

**Strengths-Based Career Development
for
School Guidance and
Counseling Programs**

Norman C. Gysbers and Richard T. Lapan



Counseling Outfitters, LLC

*Strengths-Based Career Development through Comprehensive Guidance
and Counseling Programs*

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Cover photograph by Garry R. Walz, Ph.D.

*We selected this photo for the cover because it reflects the myriad forces, patterns,
and colors that merge together to create an attractive whole – much as career
development reflects the interplay between many different influences and values.*

ISBN 13: 978-0-9795668-3-7

Dedicated to R. Lynn Jensen

A career of helping students make good decisions

Strengths-Based Career Development for School Guidance and Counseling Programs

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Foreword

Like so many organizations in today's society, publishers are faced more than ever before with the need—no, the pressing *necessity*—to make wise choices in what they decide to publish. Galloping production costs and ever-tightening consumer budgets severely restrict a publisher's freedom to take on books that have an uncertain potential for success. Hence, fewer books can be published. Economic limitations require that a publisher judiciously select from the myriad of requests they receive to publish only those that both serve an imperative need and contain information that is of the highest quality and validity. This book meets both of these criteria.

First, the idea of the need for this book did not fall upon us like an apple out of a tree. Only after analyzing the many requests we received from school counselors, counselor educators, and other school personnel did we conclude that a real gap in the school counseling literature pertains to the career guidance component of comprehensive school guidance programs. While other components are well addressed in the literature, there has been a notable need for practical resources providing step-by-step instructions on how to implement a successful school-based career guidance program. Particularly significant has been a need to interface three emerging areas of research and development: 1) an emphasis on strengths-based counseling approaches; 2) the growing demand for counselor and program accountability; and 3) an emphasis on the importance of a seamless longitudinal development of students' skills in life/career decision making and planning. Many resources speak

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to the *importance* of developing such skills, but few offer specific assistance to counselors in designing and implementing successful programs to do so.

In regard to the second criterion, quality, there is no question that Norman Gysbers and Richard Lapan are eminently qualified to provide counselors with valuable insight and guidance in all three of these areas. Norm has long been a leader in the development of the comprehensive school guidance program model, the delivery of career guidance services, and the implementation of program evaluation activities. Rich has brought a fresh emphasis on students' individual career development through his conceptualization of an "Integrative/Contextual Model of Career Development" and a much needed emphasis on strengths-based career guidance.

Thus we have a relatively unattended need in school guidance and counseling programs addressed by two outstanding leaders in the guidance and counseling literature. The result is both an excellent publication and one that stands by itself in responding to a pressing need in comprehensive school guidance programs. We are assured that this book will be not only a compelling read, but a resource that counselors and counselor educators will return to again and again.

Do you like unbeatable bargains? This is one of them. We're confident that you will be constantly reassured that it serves your needs admirably well.

Garry R. Walz, Ph.D.

Jeanne C. Bleuer, Ph.D.

Counseling Outfitters, LLC

Preface

As workplaces become more global and characterized by unprecedented technological change and mobility, competition crosses international borders. Speed and innovation hold key places in competitive success; and current and future workers are learning that “business-as-usual” means integrating cultural, social, legal, political, governmental, and economic differences when creating and marketing all products and services. (Feller & Whichard, 2005, p. 23)

In this the first decade of the 21st century, Friedman (2007) declared that the “world is flat,” meaning that individuals and companies are collaborating and competing globally. Why is the world flat? According to Friedman, the world is flat because of ten forces at work including the fall of the Berlin wall, the introduction of Netscape, work flow software, open-sourcing, outsourcing, offshoring, supply-chaining, insourcing, in-forming, and finally, by something he called the steroids – digital processing.

As the power of these forces continues to unfold, they are causing substantial and long lasting changes in the occupational, industrial, and social structures of the United States and countries around the world, changes that are having a dramatic impact on work, the workplace, and the lives of people. Work and workplaces are becoming more global, characterized by technological change moving at near light speed. “More and more workers and the organizations in which they work are

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developing global identities” (Feller & Whichard, 2005, p. 23).

Social structures and social and personal values also continue to change and become more diverse. Emerging social groups are challenging established groups, asking for equality. People are on the move, too, from rural to urban areas and back again and from one region of the country to another in search of economic, social, and psychological security. Our nation’s population is becoming increasingly diverse.

All of these changes are creating substantial challenges for our children and adolescents. A rapidly changing work world and labor force in a global economy; violence in the home, school, and community; divorce; teenage suicide; substance abuse; and sexual experimentation are just a few examples. These challenges are not abstract aberrations. These challenges are real; and they are having and will have substantial impact on the career, personal/social, and academic development of our children and adolescents (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006).

Now, more than ever before, given these dramatic challenges, it is imperative that young people are prepared to make successful transitions within our educational system, to work, or to further education upon leaving our K-12 institutions, and be successful participants in the workforce. “Every student in America should graduate from high school ready for college, career, and life. Every child. No exceptions” (Gates, as cited in Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007). What knowledge, skills, and attitudes will be required of students for these purposes? The report of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007) titled “Tough Choices Tough Times” recommended the following:

Strong skills in English, mathematics, technology, and science, as well as literature, history, and the arts will be essential for many; beyond this, candidates will

have to be comfortable with ideas and abstractions, good at both analysis and synthesis, creative and innovative, self-disciplined and well organized, able to learn very quickly and work well as a member of a team and have the flexibility to adapt quickly to frequent changes in the labor market as the shifts in the economy become ever faster and more dramatic. (p. 8)

Knowledge, skills, and attitudes such as these do not appear suddenly on the day students are ready to leave school. On the contrary, they require substantial time and attention to develop, be assimilated, and used by students. They require time and attention beginning in elementary school. Their development requires strong academic and career and technical educational preparation as well as comprehensive guidance and counseling programs that feature career guidance and counseling and related academic and personal/social activities.

It is also important to remember that students are not empty vessels waiting to be filled when they come to school (Larson & Keiper, 2007). “Students come with preconceptions about how the world works which includes beliefs and prior knowledge acquired through various experiences” (Pellegrino, 2006, p. 3). Unfortunately, these preconceptions, particularly concerning the nature and structure of the world of education and work, are often incomplete, inaccurate, and stereotypical. As a result, many students begin learning about education and work in a state of educational and occupational illiteracy.

To work with students in this state, Pellegrino (2006) stressed the importance of first drawing from them what they currently know about topics such as the nature and structure of the worlds of education and work in order to build on that knowledge or to challenge it. Then, for students to develop competence in such topics, he stated they needed a foundation of

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factual knowledge organized within a conceptual framework that facilitates knowledge retrieval and application.

What Is This Book All About?

This book describes a conceptual framework that can provide all students K-12 with the needed factual knowledge they can retrieve and apply to successfully navigate transitions from grade to grade and to the work world or further education and then to work upon leaving school or back to education again. The conceptual framework that is used is a comprehensive guidance and counseling program (Gysbers & Henderson, 2006). A holistic strengths-based model of career development is featured that focuses career guidance and counseling and related academic and personal/social knowledge, skills, and attitudes delivered through comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. While academic knowledge and skills are critical today and will be tomorrow, they are not sufficient by themselves. Carnevale and Desrochers (2003) stated it this way:

To be sure, everyone will need a solid academic foundation. But at some point, students will need to put an occupational [career] point on their academic pencils. (p. 228)

Part I of the book provides you with historical and theoretical foundations to give you a clear understanding of the rich history of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in the schools. Part I also presents an integrative holistic strengths-based model of career development. Then, Part II describes comprehensive guidance and counseling programs to give you an understanding of the program framework in which career guidance and counseling is embedded and delivered.

Featured in Part II is strengths-based career development content that, when integrated into the design and application of career guidance and counseling activities, helps all students to become proactive, resilient, and adaptive adults. Also in Part II, a discussion is presented concerning the need for evidence-based activities as well as an overview of effective career guidance and counseling activities and a results-based developmental model that identifies those student outcomes likely to be impacted by such activities. In Part III, the processes used to design career guidance and counseling activities are presented along with a full discussion of the ways that career guidance and counseling activities are delivered and evaluated. This is followed by discussion of what must be done to advocate for career guidance and counseling activities within the framework of overall guidance and counseling programs.

Who Should Read This Book?

Career guidance and counseling in the schools has a long and rich history that dates back at least 100 years. During these years professional school counselors and teachers have provided students with a wide array of career guidance and counseling activities and services. These activities and services were not always provided to all students systematically and sequentially, however, because of a lack of a coherent K-12 organizational framework. Given the global economy of today and tomorrow, more must be done in our schools to engage and energize all students, helping them plan for and transition successfully into their futures. Professional school counselors, in particular, are obligated to do nothing less by their code of ethics, *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (American School Counselor Association, 2004).

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This book is designed for several groups of readers. The first group includes professional school counselors, teachers, administrators, and other educational personnel who have an interest in career guidance and counseling and a commitment to assisting all students K-12 acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to make successful transitions through school and from school to work or further education and then to work. This group will find this book to be an excellent review of the theory and practice of career guidance and counseling. But, it is more than just a review for practitioners. Its three carefully crafted and connected parts follow a logical progression from historical and theoretical foundations to an organizational framework and delivery systems for career guidance and counseling to strategies for evaluating and advocating for career guidance and counseling in the schools. Thus, this book can be a source of *renewal* for practitioners. It presents a holistic strengths-based model of career development fully integrated into a comprehensive guidance and counseling program framework that provides a seamless approach to career guidance and counseling in the schools.

A second group of readers who will find this book valuable includes school counselors in training as well as other educators in training because it provides them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to do career guidance and counseling. It offers the comprehensive guidance and counseling program framework for integrating and delivering career guidance and counseling naturally and comfortably. It also offers those in training with a perspective on the importance of career guidance and counseling for all students at all levels of K-12 education.

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About the Authors

Norman C. Gysbers

Norman C. Gysbers is a Curators' Professor in the Department of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He received his B.A. degree (1954) from Hope College and his M.A. (1959) and Ph.D. (1963) degrees from the University of Michigan. He is a licensed school counselor in Missouri. He was a teacher in the public schools, a school counselor and director of guidance at the University Laboratory School, University of Missouri, and he served in the U.S. Army. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Nevada-Reno and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. He was awarded a Franqui Professorship from the Universite Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium and lectured there in February, 1984. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and a Scholar in Residence at the University of British Columbia.

Gysbers' research and teaching interests are in career development, career counseling, and school guidance and counseling program development, management, and evaluation. He is author of 87 articles in 17 different professional journals, 33 chapters in published books, 15 monographs, and 17 books.

In 1978 he received the American Vocational Association's Division Merit Award and the Missouri Guidance Association's Outstanding Service Award. In 1981 he was awarded the National Vocational Guidance Association's

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National Merit Award and in 1983 the American Counseling Association's Distinguished Professional Service Award, and the Distinguished Professional Service Award from the Missouri Association of Counselor Education and Supervision. In 1984 he received the Franqui Foundation Medal, Universite Libre de Bruxelles. In 1987 he was awarded the United States Air Force Recruiting Service's Spirit of America Award and the Distinguished Service Award of the Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information. In 1989 he received the National Career Development Association's Eminent Career Award and in 2000 he received the National Career Development Association's President's Recognition Award. He was awarded the American School Counselor Association Post-Secondary School Counselor of the Year Award in 2001.

Gysbers was editor of the *Career Development Quarterly*, 1962-1970; President of the National Career Development Association, 1972-73; President of the American Counseling Association, 1977-78; and Vice President of the American Vocational Association, 1979-1982. He was the editor of *The Journal of Career Development* from 1978 to 2006. Since 1967 he has served as director of numerous national and state projects on career development and career counseling, and school guidance program development, implementation, and evaluation.

Richard T. Lapan

Richard T. Lapan is a professor in and chair of the Department of Student Development and Pupil Personnel Services at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. For the past 21 years, Dr. Lapan has taught Masters and Doctoral students in Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology. He has specialized in training Masters' level counselors to work in K16 school settings. In 1972, Dr. Lapan received his B.A. from St. Anselm's College (majoring in Philosophy). He earned his Masters' degree in 1974 from Duquesne University (Existential/ Phenomenological Counseling). In 1986, Dr. Lapan graduated with distinction from the University of Utah receiving a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology.

Dr. Lapan has had extensive experience providing counseling services (career, family, individual, group, and residential) to children, adolescents, and adults. From 1975 until 1980, Dr. Lapan worked as a Masters' level counselor providing counseling, educational, and residential treatment services for urban, suburban, and rural adolescents in Massachusetts. He has worked in several school settings and psychiatric hospitals. After completing his doctorate, Dr. Lapan provided career counseling services to adults who were in the process of making significant career and life changes.

Dr. Lapan's research applies a scientist-practitioner model to the project of providing effective counseling services to children, adolescents, and young adults. He has published numerous articles and presented these research findings at many national conferences. He was editor of *Professional School Counseling*, 2003-2006. Dr. Lapan has received several federal and state grants to fund his research.

In 2000, Dr. Lapan received the Distinguished Service Award from the Guidance Division of the Association for Career

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and Technical Education, and in 2006, he received the Counselor Educator of the Year Award from the American School Counselor Association. His research work focuses on developing empirically supported development and prevention programs. This professional emphasis has led to a commitment to improve the lives of young people in our society through the implementation of research enhanced, comprehensive school counseling programs.

Acknowledgements

Several years ago, Dr. Garry Walz asked us to consider writing a book that emphasized career development and career guidance within the framework of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. We were delighted to accept the invitation because we too wanted to show and stress the importance of a holistic view of career development as being a vital part of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. We are very pleased with our working relationship with Counseling Outfitters, LLC; and wish to express our thanks to Garry and Dr. Jeanne Bleuer for their encouragement and very able assistance throughout the writing process.

We also want to acknowledge and give special thanks to Linda Coats for her invaluable assistance in helping prepare this book for publication.

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