

Foreword

Career Education: Inseparable and Equal

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The National Vocational Guidance Association published several books about its history, and one of them, *Social Reform and the Origins of Vocational Guidance* (Stephens, 1970), had a significant impact on me. After reading it, I realized that the career services field was part of a much larger national progressive movement at the beginning of the 20th century in the United States. That movement, endorsed by almost every segment of society, included a major reform of public education. This reform was intended to make education more relevant to the work of an expanding urban, industrial nation and the emerging career life of individuals. I learned about the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education, which gave rise in 1926 to the American Vocational Association (now the Association for Career and Technical Education) and the Vocational Guidance Movement, which gave rise in 1913 to the National Vocational Guidance Association (now the National Career Development Association). I learned that career development was more than counseling, more than working with individuals; it was part of a “movement.”

Fast-forward a half-century to the 1970s and 1980s, and this book tells about another watershed period in career development and education, the Career Education Movement. Career and Education are inexorably intertwined in this book, which is why I have used the subtitle “inseparable and equal” in describing the Career Education Movement.

These authors provide a very personal, inside story about this latest national career-related educational reform movement. Some of you reading this were active participants in those efforts, but others were doing other things at that time. Those who were involved will say either, “I remember that” or, “I don’t remember it quite that way.” That is the nature of personal stories about living, ongoing history—some of your recollections will be different from those of these authors. Those of you who were not active participants in career education may learn, much like I did 30 years ago in reading Stephen’s (1970) book, about this important watershed period in our field.

Ken Hoyt has devoted his life and career to promoting career development in schools and other educational settings. Armed with a BS degree from the University of Maryland in 1948, an MA degree from George Washington University in 1950, and a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1954, he has focused on making sure that all students, especially those in technical and trade fields, experience the benefits of career guidance. This book tells the story of how Dr. Hoyt ended up leaving the calm faculty life of a professor at

the University of Maryland to enter the hectic life of leading a high profile national educational program in the federal government.

Irony and paradox sometimes emerge as an important source of learning from our study of history. I found it especially interesting to learn how little “power” Dr. Hoyt had to mandate career education even though he was a director in the U.S. Department of Education. At the same time, he used his “power” to empower others and to influence social and educational change in more subtle ways. Career education would seem to be the most practical, uncontroversial approach to educational reform, but it is not prominent now in U.S. public education. Indeed, other nations around the world have embraced career education while the U.S. seems to be ambivalent about it. Perhaps a final irony has to do with the way career education ended as a federal program. On the day Dr. Hoyt was notified to close the Office of Career Education, he also received a letter from Terrence Bell (1981), the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, stating his “personal respect and affection for you and my conviction that this Department and Nation owe you and career education a great debt.” The Career Education Movement is rich in irony.

Personally, I am aware of no one else in the career guidance field who has occupied such a pivotal position in public policy affecting our work in career guidance and education. After the Office of Career Education was closed in 1982, Dr. Hoyt found his way back to academe at Kansas State University in 1984, where he is now a University Distinguished Professor Emeritus.

This book explains that career education has not only been a federal government effort but also a national effort. Dr. Hoyt has invited Judith Stein, Susan Katzman, Cynthia Gahris, and Patricia Nellor Wickwire to share stories about their work in the Career Education Movement. Each of their stories is told in the author’s own words, but one shared element among them is the number of times the phrase “for the good of the students” appears. While career education has been shaped to meet the desires of many diverse groups (e.g., business people, teachers, civic groups, unions, local school districts, parents), just like the earlier Vocational Guidance Movement, it is students (along with their careers) that have ultimately provided the energy for this movement.

This book is also about developing and sustaining successful career programs, an especially important topic for both new and established professionals in the career field. These authors provide details about how resourcefulness, courage, leadership, innovation, and persistence enabled them to promote and implement career education in a sometimes ambivalent or even hostile environment. Successful program development requires more than just a good idea. This book illustrates how commitment, pragmatism, and ingenuity contribute to that process. Is there something else that career counselors can learn from this book about the development of comprehensive career programs? Perhaps John Holland’s (1997) RIASEC theory can provide us with some clues. The code for counselor is SAE, while the code for project director is ESI, department manager is ESA, training and education manager

is EIS, grant coordinator is SEI, and program manager is EIR. Given these occupational titles and codes, I estimate the summary code for “program developer” is EIS. For career counselors to become successful program developers and managers, it appears that they must draw heavily upon their skills and interests in the enterprising and investigative areas. Perhaps those very skills and interests contributed to these authors becoming such successful career educators.

I believe that most readers of this book will find it stimulating, as I did. It made me think about how the Career Education Movement was in some ways an attempt to fix what the earlier Vocational Guidance Movement failed to accomplish fully. It made me wonder why career choice and development theory was not more prominent as a conceptual basis for the movement. It made me wonder if career counselors and related professional associations had done all they might have to support the movement. It made me wonder why more independent research was not conducted on the impact of career education. It made me wish that a career education model or models for postsecondary education had been developed. Indeed, it made me realize that career education is, and was not, antithetical to college and university education. And it made me wonder if in our current polarized political and social climate we could ever get the kind of broad-based public consensus needed to restart another Career Education Movement.

In sum, this book is important for several reasons. First, it sustains a promise that Dr. Hoyt made to Dr. Sidney Marland, the “father of career education,” shortly before his death about continuing to promote career education. Second, this is a personal historical account by Dr. Hoyt and his coauthors of a unique, special time in the history of the career development and education fields. Third, counselor educators and others preparing educational leaders will find this book helpful in stimulating class discussions about the history of our fields, and how this history can help us critically examine our options for the future. Fourth, it provides lessons from the past for those who might lead the next effort to promote career preparation in education, communities, and organizations. Finally, those policy makers in government, associations, and elsewhere will find this book an inspirational and practical resource in renewed efforts to help learners in varied settings prepare for work and career. We are grateful that Dr. Hoyt and his coauthors have shared their stories for this evolving future.

References

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