

VOCATIONAL COUNSELING FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Edited by

CHRISANN SCHIRO-GEIST, PH.D.

*Associate Professor and
Director of Graduate Studies
Division of Rehabilitation Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

The goal of this book is to clarify and enhance vocational issues for the about-to-become vocational counselor, rehabilitation specialist and the practicing counselor who will primarily be providing vocational counseling and placement with nontraditional clients. Special populations focused on include displaced workers, veterans, women in the competitive job market, older workers and disabled workers. Each chapter concludes with review questions and references and several client case histories are presented in chapter five. Rounding out this book's "everything you always wanted and needed to know" approach are chapters on the psychology of work and theories of vocational development.

CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER
Springfield • Illinois • U.S.A.

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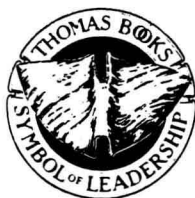
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Springfield • Illinois • U.S.A.

Published and Distributed Throughout the World by

CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER

2600 South First Street

Springfield, Illinois 62794-9265

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ISBN 0-398-05650-1

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 89-37097

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Printed in the United States of America

SC-R-3

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Vocational counseling for special populations / edited by Chrisann
Schiro-Geist.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0-398-05650-1

1. Vocational guidance. 2. Vocational guidance for the
handicapped—Case studies. I. Geist, Chrisann Schiro.

HF5381.V535 1990

362.4'0484—dc20

89-37097

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ABOUT THE EDITOR

Chrisann Schiro-Geist received her Ph.D. from Northwestern University in Counseling Psychology in 1974. She became a Rehabilitation Counselor Educator at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in 1975 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 1981. She was Director of the Rehabilitation Programs at IIT from 1981 to 1987. In August of 1987, Dr. Schiro-Geist became Coordinator of the Rehabilitation Degree Programs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is currently the Director of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Schiro-Geist has been the recipient of several grants from the Rehabilitation Services Administration and other sources totaling over \$725,000. She has developed a local and national reputation as a leader in the field, holding such offices as President of the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE), which is the national accrediting body in rehabilitation education from 1983 to 1985, President of the Illinois Rehabilitation Counseling Association (1979) and the Great Lakes Regional Rehabilitation Counseling Association (1982). She is currently Editor-in-Chief of the journal, *Rehabilitation Education*, which is sponsored by the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) and published by Pergamon Press. Dr. Schiro-Geist was recently named *Rehabilitation Educator of the Year for 1987* by NCRE. She is author of one book and over twenty refereed journal articles.

Before her position in rehabilitation education she was Director of Career Planning and Placement at Mundelein College in Chicago. She has co-authored the well-received text, *A Placement Handbook for Counseling Disabled Persons* (Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1982). This text is currently under contract for its Second Edition, due to be published in 1990. She received the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association's *National Citation* for her contributions to the field of Rehabilitation Counseling in 1982 with a special commendation for the impact of this placement text on the field.

Dr. Schiro-Geist is the recipient of a 1989-90 Mary E. Switzer Research Fellowship awarded by the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

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PREFACE

This is a book which is not meant to replace any existing texts, but rather to enhance and clarify vocational issues for the about-to-become vocational counselor or rehabilitation specialist or for the practicing counselor who will be doing a lot of vocational counseling and placement with nontraditional clients.

Who are nontraditional clients? Those special populations on which we will focus include: displaced workers, veterans, women in the competitive job market, older workers, and persons who are disabled. Disadvantaged workers are not attended to as a specific population, but the obvious problems inherent in being disadvantaged are attended to relevant to other vocational concerns.

The book was created as a response to a seminar taught at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) within the Rehabilitation Psychology Program of the Psychology Department. The doctoral level seminar focused on an advanced perspective on vocational issues. The topical areas included vocational counseling, evaluation, and placement. These have all become chapters in the following text.

In addition, chapters have been added on the psychology of work and theories of vocational development to round out an “everything you always wanted, and needed, to know” approach in the text. The book could stand as a mini-review of vocational counseling or it could be used as a supplement to a major text in a course in vocational counseling, vocational evaluation, or job placement, or it could be used as a primary text for a doctoral level course in vocational psychology or vocational counseling.

Each chapter ends with review questions and references. As additional case discussion material, five case histories of clients with special needs are presented at the end of Chapter 5. The chapter on Job Placement takes the theoretical, counseling and assessment information and translates it into the ultimate focus of all vocational issues—helping one’s client to obtain a job in the competitive market. The concluding chapter

on Supported Employment (Chapter 7) is one which was added after the original work was designed, but it is an important one for counselors in the 1990s. Supported Employment will often be the vocational outcome for special populations, especially for individuals with severe disabilities. The time has come that all potential vocational counselors should know about concepts of supported work and supported employment.

The editor would like to formally acknowledge the help and assistance of Mr. Emer Broadbent and Mrs. Tammy Nichols of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) for making what started out as an IIT project a successful product at the UIUC.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Chapter</i>	
1. Psychology of Work— <i>Robert Donohue</i>	3
2. Theoretical Perspectives— <i>M. Gloria Gimenes</i>	19
3. Special populations— <i>Renee Magiera-Planey</i>	45
4. Vocational Assessment— <i>Gary Szymula</i>	65
5. Vocational Counseling— <i>Kathleen Sexton-Radek</i>	99
6. Job Placement— <i>Chrisann Schiro-Geist</i>	119
7. Supported Employment: A Viable Option for Persons with Severe Disabilities— <i>Chow Lam</i>	139
Index	149

**VOCATIONAL COUNSELING
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Chapter 1

PSYCHOLOGY OF WORK

ROBERT DONOHUE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the world of work and introduces to the reader some of the basic principles and practices of that world. While this book primarily attends to issues for a particular subset of individuals in the work force, a basic introduction to the world of work will be helpful since all potential clients must be able to fit into the larger work environment. Before one attempts to provide vocational counseling to a client, regardless of the particular needs of that person, the counselor must be knowledgeable of the rules that govern the final goal of the rehabilitation process, the work place. Such an appreciation of the fundamentals of the world of work will help to maximize the clients chances of being hired and ultimately being satisfied and successful with his/her final job placement. Vocational counseling is limited by the counselor and client's familiarity with the factors that influence potential employment success.

The author examines the phenomenon of work from three perspectives: sociological, organizational, and individual. Admittedly this is an arbitrary approach to the topic, and other views may be equally available and acceptable. However, it seems that this format permits a useful frame of reference since all three perspectives are essential and interact in a complex fashion to result in the phenomenon which we call work. Certainly these perspectives overlap and influence each other in many ways. It is not the author's intention to exhaustively examine these perspectives individually, nor will the complex interactions be fully addressed. The goal is to suggest this model as one which could aid the counselor in his or her task of placing a particular client into an employment situation. By using this frame of reference, the counselor may be better able to match the client with the job.

WORK

It may seem simplistic to offer a definition of work because most people have already developed some notion of its meaning. One can hardly imagine that any adult in this culture does not have some concept of the meaning of work based upon his or her own experience or by seeing others who are engaged in some type of employment. While we may all have our own individual concept of the meaning of work, these concepts are colored by personal experiences which limit us in developing a more universally accepted definition. Often people equate work with employment and therefore their definition is bounded to a particular set of experiences. One example of such a culturally bounded definition is to equate work with paid employment. This definition of work excludes homemakers and those who work as volunteers; for in both cases, the individual receives no pay for his or her services. Our treatment of work will include such endeavors, regardless of the economic rewards involved.

Developing a Definition of Work

One popular dictionary devotes over seventy lines to a comprehensive definition of work, both as a noun and as a verb. The initial definition states that work is "physical or mental effort or activity directed toward the production or accomplishment of something" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1976). Work has also been defined as "an activity that produces something of value for other people" (Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare 1973). This author argues that a full and adequate definition of work must go beyond a simple statement of employment; it must also include the social, organizational, and individual factors which together constitute a complete treatment of the phenomenon. As such, our understanding of work extends beyond this workplace, and includes the social matrix within which work is said to exist.

In a world that is constantly facing complex problems such as war, disease, and economic upheaval, it may seem that an extensive treatment of work to be an academic extravagance. One is tempted to simply say that people work in order to provide themselves and their families with the necessities of life. It could also be assumed that the way one goes about selecting a job, and continuing work is, to a great extent, a chance event and that little can be gained by studying something that is so

individualistic and subject to chance and personal circumstances. However, this is not the case, for one can learn a great deal about himself and the society in which he lives by studying the seemingly obvious. Work is of vital importance to us simply because it is so universally experienced and constitutes a major part of our lives as individuals as well as our culture.

Sociological Perspectives

History of Work

The ancient Greeks felt that work was inherently subhuman, a curse to be avoided by all worthwhile men. Slaves became degraded because they engaged in work and an early definition of a slave was one who performed labor. Thus, to work was to be a slave in the classical era in Greece (Arendt, 1958). Slaves, serfs, and noncitizens performed all the work done in the city-states, leaving the citizens of Greece the free time to pursue the arts, a study of philosophy, and other leisurely endeavors (Neff, 1968).

Labor and work became distinguished by the use of two terms, *laborens* for the work of animals and *homo faber* for the work of man. The monotonous, dirty and difficult tasks necessary for the maintenance of life were considered *animal laborens* and relegated to be done by slaves. *Homo faber* referred to the skillful endeavors of a newly developing class of people, the craftsmen and artisans (Neff, 1968). This ancient distinction between labor and craft greatly influenced a social class structure and may well have been the forerunner of blue collar/white collar or worker/professional duality.

The value of work began to emerge during the rise of Christianity in Europe as work became a vehicle for achieving both worldly power and eternal salvation. Benedictine monks were required to perform manual as well as intellectual and spiritual labors as a part of their religious life: in the Rule of St. Benedict, he urged his followers to "labor and Pray" (Neff, 1968). Work was valued as a means of disciplining the soul and enhancing one's position in the eyes of God.

The Protestant Work Ethic

The culmination of this developmental process of the value and importance of work was the emergence of the Protestant Work Ethic, which

stressed that success came through hard work, frugality, and perseverance (Cherrington, 1980). This work ethic came to the United States with the original settlers from Europe who sought freedom and opportunity in a foreign land. As factories grew during the early years of the industrial revolution, the numbers of factory workers increased dramatically while working conditions deteriorated. This resulted in a shift in the work ethic, and the righteousness and moral value of work were replaced by a dehumanizing slave-like existence. Workers felt trapped by a wage system that removed any sense of freedom and dignity and replaced it with a rigid indebtedness to the company and a dependence for survival based upon piecework wages (Cherrington, 1980).

Prior to the industrial revolution, craftsmen and artisans could feel a sense of pride and personal accomplishment from their efforts. However, the new factories demanded that man and machine perform in such a manner that any sense of individuality was lost and the worker became merely an extension of, and a easily replaceable part of a machine. Long days in unhealthy working conditions characterized the plight of workers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tycoons and entrepreneurs rose to power and wealth on the back of the working man. For a large part of the society, working returned to a form that was not unlike that which had been the basis of the Greek city-state. Few members of the society had the time or energy to devote themselves to leisure pursuits. This luxury was to be enjoyed by a select few.

Role Expectations

From our brief treatment of the historical development of work, it is evident that there is an essential interaction between labor and society. The worker roles are regulated by norms established in any culture. The relationship between the role of the worker and the social context in which work is performed is known as occupational colleagueship (Gross, 1958). This colleagueship binds the workers together to create a sense of *esprit de corps*. It is this sense of belonging and identification with a common purpose that is vital to the identity of the worker (Gross, 1958). Social status and role identity became as valuable to the individual as the economic rewards gained through employment. This emphasis of role identity through work has been studied and written about for almost a hundred years. One can even see the importance of being a worker in the psychoanalytic literature, for Freud had suggested that the two most

important tasks facing man were success in work and love (Neff, 1968). This relationship between work role and identity has a social as well as an individual significance. We are reminded that the initial definitions of work offered in this chapter emphasized the social characteristic of work, that is that work is performed for the good of another; here we can see the vital and essential interaction between the work role and the society. One can only interpret such an identity within the context of some society.

As counselors, part of our task is to facilitate our clients' efforts in coming to and succeeding in the work world. In order to achieve our goals, we must see that the social factors that influence the work place have significance to the person who seeks our help because the work place is part of the greater society and to a great extent, is governed by the norms of that society.

Technological Revolutions and Changes in Work

The recent technological advances in many industries has created a good deal of concern among workers. Research with workers in the chemical industry has found that highly skilled employees are concerned with maintaining a greater amount of control over their jobs, and value a variety of work assignments. These workers identify learning new skills as a positive value of their jobs and are willing to accept additional job duties which improve their work performance (Davis and Werling, 1960). The researchers noted that a critical factor in the results of their study was the long-standing relationship between the unions and the management that had been based on mutual trust and respect (Davis, 1976).

While workers may be concerned with technological changes and advancement that effect production, they do not always resist these changes outright. Factors which facilitate such changes include their current level of skill and an organizational structure that permits greater involvement by the worker in the quality of work life through increased ability to regulate and control their own work. The job must allow the individual to see his or her potential to learn and grow within the job. Self-actualization or personal growth appear to be related to the development of motivation and commitment to the job since this meets the intrinsic needs of the employee. Work which demands routine and monotonous tasks and very limited control of the worker tends to decrease the level of satisfaction and motivation.

Organizational Perspectives

It is not within the scope of this chapter to provide an extensive treatment of the dynamics that govern the management of an organization. Such a topic would be better addressed in an introductory text in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. The author will address only a few of the aspects of organizational management as they apply to vocational counseling. This section will focus on working conditions and how they can be changed to improve worker satisfaction. While there are several innovations that could be investigated, this unit will focus on job design.

Job Design

The successful management of any organization depends, in large part, on the best fit between worker and the workplace. This phenomenon has been commonly called the person-environment fit and job design is often utilized as a way to achieve this congruence. Prior to modern day job design, the employer structured the job as simply and standardized as possible in order to maximize production. The basic assumption is that productivity is greatest if a worker performs a limited number of discrete tasks repeatedly and the final product is the result of a series of tasks by the workers in strict and rigid fashion. Training for each worker is limited because the individual is only accountable for a few specific tasks, however, this also limits the amount of influence that any one individual has upon the finished product.

This concept of rigid standardization creates a monotony on the job for the worker is forced to repeat a few steps throughout the entire workday. There are problems which may arise when workers become bored with their tasks. Boredom often leads to a feeling of dissatisfaction and eventually may result in inappropriate work behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism, turnover, and stress (Mulchinsky, 1983). While the goal of work simplification was to increase productivity and reduce production expenses, the economic gains of increased efficiency were often offset by the behavioral reactions of unhappy, bored workers. Job designs were introduced by industrial psychologists to improve the working conditions by making work more meaningful and rewarding.

Job Enrichment and Job Enlargement

Job enrichment and job enlargement became two ways of improving working conditions in situations where the work tasks had been highly