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**Seminar of the UNESCO Chair of Lifelong Guidance  
and Counselling, Institute of Pedagogy, University  
of Wrocław, Wrocław 3-4 June, 2014**

The UNESCO Chair of Lifelong Guidance and Counselling invited career counselling scholars, vocational counsellors, teachers and students to take part in lectures and workshops given by Professor Mark Savickas and Professor Jean Guichard on 3-4 June, 2014. Prof. Mark Savickas from Northeastern Ohio Medical University is a renowned career counselling expert, the founder of career-designing theory and the Head of the Life-Design International Research Group. Prof. Jean Guichard is a professor of psychology, the founder of the “self-constructing individual” theory, a long-time associate of INETOP in Paris and, since 2013, the Head of the UNESCO Chair of Lifelong Guidance and Counselling at the University of Wrocław. Thanks to the efforts of Dr Violetta Drabik-Podgórna and Dr Marek Podgórnny, the visitors’ stay was partly funded by the Municipality of Wrocław under the Visiting Professors Programme of Scientiae Wratislavienses. The two-day cycle of meetings held at the University of Wrocław’s Institute of Pedagogy began with a panel discussion involving researchers from the University of Wrocław and invited scholars. The lecture themes were related to “Careers in liquid modernity.”

In his lecture on “Career-Designing in Liquid Modernity: Actors, Agents, Authors,” Mark Savickas focused on issues surrounding the individualisation of people’s life-courses and on the exceptionally rapid pace of changes in the modern world’s occupational and employment structures. Prof. Savickas emphasised that, with the material conditions continually evolving and the social relations constantly changing, life-long career planning is fraught with difficulty, and the events that mark the transition into adulthood are frequently put off as a response to uncertainty and risk. This is why engagement in the shaping of one’s own life is becoming an immanent property of each individual and an essential life skill in modern society. Prof. Savickas noted that today people are expected to manage their careers, constructing the best possible future for themselves. In his view, this is made possible through the continual reconstruction of identity. By recommending interventions

in the career-designing process, Prof. Savickas reminds us that the objective of vocational counselling is to support the client in career- and life-designing. Assisted by the counsellor, the individual should acquire “an internal compass facilitating navigation during the transition.” Prof. Savickas stressed the important role the counsellors play aiding their clients in autobiographical reflection in order to discover associations between the biographical past and the future.

Jean Guichard illuminated the potential for creative counselling intervention in his lecture titled “Career constructing dialogues.” He showed in what ways deeply reflexive “dialogues” leading to the self-construction of life could actually help develop significant future perspectives and make the present life meaningful. As explained by Prof. Guichard, each sphere of life has its own “subjective identity form” (SIF), and the counselee’s task is to become aware of how each individualised sphere of identity relates to other ones, jointly forming a dynamic system. In the course of the dialogic relations which make up our daily life, we conduct dialogues with particular individuals, yet these dialogues follow pre-defined patterns. However, as Prof. Guichard insisted, when engaging in dialogue with a counsellor we do not fall back on a pre-existing framework; this allows us to abandon the “well-worn paths” of everyday dialogues, submit our day-to-day experiences to reflection and create a new, experimental, preliminary self. In Professor Guichard’s view, this self can then transform into a genuine, functioning self, yet the individual (the client, the counselee) must desire this and see him/herself in this “I.” Counselling interventions organised in this manner demonstrate that “dialogues for self-construction” contribute to the development of reflection on oneself and on one’s career.

The seminar also featured presentations by Polish scholars. Alicja Kargulowa, Professor at the University of Lower Silesia, gave a talk on counselling in the era of neo-liberalism, in which she attended to the changing understanding of the individual’s place in social life across various periods and to the difficulties associated with studying counselling in postmodern discourse. Counselling research should address the aforementioned changes in society, in the tasks of counsellors and in the needs of the counselees. Prof. Kargulowa elucidated the key neo-liberal notions of public choice, human capital, social transactions and transaction costs and their influence on actual realities. She stressed that the way in which they are perceived and construed impacts practice and is relevant not only to the organisation of counselling but also to its sense and meaning. Discussing the realities of the neo-liberal world and means of help-provision, Prof. Kargulowa distinguished three types of counselling offers: rehabilitative counselling (why live?), existential counselling (how to live?) and career counselling (what to be?), emphasising that the counsellor’s job is to help clients in making conscious decisions and achieving their own ambitions. Prof. Kargulowa left her audience with a question posed towards the end of her lecture: In the era of neo-liberalism, should counselling promote individualism or, rather, support communal pursuits?

Magdalena Piorunek from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań presented the results of her research on careers underpinned by Charlotte Büchler's theory. Professor Piorunek adopted an interpretive paradigm to study the accumulation of previous life experience. In her research sample, composed of individuals between 40 and 55 years of age, she identified three career types/patterns characteristic of middle age. The "linear career" is characterised by continuance. In the "sequential career," action is motivated by the drive to self-realisation through pursuits corresponding to expectations. The "decentralised (mosaic-like) career" is constructed by individuals who have a high tolerance for change, are active in many different fields and seize the chances they notice. In describing a new paradigm of career in counselling studies, Prof. Piorunek also addressed career dilemmas, highlighting the problems experienced by the groups which had become victims of the political and economic changes.

The panel discussion (and the first day of the seminar) was rounded off with a Q&A session involving the audience.

On the second day, Mark Savickas gave a lecture on "Methods and tools in career-design counselling." Discussing the methods and instruments applied in career counselling, Prof. Savickas dwelled on the differences between guidance, counselling and coaching. Pointing primarily to the differences in approaching the client's problem, he showed that vocational guidance was result-oriented and attempted to find a solution to the problem of "how to fit self to work, and abilities to requirements?" Career counselling, on the other hand, aims at developing personality and seeks to answer the question "How can the individual fit work into his/her life?" Prof. Savickas treats career as a life story which takes us into the past and career counselling as assistance in implementing one's "designs for oneself" in the creation of one's own story. He views indecisiveness about career as justified hesitation which precedes transformation. By using important patterns from the past and considering potential versions of him/herself, the individual can rise up to challenges and experience "active victories" both over and for him/herself. Prof. Savickas emphasised that the career counsellor should provide support and be "useful." The counsellor is there to help individuals and society and to accompany and assist people in life-designing through making them realise problems and solutions. He locates the meaning of counselling in helping people actively manage the negative events, such as suffering, which they experience. The challenge of counselling, thus, is to assist the individual and society in adapting to the transitions of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century work world.

The lecture was followed by a workshop in which Prof. Savickas introduced the participants to the methods he applies in his career construction counselling practice. The participants had an exceptional opportunity to experience first-hand Prof. Savickas's counselling session. He showed the manner in which he conducted interviews based on the "Career Style Interview," a tool he had developed himself, and by the same token lifted the curtain on his work. The workshop enabled

the participants to observe Prof. Savickas in his professional practical activity and to understand the manner in which the instrument he had created should be applied.

Participation in the two days of meetings conducted by Prof. Savickas, Prof. Guichard and the Polish professors was an opportunity for career counsellors, vocational advisors, teachers and students to listen to important lectures as well as to pose meaningful questions. The participants could make comparisons, acquire knowledge and expand their skill sets. A UNESCO Chair certificate was awarded to all those who participated in the seminar.

*Translated from Polish by Agnieszka Dragon*