

Advancing the Career Counseling Profession: Objectives and Strategies for the Next Decade

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This article discusses the 9 analyses of the career counseling profession's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that appear in this September 2003 special issue of *The Career Development Quarterly*. The author identifies points of convergence, proposes a mission statement, and summarizes what career counselors seem intent on doing in the coming years. The analysts recommended that the career counseling profession concentrate on 8 objectives: advancing theory that is more holistic, contextual, and multicultural; using accumulated research more effectively; focusing new research on the career counseling process; exploiting technology to construct new tools; ameliorating career counseling training; expanding the National Career Development Association's role; increasing advocacy about public policy; and fostering the international growth of the profession.

Each author in this special issue on career counseling in the next decade has presented a realistic and erudite appraisal of the profession's current strengths and weaknesses as well as its future opportunities and threats. Although conducted from differing perspectives, the analyses converge on reaffirming career counseling's historic mission of helping individuals adapt to societal expectations and personal transitions in their work lives. The rapid changes that are now occurring in the organization of work and the arrangement of occupations, as well as the increasing globalization of the workforce, remind many career counselors of the cultural context that led to the formation of the counseling profession in 1908 and, 5 years later, to the formation of its professional organization, now called the National Career Development Association (NCDA). As Virginia Woolf (as cited in *Signal*, 1987) astutely observed "on or about December 1910, human nature changed" (p. 7). In the first decade of the twentieth century, the agricultural economy was overcome by the forces of industrialization, urbanization, commercialization, and immigration. One response to the ills exacerbated by city life was the Progressive vision of an industrial society redeemed by enlightened science. As part of this democratic impulse, social reformers such as Parsons (1909) scientized the benevolent social work of the late nineteenth century, when volunteers used evangelical religion to build character and in so doing originated modern vocational guidance, in which professionals use *true reasoning* to match personalities to occupations.

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