

Conference “Transitions, career learning and career management skills. Multi-disciplinary and critical perspectives”, October 19-20, 2017, Stockholm University

Paper presentation

## **Authors**

Ingela Bergmo-Prvulovic, Department of Education, Stockholm University, [ingela.bergmo.prvulovic@edu.su.se](mailto:ingela.bergmo.prvulovic@edu.su.se)

Åsa Sundelin, Department of Education, Stockholm University, [asa.sundelin@edu.su.se](mailto:asa.sundelin@edu.su.se)

Title

**Theorizing learning dimensions in career guidance: Deconstructing the career guidance practice from a “learning paradox”**

## **Information on how the contribution is related to the conference theme**

Career guidance practice has a crucial role in managing individuals career transitions in general and notably, to support career learning. To contribute to the development of knowledge regarding career support in transition, this papers interest is to develop a theoretical framework regarding learning dimensions in career guidance.

## **Key-words**

*career guidance, learning, career transition, professional identity*

## **General description on research questions, objectives and theoretical framework**

Career guidance is seen as crucial for supporting people in transitional times of change (cf. Jütte, Nicoll, & Salling Olesen, 2011; Watts, 2005; Watts & Fretwell, 2004; Watts & Sultana, 2004). Under the umbrella of lifelong learning strategies, career guidance has received increased attention as part of such strategies (Savickas, 2008; Savickas m fl, 2009; Watts & Sultana, 2004). Nevertheless, results from two different studies discloses a paradox regarding learning dimensions in career counselling. Bergmo-Prvulovics (2015) study shows that Swedish guidance counsellors neither describe themselves or their professional practice in

#### Paper presentation

educational or pedagogical terms. At the same time, Sundelins (2015) study of career conversations with young migrants reveal that the educational function is essential in the conversations and that guidance counsellors clearly are supporting and managing learning processes.

The paradox discloses that the professional language of guidance counsellors seems to be insufficient in terms of learning dimensions in career guidance practice. Swedish guidance counsellors do not express their professional identity in terms of being educative with a clear language for learning within their professional practice.

Developing a theoretical framework and professional language for learning dimensions in counselling processes is an urgent issue. Counsellors limited language for learning dimensions in career counselling risks to limit both their opportunities to pay attention to when learning takes place and to support learning, and thus to support clients career transitions.

#### **Methods/methodology**

The intention with this paper is to develop a theoretical framework of learning dimensions in the professional practice of career counselling. To start with, we bring together results from the two different studies (Bergmo-Prvulovic, 2015; Sundelin, 2015) that together reveal a paradox between how counsellors conceive their profession and the practice with respect to learning. As mentioned, guidance counsellors do not clearly identify their professional practice in educational terms at the same time as the educative function seems to be essential. Sundelin (2015) clearly identified that one of the counsellors' key function in conversations is that of being educative in education systems, career opportunities and societal structure of career possibilities among all, supporting a local know-how (Zikic, Bonache, & Cerdin, 2010).

Career counselling with migrants seem to both highlight and contribute to a deeper understanding of learning dimensions in counselling. We consider this educative function in

#### Paper presentation

alignment with Illeris (2015) ideas about learning and mean that, discussing the results from Sundelins study in relation to Illeris could provide a language for learning dimensions in career guidance.

Initially, Illeris (2015) defines learning as any process that leads to a lasting change of a persons' capacity. Furthermore, he emphasizes that in such definition a range of processes are included, that often are conceptualized with other words, such as *socialization*, *qualification*, *competence development*, and *therapy* (Illeris, 2015, p. 18). These processes are all considered as specific types of learning processes, or as specific perspective on learning. Given the triangular model of learning developed by Illeris, we clearly see how guidance counsellors are involved in *the social interaction process* when practicing and using dialogue with the clients in practice, as highlighted in Sundelin (2015). It is also clear, that the clients undergo *the individual assimilation process*. The informative function (cf. Sundelin, 2015) occurs in the *content dimension*. However, if the client is to assimilate the content, it is necessary for the client to be motivated. Guidance counsellors are involved also in the *driving force dimension* when practicing dialogue with their clients in the *interaction dimension* (cf. Illeris, 2015, p. 19).

#### **Expected outcomes/results**

We suggest that this holistic approach on learning, formulated by Illeris, is sufficient to capture the various learning elements that occur in career guidance practice. Discussing the “learning paradox” in relation to Illeris contributes thus to development of the professional language concerning learning dimensions in career guidance. Bergmo-Prvulovic (Manuscript) results implies that counsellors have an implicit understanding of their work as an educating practice but may not be utilized as they should be based upon the needs of their clients. We suggest that an identification as being enhancers for peoples' various learning processes and counselling being an educational practice also would contribute to strengthen the guidance profession.

Conference "Transitions, career learning and career management skills. Multi-disciplinary and critical perspectives", October 19-20, 2017, Stockholm University

Paper presentation

Peavy & Li (2003) mean that conventional guidance methods often are directly transferred into intercultural encounters but that "standard guidance" needs to be adapted for an intercultural context. Guidance and its assumptions need to be examined and deconstructed to meet the needs of different groups, they mean, which is about both critically reviewing and developing guidance practice and its assumptions. The question of how counselors can support individuals career learning in guidance is central regardless of target group and, of particular importance in times of what Vertovec (2007) describes as super-diversity. Career guidance with migrants sheds light on general issues, thus becoming an important source of knowledge for the development of career guidance. With Peavy & Lis (2003) formulations, career guidance needs to be deconstructed in terms of learning to be adapted to different groups needs and situation.

### **Intent of publication**

International Journal

Paper presentation

## References

- Bergmo-Prvulovic, I. (2015). *Social Representations of Career and Career Guidance in the Changing World of Working Life*: School of Education and Communication, Jönköping University.
- Bergmo-Prvulovic, I. (Manuscript). The Uneasy Relationship to Career: Guidance Counsellors' Social Representations of their Mission and of Career therein.
- Illeris, K. (2015). *Lärande*: Studentlitteratur.
- Jütte, W., Nicoll, K., & Salling Olesen, H. (2011). Editorial: Professionalisation - the struggle within. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults - RELA*, 2(1), 7-20.
- Peavy, R. V., & Li, H. Z. (2003). Social and cultural context of intercultural counselling. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 37(3), 186.
- Savickas, M. L. (2008). Helping people choose jobs: A history of the guidance profession. In J. A. Athanasou & R. Van Esbroeck (Eds.), *International handbook of career guidance* (pp. 97-113). Dordrecht: Springer Science + Business Media.
- Savickas, M. L., Nota, L., Rossier, J., Dauwalder, J.-P., Duarte, M. E., Guichard, J., . . . van Vianen, A. E. M. (2009). Life-designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75, 239-250.
- Sundelin, Å. (2015). *Att skapa framtid. En analys av interaktionen i studie- och yrkesvägledande samtal med unga i migration*. [Shaping a future : An analysis of interaction in career counselling conversations with young migrants]Stockholm.
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 30(6), 1024-1054.
- Watts, A. G. (2005). Career guidance: An international review. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 54, 66-76.
- Watts, A. G., & Fretwell, D. H. (2004). *Public policies for career development*. (Vol. 1 of 1). Washington. D.C.: World Bank.
- Watts, A. G., & Sultana, R. G. (2004). Career Guidance Policies in 37 Countries: Contrasts and Common Themes. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 4, 105-122.

Conference “Transitions, career learning and career management skills. Multi-disciplinary and critical perspectives”, October 19-20, 2017, Stockholm University

Paper presentation

Zikic, J., Bonache, J., & Cerdin, J. L. (2010). Crossing national boundaries: A typology of qualified immigrants' career orientations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(5), 667-686.