theoretical insights. Together, they provide us with an inspiring image of the possibilities and boundaries of career learning in today's education system.

