ASSESSING INTERESTS:
HARRY DEXTER KITSON’S INFLUENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND
COLLEGE CAREER ADVISING

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The purpose of this dissertation was to understand the influence of Dr. Harry Dexter Kitson on the fields of vocational psychology, vocational guidance and subsequently on college career advising. As an early practitioner of vocational guidance, Dr. Kitson held the view that individuals could conduct self analysis of their interests using occupational information and ‘trying out’ to explore and chose vocations. During the same time, other prominent vocational psychologists were developing vocational tests to assess interests and make vocational choice more scientific. These contrasting views were based on two different understandings of the self. Kitson’s interpretation of self was based on the teaching of James Rowland Angell, a student of Dewey, who believed that the self was not static but changed with experience while those who advocated vocational testing held a scientific view of self as an object with traits that could be tested and identified.

Analysis of texts related to these differing paradigms was conducted in order to understand their roots. By reading college career websites in Ohio, it was concluded that college career advisers often confuse the two counseling paradigms.
Although Kitson is not recognized as the source for contemporary career advising strategies, most career advisers in liberal arts colleges embrace the philosophy of self analysis he advocated as they encourage students to learn about themselves, explore career information online and gain experience through internships.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a conference room at a liberal arts college, the College Trustees are meeting for their annual review of the state of the College. The Director of Career Services is making a report on the career planning activities offered the previous year and the status of students who participated in the programs. It has been a busy year, and many students been actively involved in exploring careers. They have attended workshops, come for counseling, and read resource materials online. Despite these activities and as could be expected of young adults, some of the first and second year students are still exploring and are not certain what career directions they will find rewarding in the liberal arts curriculum. Hearing this, one of the trustees, a clinical psychologist with a private practice in the area, leans forward and suggests somewhat sharply “Well, why don’t you just give them all tests? Wouldn’t that solve the problem?” But would it?

Choosing a vocation is a key element of American life. How to discover one’s vocation has been the focus of novels, religious discussions, school curriculum and popular culture. Furthermore, the process of vocational decision-making mirrors the historical time and changes with social values. In the nineteenth century, many young men followed in their fathers’ footsteps, training under their guidance to assume a similar job. Industrialization offered factory jobs to young men and young women, bringing with the jobs social freedoms and changing values. After World War II, veterans returned to receive the benefits of a GI Bill that allowed them to further their education, get jobs in business, buy homes and move into middle class suburban life. In recent
times of national turmoil such as the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the recession of 2008, Americans paused to think about how they made their living and whether their choice deeply reflected their values, a concern that would have seemed foreign to those earlier job seekers. According to American civic values, choosing one’s life work should reflect a basic principle of democracy – that anyone can attain any occupational goal they seek, free of the restraints of social class, the limits of educational opportunity, or discrimination. On an individual level, however, vocational choice has been restrained by many factors including ethnicity, sex role stereotyping, family values and role models, educational opportunity and the bewildering variety of options many individuals face. Seeking direction, many have turned to schools and colleges for vocational guidance.

In addition to the influence of family values and of role models, schools and teachers have played a critical role in encouraging and guiding young adults as they sought employment opportunities. As the United States industrialized and urbanized in the late 1800s, children and youth were leaving schools in increasing numbers to work in the mills and factories. Even though public education was available through secondary school, many children were not able to continue their education beyond sixth grade. Even fewer achieved a college education. At the same time, American cities were flooded with waves of immigrants seeking employment and education. As industry grew and was pressed for additional workers, both American and immigrant children were leaving school at earlier ages, and violation of child labor laws became rampant. In the late 19th century, principals and school superintendents in secondary schools began to
provide vocational guidance to their students leaving school due either to graduation or to withdrawal for work. Jessie B. Davis, a principal who became influential in vocational guidance in the 1920s, was known to have counseled students about careers at Central High School in Detroit as early as the 1890s, continuing into the first decade of the twentieth century.¹

Despite these early efforts on the part of educators, many historians attribute the creation of the profession of vocational guidance to the influence of the Progressive Movement.² The question of how youth were guided into work and how industry chose and treated its young workers became a prime concern of the social reform movement at the turn of the century. Under the guidance of philanthropists and wealthy benefactors, settlement houses that offered educational programs and social services developed in many urban areas. In Boston, the Civic Service House was established in 1901 as an outgrowth of the philanthropic activities of Pauline Agassiz Shaw, the wealthy daughter of famous scientist Louis Agassiz, who also supported kindergartens, day nurseries, and teacher training.³ While offering lectures at the Civic Service Houses’ Breadwinners Institute, a modified college for working people, Frank Parsons, a social reformer, professor, lawyer and advocate for the poor, suggested the addition of a Vocation Bureau as an extension of these programs. Due to his careful conceptualization and the


implementation of his ideas following his death, Parsons is widely credited with creating the profession of vocational guidance in 1908 during his work at the Boston Vocation Bureau.\textsuperscript{4} Parson’s legacy was sealed by the publication of his posthumous book, \textit{Choosing a Vocation}, in 1909, and by the careful nurturing of his legacy by his friends.\textsuperscript{5} Although some historians still differ on when vocational guidance began and who implemented guidance principles, there is agreement that public schools were trying to provide some form of vocational guidance to youth throughout the early 1900s and that settlement houses joined them in addressing the vocational needs of youth outside the schools a few years later.

In his work with youth in settlement houses, Parsons’ recommended a three step method for vocational choice: that individuals develop a “clear understanding of yourself,” a “knowledge of different lines of work,” and “true reasoning on the relation of these facts.”\textsuperscript{6} Soon after his death, his successor and friend, Meyer Bloomfield, established a course at Harvard to educate counselors in Parsons’ methods and taught similar courses at other universities as far afield as the University of California, rapidly spreading Parsons’ ideas. Vocational guidance quickly became a profession that helped people choose, prepare for, enter and succeed in an occupation.

During this same period in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, following the return of William James and Hugo Munsterberg from German universities where the

\textsuperscript{4} Davis, \textit{Frank Parson, Prophet, Innovator, Counselor}, vii.


scientific method was being applied to the study of the human mind, early psychologists were beginning to conduct research in the United States. Vocational fit was one of the first topics that psychologists explored as the discipline developed. As the awareness of individual human difference grew due to the work of James McKeen Cattell, E.L. Thorndike and Harry Hollingworth, studies were done to identify abilities that could be appropriately related to different jobs. Unlike educators whose focus was helping youth choose jobs or helping industrialists choose youth for specific jobs, the focus of psychologists was on research leading to scientific understanding of individual abilities and how those abilities helped individuals discriminate among vocational choices. Although he helped his friends and colleagues at the Vocation Bureau with testing of youth, psychologist Hugo Munsterberg, for example, thought that it was na""ive to accept an individual’s self-report as a guide to vocational choice. He worked to create modern psychological laboratories where mental functions could be assessed and linked to appropriate vocational options.\footnote{Savickas, Mark L. and David B. Baker, "The History of Vocational Psychology: Antecedents, Origin, and Early Development" In \textit{Handbook of Vocational Psychology}, eds. W. Bruce Walsh and Mark L. Savickas (Mahweh, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005), 15.}

Harry Hollingworth, the first vocational psychologist in the United States, wrote in his 1916 book \textit{Vocational Psychology: Its Problems and Methods} that the time to decide one’s fortune through magic, through prayer, through phrenology or other unscientific methods was over. In contrast to Parsons, he thought that learning about occupations, even visiting workplaces and shadowing workers, was not enough to allow for a satisfying vocational choice in light of individual differences in aptitude, capabilities and interests that were now recognized by psychologists. Factors
such as workplace characteristics or worker behavior had little relationship, he believed, to an individual’s internal satisfactions and abilities. Instead, Hollingworth proposed a systematic effort to study the individual and to judge, using their mental characteristics, what occupations best fit them. Thus early in the history of helping individuals choose satisfying work, a difference of opinion arose between the profession of vocational guidance which focused on helping individuals choose work, and the science of vocational psychology, a field of applied psychology that researched individual differences and vocational behavior.

**The Purpose of the Study**

In the early 1900s at the University of Chicago, Harry Dexter Kitson trained in applied psychology under the direction of James Roland Angell and began a long career of teaching, professional activity and writing. Although he is not a familiar name to most current practitioners, his doctoral student, Donald Super and Super’s student, John Crites, are well-known and have been very influential in vocational psychology.

Kitson received his Bachelor’s degree in psychology in 1909 from Hiram College and his doctorate in psychology in 1915 under Angell at the University of Chicago. Angell’s two masters’ degrees were earned under the direction of William James and John Dewey, and Kitson was strongly influenced by Angell. Kitson is alleged to have written the first dissertation on college counseling and strongly promoted self-analysis

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for career choice throughout his long career. As president of the National Vocational Guidance Association, the first organization to focus on the psychology of vocational choice, and as editor of their journal for thirteen years, his active professional influence extended from 1922 to 1939 and was enhanced by the mentoring of many masters’ and doctoral students. During his long teaching career at both Indiana University and Teachers College Columbia from 1915 to 1951, he trained many vocational counselors and supervised dissertations for Donald Super and others who become eminent scholars of vocational psychology. An early adopter of technology, he wrote and narrated radio broadcasts on vocation for CBS American School of the Air. He also created a predecessor of the famous hexagon of vocational interests later fully developed by John Holland.

In contrast to many of his contemporaries in vocational psychology, Kitson was a strong proponent of self-analysis of career interests and was skeptical about the usefulness of vocational testing. Throughout his career as a teacher and scholar, he advocated self-analysis as a means of vocational choice even as vocational tests became more sophisticated and valid and as his colleagues focused their research on test development, analysis and implementation. In his book, *The Psychology of Vocational Adjustment*, Kitson outlined his theory that interests could be developed as well as discovered and described methods that would allow a parent, business executive or

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worker to do so.\footnote{12} He contrasted the development of interests through experience with the evaluation of static interests such as those that would be identified via a questionnaire.\footnote{13} His advocacy of self-analysis opened him to criticism from his colleagues. Looking back at the history of vocational counseling from the 1950s, E. G. Williamson, a psychologist who is also known for his work in student personnel in higher education, questioned why Kitson abandoned Parsons’ belief in an external analysis of the individual’s capabilities or interests and the use of objective data on vocations and found no experimental study on the accuracy of self-analysis. He pointed out that much of the contemporary work on vocational testing was done at Teachers College while Kitson also taught there, and he could not have been unaware of the research done by Hollingworth, Thorndike and others. Williamson concludes that the rejection of Parsons’ views by his successors is only an example of the “discouraging regressions in the jagged development curve of Western civilization.”\footnote{14}

Other historians of both vocational guidance and vocational psychology mention Kitson’s contributions to the early years of the field in a more positive light. In his 1942 History of Vocational Guidance, Brewer, a contemporary of Kitson, noted that Kitson’s book, The Psychology of Vocational Adjustment, was “the first comprehensive book in the field and rich in historical materials.”\footnote{15} He was called “a pioneer in the training of vocational counselors” by Borow in Milestones: A Chronology of Notable Events in the


\footnote{14} Ibid., 146.

History of Vocational Guidance, essays in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the National Vocational Guidance Association.\textsuperscript{16} In his 1963 dissertation on vocational guidance, Bryant stated that “Kitson bridged the transition to the modern period”.\textsuperscript{17} In a 2001 interview about the flow of ideas that influenced his work, Dr. Mark Savickas, a contemporary vocational psychologist, refers to Kitson as the “great grandfather of the field and part of his (Savickas’) professional family tree.”\textsuperscript{18} Based on these references, it appears that Kitson made a significant contribution while the groundwork both in vocational psychology and vocational guidance was being laid. No substantive work exists that focuses solely on Kitson’s contributions. Therefore, it will be the purpose of this study to explore his background, the evolution of his thought and why his beliefs on vocational testing and self-analysis matter to the field of vocational guidance as well as the field of contemporary college career advising.

**The Research Question**

This study will ask three questions: What were Harry Dexter Kitson’s contributions to the development of vocational guidance and vocational psychology in the first half of the twentieth century? How did self-analysis develop as a principle theme of Kitson’s body of work but not in the work of other prominent vocational psychologists of his time? More importantly, what influence might Kitson’s views have on contemporary college career advising?


\textsuperscript{17} Girard Thompson Bryant, "The Growth and Development of the Vocational Guidance Movement in the United States, 1900-1930" (Doctor of Education, Washington University), 1.

\textsuperscript{18} Collin, *An Interview with Mark Savickas: Themes in an Eminent Career*, 121.
Kitson became an applied psychologist in the very early years of the profession when theories and methodology were in their infancy. Following Frank Parson’s model, a key component of vocational advising at that time involved developing occupational information to allow an individual to make an informed choice about a vocation. Many early practitioners of vocational guidance focused on that task. Kitson made his contributions as both, a journal editor, prolific writer and later primary author of occupational materials for CBS American School of the Air. At the same time, statistical methods were in their infancy, and the tests that Kitson used for his dissertation he later learned were not credible and in fact, no more accurate than appraisals by those who knew the individual. The warnings that he issued throughout his career that tests would limit individual choice and pigeon-hole career seekers may have been based on this early research experience but the concern remained with him despite the increasing statistical sophistication that developed around him during his scholarly career. Kitson may not have been aware that the new capability tests analyzed different factors than the early sensory-motor tests he deplored. However, his colleague, Harry Hollingsworth, the first professionally trained vocational psychologist, was teaching these new testing and statistical methods at Teachers’ College, Columbia, as early as 1925. In addition, Kitson’s graduate students, prominent researchers such as Donald Super, became well-known in part for their work on vocational testing.

Additional differences appeared between early vocational psychologists working primarily in research labs, academics such as Kitson and other vocational guidance practitioners. The Army alpha and beta tests used during World War I to track soldiers
into productive military jobs started a postwar testing mania, primarily designed to match the man to the job. Kitson’s life emphasis was to help the individual find satisfying work. Philosophical differences deepened as graduate programs in different regions of the country were populated by proponents of different philosophies and produced students who shared their divergent views.

Although Kitson was a prominent vocational psychologist during his life, researching and publishing extensively, holding influential positions in professional organizations and teaching and mentoring graduate students who became important scholars in their own right, he has not received much credit for an intellectual legacy. However, self-analysis and an emphasis on developing vocational interests continue to be themes in college career advising. This study may be able to contribute to the history of college career advising by exploring its early development and looking at contemporary problems through Kitson’s lens.

**The Method of the Study**

To answer these questions, I conducted a careful reading of Harry Dexter Kitson’s writing with particular emphasis on his dissertation, *The Scientific Study of the College Student*, published in 1917, his first book *The Psychology of Vocational Adjustment* completed in 1925, and on articles he wrote for *Occupations*, the journal of the National Vocational Guidance Association, during his years as editor. Primary and secondary sources on William James, John Dewey and James Roland Angell were also examined to see how Kitson’s education may have affected the development of his ideas and how, in turn, his ideas influenced the field of vocational guidance during some of its formative
years. The work of other early vocational psychologists, contemporaries of Kitson, who
differed in their philosophy regarding vocation testing, was also included.

This study is conducted within the framework of cultural foundations of education
which uses the disciplines of history, philosophy and sociology to understand education.
Each chapter develops thematically and utilizes the lens of a discipline to explore
Kitson’s ideas and influence. Chapter One explores Kitson and his contributions to the
field of vocational guidance. Although some of his ideas about the importance of
self-analysis in vocational guidance were not broadly shared among his colleagues, he
was still elected to positions of responsibility in important professional organizations,
implying that he was respected in the field. This chapter explains why he was influential
in his time and why his ideas might matter today to the field of college career advising.
In Chapter Two, I examine the history of the emergence and development of the
profession of vocational guidance. Chapter Three explores the roots of the Kitson’s
belief in the viability of self-analysis as a tool for vocational guidance at a time when
vocational testing was emerging as the primary paradigm in the field of vocational
psychology. I apply both the disciplinary lens of history and of sociology to understand
how a theoretical rift developed between Kitson and other pioneers in these fields who
believed that self-analysis was unscientific and thus not suited to modern psychology.
Kitson was educated in applied psychology but chose to affiliate with the theories and
concepts of vocational guidance throughout his teaching and research career. Why that
occurred and whether it mattered to each of these emerging disciplines is explored.
Chapter Four delves more deeply into the concept of self-analysis and probe for links
between Kitson’s thought and the philosophical concepts of his teachers. Kitson’s intellectual mentors included University of Chicago professor James Roland Angell who had studied both with William James, for whom “the self” was an important concept, and with Dewey, who believed that the role of a teacher was to guide and direct a child to develop interests and thereby further the self. Kitson also asserted that vocational interests could be developed or discovered throughout life and perhaps drew this concept from Dewey’s work.

An important area of research in cultural foundations is the emergence of professions within education, and in Chapter Five, the development of the profession of college career advising is examined. This is a disparate field composed of practitioners whose educational backgrounds range from counseling through college student personnel to business and human resources. Practitioners may never have studied vocational guidance theory or been exposed to multiple perspectives and research on vocational choice. This chapter explores areas of contemporary practice where Kitson or his ideas have been influential. Kitson’s doctoral students, who were prominent in vocational psychology during the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and their intellectual descendents who are still active in the field maintained the dialogue between those who support testing and those who utilize self-analysis. However, these theoretical disagreements may become moot as the nature of work, the process of career decision-making and the economy change the field of college career advising, and Chapter Six concludes this dissertation by looking towards the future of college career advising and what we can learn from the influence and work of Harry Dexter Kitson.
A prolific writer even prior to the completion of his dissertation, Kitson was published in a variety of journals where the evolution of his thinking could be examined. His scholarly work was accepted throughout his career by journals such as *Teachers College Record, Journal of Clinical Psychology, American Psychologist, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Educational Psychology* and the *Personnel Journal*. During the years that he was president and a board member for the National Vocational Guidance Association, he presided over a number of professional conferences, and the records of those conferences will be examined to better understand the issues that may have arisen during his tenure and the role that he played that would embody his philosophy about vocational guidance.

Throughout his career, he also published books explaining his theory of vocational guidance and demonstrating its application to the vocational choices of adults, boys and girls. Some were theoretical, directed to his psychologist colleagues, and others pragmatic and directed to an audience of youth. Titles include *The Scientific Study of the College Student*, his 1915 dissertation, *I Find My Vocation, Psychology of Vocational Adjustment, How to Find A Vocation, How to Use Your Mind: A Psychology of Study, How to Operate a Placement Office, and Vocations for Girls*. His many book reviews were widely published but will not be examined during this study.

Finally, Kitson wrote extensively about college student vocational choice. Although it was common for vocational psychologists to be interested in college students in the early twentieth century, an attempt will be made to learn the genesis of his particular interest in college students. The conflict between self-analysis and vocational
testing which he embodied continues to be easily seen in college career advising as the scenario at the beginning of this proposal illustrated. Therefore, I conducted additional research on the history of college career advising, and I explored the challenges facing the modern field coming from such sources as the economy, the influence of parents on Millennial students, and the rise of career coaching consulting firms through the lens of Kitson’s ideas.

The Significance of the Study

The field of vocational psychology is relatively young, having emerged as a specialization in applied psychology within the past 100 years. Although Kitson considered himself more aligned with the profession of vocational guidance than the field of applied psychology, he was an active and productive scholar in psychology throughout the first half of that period. Thus, it might be expected that his ideas would have significance even when he differed from his colleagues. He was also educated in a group of psychologists at the University of Chicago that produced several other pioneers in vocational psychology including Helen Woolley and Mabel Ruth Fernald, and it may be historically significant to contrast his career with theirs. It is possible that such a thorough analysis of Kitson’s ideas and his work may also result in an additional contribution to the history of vocational psychology at a time when vocational psychology is undergoing a re-examination of its past and a re-conceptualization of its future.19

In addition, the study explores the impact Kitson’s ideas may have had on those who are practicing vocational and career advising in colleges and universities and

whether any path can be traced from his ideas to their practice. The field is composed of professionals from disparate academic and employment backgrounds. Although some are educated as counselors, many college career advisers have not studied vocational psychology or vocational guidance prior to assuming their roles in career development offices. Their professional education can range from degrees in college student personnel work or higher education to human resources or business. However, the theory of vocational guidance has been underlying the work of placement and career development professionals whether they knew it or not. Today, it is common in colleges to utilize guidance methods similar to those Kitson advocated. For example, in Kitson’s work you will find support for his belief that individuals can identify their own interests and abilities, that trying out occupations is an important tool for choosing a career, that occupational information is critical to understanding career expectations, and that interests can be developed. Many college career centers use similar methods in their work with contemporary college students. A brief review of college career center websites, for example, will demonstrate that college career advisers suggest students conduct self-assessments of their abilities, interests and values.20 Internships and volunteer work are both suggested as methods to try out tentative career choices, and extensive online occupational information databases are widely available. At the same time, the tension between vocational testing and self-analysis continues in college career advising as different constituencies advocate ways to help college students make career choices. Therefore, it is important to the history of higher education to understand what

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20 See the websites of Oberlin College or Hiram College at www.oberlin.edu or www.hiram.edu/career
practices vocational guidance theory contributed to career advising of college students and how theory has been selected for application in the work of career development professionals. Finally, as the role of work continues to change in human lives, re-examining the field in light of Kitson’s thought may provide direction for the future.

**The Limitations of the Study**

From an initial examination of sources, it is clear that Kitson left a large body of published professional work but personal papers to explain his philosophy of vocational psychology or to provide any additional autobiographical materials have not yet been identified. Although one would assume that his personal and/or professional papers would be held in the archives of Teachers College Columbia since he taught there most of his career, he is not listed among the faculty whose papers are maintained. According to an archivist, the materials that are available at Columbia are primarily related to his employment status at the University. At this time, the only professional papers that have been found are in the archives of Emory University. The Emory archival entry states that the partial box contains material from 1928 to 1935 and “all the writings pertain to the application of vocational guidance to high school, and a number of them have been published. The unpublished ones are incomplete.”

Records of the St. Joseph County, Indiana Public Library where local and family history records are kept for Mishawaka, Indiana, Kitson’s hometown, do not indicate any materials under his name. Since additional research did not uncover personal papers, the analysis of his work was done by reading his published works and those historians who have written about him without

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21 Personal communication.
the benefit of his own comments and analysis. Furthermore, material on the history of vocational psychology is sparse. Kitson is mentioned only briefly in the literature reviewed to date so there may not be an extensive analysis of his contribution done by other psychologists from which to draw.

Among the common topics researched by early vocational psychologists were the characteristics of good salespeople, and Kitson was no exception. He published a number of articles and books on the topic including *The Mind of the Buyer, a psychology of selling, A Manual for the Study of Advertising and Selling*, and *Understanding the Consumers' Mind*. This study does not explore Kitson’s work on salesmanship which will be left for another researcher to examine.

When exploring college career advising, the study will be limited to Kitson’s possible influence on the practical application of “self-analysis” as an alternative to vocational testing in liberal arts colleges and to discussion of the use of vocational tests. The researcher has a strong background in the history of higher education in liberal arts colleges and can contribute the perspective of a practitioner in college career advising.

Harry Dexter Kitson is an important early figure in vocational guidance and vocational psychology and a teacher who mentored vocational psychologists and counselors at a pivotal time in the development of the field. His students and colleagues were among the most significant scholars in vocational psychology, and it will be challenging and rewarding to conduct this study of his professional ideas and his influence on the profession.
CHAPTER II

THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND VOCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: TWO NEW PROFESSIONS

The fields of vocational psychology and vocational guidance have been intertwined from their beginning. In 1909, Harry Hollingworth received the first PhD in vocational psychology, one of the earliest applied fields in psychology just as Frank Parsons’ posthumous book, Choosing A Vocation, that laid the groundwork for vocational guidance was published. Harry Dexter Kitson graduated from Hiram College in the same year with a degree in Greek and Latin. Late in his college career, he took two psychology courses and was influenced by Parsons’ book to begin his professional life as a psychologist with vocational psychology as his specialty. As his career developed, he spent much of his life teaching and writing about vocational guidance. At the time of his retirement, Donald Super and the American Psychological Association paid tribute to his life and career in these words:

In part, the history of vocational guidance and of vocational psychology in the United States is the professional history of Harry Dexter Kitson, Professor Emeritus of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, and Editor of Occupations (predecessor of Personnel and Guidance Journal) for 14 years. For 47 productive years, Dr. Kitson contributed concepts and techniques to both fields, and in his classrooms and seminars trained many who since have made their own considerable contributions.22

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This chapter will describe the early history and emergence of these two professions while the principles for research and practice in each field were being determined, and while it was possible for most of the practitioners to know each other’s work and even to collaborate. Although there is little dissent about the origins of each field and the key scholars and practitioners are well-known in their respective disciplinary histories, some divergence occurred in the 1920s between those who trusted psychological tests as tools for vocational decision-making and those, represented here by Kitson, who questioned their value and preferred self-analysis as the means for choosing one’s life work. As these fields grew and matured, it will be important to understand why Kitson and a few others vocational psychologists held firm to their belief in self-analysis while the mainstream of vocational psychology developed sophisticated interest and ability tests.

**Early History of Psychology**

Although experimental psychology was developing as a discipline in European universities in the late 1800s, few Americans except those who had the opportunity to travel to German universities were able to study it until the early 1900s. Wilhelm Wundt, a German psychologist, is recognized for establishing the first experimental psychology laboratory at the University of Leipzig in the late 1870s; three of his students, James McKeen Cattell, William James, and Hugo Munsterberg, became early scholars and academics in American psychology.

The period from 1860-1930 is sometimes considered the “era of systems and schools” in psychology. Systems are “logical structures to unify and make
comprehensible the obtained observational data,” and schools are “groups of disciples or followers of a dominant person.” Wundt developed a comprehensive system of thought about psychology and in the course of his lengthy teaching career created a school of devoted followers both in Germany and the United States. William James, on the other hand, never created a clear system of his psychological ideas but had many followers of both his philosophical and psychological thought. As a pragmatist, this resistance to systematic psychology would be consistent with his critique of dogma. As psychology was just evolving as a discipline, there were frequent opportunities for systems to be created and critiques to occur.

Based on the work of German psychologists, American psychologists learned to conduct laboratory experiments. Although these initial experiments were primarily observations of human behavior rather than psychological tests, an attempt was made to structure observation so that different observers’ results could be compared and verified. What would be observed and the range of problems to be considered “psychology” continued to be debated.

These first American experiments were conducted under the direction of only a few German-trained psychologists. Cattell returned to the U.S. in 1891 to become a Professor of Psychology at Columbia just as a vibrant academic and scientific community was developing there. During his research in Leipzig, he had begun to doubt a subject’s report of internal content and events (introspection) in favor of observable and

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measurable behavior. He is widely credited as the first in the United States to use
German experimental methods to measure psychological differences between
individuals.\textsuperscript{25} Apparently the first American professor of psychology as a distinct
discipline, he taught initially at the University of Pennsylvania and then settled into
Columbia University. Cattell prided himself on his ability to take very precise
measurements, and his work on statistical correlation was very influential in early
psychology. He identified three important qualities that would allow psychologists to
utilize correlation in the statistical analysis of vocational testing: “describe a quantity by
its relative position on a scale of measurement, not by a classificatory adjective; keep in
mind the variable error in every measurement used; and study the quantities by their
relation to each other.”\textsuperscript{26} Cattell was also instrumental in bringing the philosopher John
Dewey and the anthropologist Franz Boas to Columbia and participated in the
establishment of the American Psychological Association with G. Stanley Hall, its
founder, as one of the twenty-six charter members in 1892.\textsuperscript{27} Cattell was not an expert
mathematician and may have enticed Boas to Columbia to benefit from his background in
physics and mathematics. In fact, as later events would reveal, Cattell’s understanding of
statistics was so weak that he did not realize that none of his studies showed statistically

\textsuperscript{25} Aspects of the History of Psychology in America 1892-1992, ed. Adler, Helmut E. and Rieber, Robert W.,

\textsuperscript{26} Savickas, Mark L, and Baker, David B., “The History of Vocational Psychology: Antecedents, Origin,
and Early Development” In Handbook of Vocational Psychology, eds. W. Bruce Walsh and Mark L.

\textsuperscript{27} Michael M. Sokal, "James McKeen Cattell, the New York Academy of Sciences, and the American
significant correlations. Only when one of his later graduate students reran the correlation data was the error revealed. Although he is generally considered an important early psychologist, in his later years, Cattell’s reputation rested not on his work as a psychologist but on his administrative work with The Psychological Corporation and his editorial work on numerous journals including Science, Popular Science Monthly and The American Naturalist.28

James bridged the transition between philosophy and psychology as the concepts of mind were initially conceived in a new way. Although well-educated and cultured, James struggled with his own vocation, first studying medicine and traveling to Germany to continue pursuit of that field. Under the influence of Wundt, he began to explore both philosophy and psychology, returning to Harvard in 1873 to teach physiology. He is known for claiming that the first lecture he ever gave in psychology was also the first one he had ever heard. Throughout his scholarly career, James was as much a philosopher as a psychologist and held faculty positions in both disciplines in alternating years as his interests changed. James’ influence on psychology came primarily from his two major textbooks, *Principles of Psychology* written in 1890 and his shorter book, *Psychology Brief Course*, published in 1892. James communicated and wrote well. He kept track of experimental psychology through his wide international correspondence but was not limited by it; he wanted to be free to think and psychologize about mental activity, to reflect on observations and to offer interpretations of experience and behavior. One chapter in his book focuses on the self, a concept that fit uneasily with psychology during

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its early period due to anxiety that self would be confused with the religious concept of
soul or transcendental ego. James believed that transcendental ego was a useless concept
for psychology. He approached the self by discussing empirical self, that part of a person
which is called “me.” He described three components of self – the material self including
the body, the social self created from the recognition of others and the spiritual or inner
self capable of inward thinking. By bringing the concept of self into psychology, he
created the possibility for social psychology to be developed and opened the opportunity
for discussion of personality in the future.  

As early as 1904, psychology was described as a science of consciousness where
mental facts or facts of consciousness formed the basis of the field. Because it did not
occupy physical space, consciousness was thought to be composed of sensation, ideas,
pains and pleasures. Early psychologists tried to avoid discussing the “soul” due to its
religious meaning which implied the existence of something beyond conscious thought.
In place of that term, the word “mind” was used to mean the entirety of intelligent
processes which occur in an organism. Research methods initially included introspection
into the functioning of the mind but observation quickly supplanted that technique as the
field moved towards an experimental science and away from its roots in philosophy.

Two primary systems dominated psychology during its early years – structuralism
and functionalism. Another Wundt student, Edward Bradford Titchener, was a major
proponent of structuralism, which gave preference to sensation. Relying on introspection
by a trained observer, Titchener believed that an understanding of consciousness could be

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29 Ibid, 54.
built from descriptions of sensation, the unit from which other mental processes were created, rather than from a description of why or how sensations occurred. The system had a short life and died soon after Titchener himself.

Structuralism was immediately challenged by functionalism. Functionalism had three facets – a belief in mental operations (functions) rather than mental elements, the mind as mediator between the environment and needs of the organism (a mind-body relationship), and consciousness as a system of control that could be seen in selective attention, problem solving and reflection.\textsuperscript{30} These basic beliefs laid the groundwork for American psychology as each of these psychologists began to turn their attention to the practical application of their research. One of the main scholars of functionalism, James Rowland Angell, attempted to keep basic science and applied science together and conducted a wider range of experiments than his predecessors. His ideas flowed from pragmatism, which he had learned as a student of James although he favored laboratory research more than James who deemed it boring. James encouraged a warm hearted psychology that was impatient and even bored with the trivia of laboratory work. In \textit{Principles of Psychology}, he stated that laboratory “method taxes patience to the utmost, and could hardly have arisen in a country whose natives could be bored. Such Germans as Weber, Fechner…and Wundt obviously cannot.”\textsuperscript{31}

In the laboratory, Angell kept both basic and applied psychology together, resulting in controversy over the interpretation of his experiments. He and his followers


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 64.
believed that individual differences really mattered, and that in reaction time experiments, training subjects to decrease differences was wrong. With practice, reaction time for motor and sensory experiments became shorter, a change that functionalists believed was a learned adaptive response to repeated exposure to the task. Dewey, also a functionalist, weighed in on this discussion in an 1896 article in which he gave one of the most important arguments for the functionalist attitude towards interactions between stimulus and response, emphasizing the circular process in which response does not complete the behavior but leads to the selection of the next stimulus, coherent with the act or function. The practical importance of this approach to psychology at the University of Chicago was to encourage animal and child psychology, the study of habits of individual differences and to accept as legitimate applications to education, business and clinical psychology. Under the guidance of Angell, the psychology department at the University of Chicago where Kitson studied for his PhD became the home of functionalism.

Ultimately neither James nor Wundt’s psychologies persisted, despite their significant contemporary influence. Although lab instruction based on Wundt’s instruments continued for years, and laboratory research eventually won out despite James’ dislike for it, James’ pragmatic philosophy eventually won over the basic science emphasis of Wundt. Harvey Carr who followed Angell in the psychology department at Chicago when Angell took on the presidency of Yale continued the functionalist tradition, but included rigorous laboratory experiments as well. This practical tradition

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32 Ibid., 65.
was carried on by Dewey and others. The psychology programs at Columbia and Chicago educated 32% of all psychologists in the country in the 1920s, thus extending the influence of functionalism for some time. Without opposition, functionalism gradually lost its visible distinctiveness. Both systems were later replaced by behaviorism, which emphasized the conditioned reflex as a unit of habit.33

The Case for Vocational Guidance

The need for vocational guidance may seem obvious to modern educators but little attention was paid to systematic assistance for youth in the early 1900s. Although public schools were devoting some time to discussion of work as early as the 1890s, no clear consensus on whether vocational guidance was needed and no clear statement of how it could be delivered existed. What did become clear to educators and social progressives was that for democracy to exist, an individual’s choice of work had to be based on self-determination, putting in motion an emphasis on vocational guidance as social justice that remains a constant in the profession today.34

As with any new profession, modest controversy existed over the early definition of vocational guidance. In his 1963 dissertation, The Growth and Development of the Vocational Guidance Movement, Bryant chronicles at least twenty definitions of vocational guidance that were in common use early in the 1900s. His own definition focused on the work of an occupation: “Vocational Guidance is a conscious effort on the part of trained personnel to assist people, mostly youthful, to train for and obtain the kind

33 Ibid., 87.

of work which will best fit their capacities, giving them optimum pleasure and a sense of fulfillment and reward.”

According to Meyer Bloomfield, a colleague of Parsons and an early practitioner of the field of vocational guidance, “it is organized common sense used to help each individual make the most of his abilities and opportunities.”

John Brewer was more specific and built on the steps that Parsons had proscribed. Effective vocational guidance would help youth obtain information and knowledge of self, knowledge of the world of work, offer tests and counsel to help select a calling and training, and follow through to achievement of a satisfying career.

Rather than a philosophy or process, in recent years, and for the purpose of this paper, the term “vocational guidance” will refer to a profession that helps individuals choose, prepare for, enter and succeed in an occupation.

The need for vocational guidance arose from massive social changes in American society in the late nineteenth century. As the United States began to industrialize in the mid to late 1880s, a division of labor previously unknown in an agrarian society became essential. The growth of industrial technology which required “fitting the man to the job” made it necessary to identify different skills and abilities needed to operate machines or perform other factory jobs. At first, these dramatic social changes did not result in the establishment of vocational guidance to assist people with vocational choices. Even

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38 M. L. Savickas, email message to author, August 5, 2010.
following the Civil War when vocational and industrial education began to prepare young adults for their working lives more purposefully, little or no attention was paid to whether these were the right youth for the right jobs; the primary concern of school leaders and of industrialists was that students were prepared for existing jobs. A very early book written in 1881 by a Massachusetts farmer, Lysander Richards, had proposed the founding of a new profession of vocophers who would advise people about their vocational plans but there is no evidence that Richards’ ideas were ever influential. After examining all the candidates for the honor of ‘founder of vocational guidance’, most historians conclude that only Frank Parsons, director of the Vocation Bureau at the Boston Civic Bureau from 1905-1908, could be credited with conceptualizing and then founding the field of vocational guidance.39

Although recognized primarily as the founder of vocational guidance, Parsons was a more complex social reformer and intellectual than is generally known. His passion for social justice stemmed from a childhood in a poor farming family and his own early rough years of employment due to the financial crisis of 1869, bouncing from college where he was trained as a civil engineer to labor on the railroad and then to public school teaching.40 During this period, he learned about issues affecting workers and became more aware of injustices in the American economic system, a theme that influenced his writing and public speaking throughout the rest of his life. Following law school, he taught history and political science at a small Kansas university where his


lectures on Christian Socialism and on reform issues such as public ownership of utilities and corporate greed were not popular with the Board although he was a well-respected teacher.\textsuperscript{41} Even a progressive new college like Ruskin College in Missouri, founded on the educational philosophy of John Ruskin, a British cultural thinker, socialist and Utopian, where he also taught briefly did not provide him with an intellectual home. All of these events in Parsons’ life were generally unknown and unimportant to those who followed him later in vocational guidance but his emphasis on social justice came through clearly in his work and would continue to resonate through the profession.

Returning to his home in Boston from his teaching career, he was invited to offer a series of lectures at the Breadwinners’ Institute, a school and settlement house for working youth, a group for which he had a particular concern. When Boston reform leaders Pauline Agassiz Shaw, a wealthy patron of social causes, and Ralph Albertson from Filene’s department store offered to begin a Vocation Bureau in the Civic House to assist working youth and adolescents with their choice of life work, Parsons eagerly took on the role of director.\textsuperscript{42} Without patronage from these progressive social reformers, Parsons might not have had the opportunity to combine his social reform ideas with his concern for youth and implement the concepts of vocational guidance. He had only given a few lectures, worked on the draft of his book, and started to offer vocational

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 23.

guidance appointments to youth at the settlement house when he died of cancer late in 1908.\textsuperscript{43}

Following his death his friend, Ralph Albertson, completed \textit{Choosing a Vocation}, Parsons’ only published work on vocational guidance, and along with Parson’s patron, Pauline Agassiz Shaw, and his colleague, Filene, is credited with promoting Parsons’ legacy vigorously to ensure that he received recognition for his insights.\textsuperscript{44} The following summer, Bloomfield was invited to teach courses on Parsons’ guidance method at Harvard, and other universities soon followed suit after his work became known. Another friend, Paul Hanus, a professor of education at Harvard, lent academic credibility to the Vocation Bureau, and financial support to continue the work was provided by Filene from the Boston department store of the same name. All these friends and colleagues prevented Parsons’ work from disappearing following his death and enabled Parsons’ insights and principles to evolve into the profession of vocational guidance.

\textit{Choosing a Vocation} laid out Parsons’ belief that “no step in life, unless it may be the choice of a husband or wife, is more important than the choice of a vocation”.\textsuperscript{45} He identified three tasks for vocational guidance: develop a clear understanding of self including personality, skills, abilities, health and family circumstances, acquire knowledge of the requirements for occupations, and use “true reasoning” to compare the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{43} Davis, \textit{Frank Parson, Prophet, Innovator, Counselor}, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Hershenson, \textit{Frank Parson’s Enablers: Pauline Agassiz Shaw, Meyer Bloomfield, and Ralph Albertson}, 77-84.
\item \textsuperscript{45} Frank Parsons, \textit{Choosing A Vocation} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), 3.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
first two. Parsons created a questionnaire that could take weeks or months to complete to guide young men as they considered their family circumstances and previous life experiences. This self study, which was also intended to develop analytical abilities within an individual, formed the basis of conversations to follow with a counselor. It is believed that Parsons counseled as many as 80 young men in a few months after opening the Vocation Bureau. According to Parsons, the counselor’s role was to guide or advise but never recommend an occupation. That choice needed to be made by each person following careful consideration of self and comparison with the requirements of industries and occupations. Very little occupational information was available in the early 1900s so Bloomfield coordinated the work of others at the Vocation Bureau to increase available data. In his 1909 book, Parsons recommended that this process continue. Finally, he believed that the counselor could continue to play a role during the individual’s induction into the field by continuing to provide advice on what is now called vocational adjustment. Although he died before the book was published, his work laid the foundation for vocational guidance, and his method in various forms is still in use.

Vocational guidance would not have emerged in the early twentieth century without the climate created by Progressivism, the social and political reform philosophy that developed to challenge industrialization and urbanization. The years that Parsons

\[46\] Ibid, 5.

\[47\] Ibid, 25.

\[48\] Ibid, 51.
lived in Boston prior to his death were an extraordinary time, filled with inventions such as electricity, the auto and the airplane, the growth and influence of railroads as well as the challenges of immigration, urban poverty, historical events such as the Spanish American war, government reform efforts, and an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. Progressive thinkers and activists created the intellectual climate and started the institutions that made vocational guidance necessary as well as possible.\textsuperscript{49} However, social progressives had divergent goals. Some promised business leaders better trained and guided workers, yielding higher economic returns for business by reducing turnover. Others, focused on social reform, were moved by a passion for social justice for immigrants and the urban poor and focused on more universal societal changes such as improved education, safer working conditions and a reduction of poverty.\textsuperscript{50}

John Dewey played a key role in the development of progressivism, its views of education and the development of vocational guidance both as a philosopher and scholar and as an active practitioner in the settlement house and educational reform movements. Among his many educational ideas, he promoted vocational activities in the classroom at his laboratory school at the University of Chicago. Although Dewey did not encourage these activities as a means of trying out vocations as Parsons recommended, he did share Parsons’ strong commitment to social reform and commitment to the settlement house movement as a reform vehicle. How closely Dewey’s thoughts on education and on guidance influenced John Brewer and other contemporaries of Parsons to switch their

\textsuperscript{49} Donald G. Zytowski, "Frank Parsons and the Progressive Movement," \textit{The Career Development Quarterly} 50, no. 1 (September, 2001), 57-65.

focus from “fitting the child to the job” to “finding the right job for the child” is not known. Was it a coincidence that this switch took place in the same year that *Democracy and Education* was published? Of course, Dewey’s views on education were well-known as he spoke and wrote widely. He believed that the public school system was the main training ground for democracy, that curriculum should have meaning for an urban life and should prepare children for democratic participation, and that learning should be centered around the child’s own experience which would help create the capacity to think, to see problems, to relate facts to them, and to use and enjoy ideas. However, the complex philosophical ideas in *Democracy and Education* which described the purpose of education for individuals and not for industry may have been well over the heads of Dewey’s contemporaries in vocational guidance.\(^5\)

Despite the lack of evidence for a direct relationship between Dewey’s work and the concurrent work on vocational guidance occurring around the country, it is clear that both movements came from a similar wellspring of social discontent and a desire for reform through education.

There is evidence that an early version of vocational guidance was alive in public school systems such as Detroit, Chicago, New York and smaller cities prior to the time that Parsons was articulating his ideas in Boston. In fact, in an article in the “School Review” from January, 1915 written by D. W. Horton of Mishawaka, Indiana, Kitson’s hometown, it appears that a comprehensive program in vocational guidance had been implemented that included these steps: conduct a survey, study the curriculum, compile

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readings lists on vocations for the English department, use assembly periods for talks, 
hold conferences with the graduating class, offer courses on vocations for credit and 
provide placement in summer and permanent work. These vocational guidance 
procedures advocated by Parsons and others were already in place in Mishawaka while 
Kitson was still studying vocational psychology at the University of Chicago.

**Vocational Guidance in the Schools**

The agenda of social reformers also included the implementation of a vocational 
education curriculum in public schools. In fact, for many, the reform of public education 
was the key issue for social reform in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Due to the public schools’ 
continuing focus on a classical curriculum which seemed increasingly archaic, students 
who were not anticipating college often withdrew soon after primary school and went to 
work, lacking the training and focus to find a secure place within industry and increasing 
problems of what modern human resource literature would call “turnover.” For 
reformers, these events heightened awareness of inadequate vocational education 
particularly in the curriculum of secondary schools. Vocational guidance was seen by 
some educators as a necessary function to direct students to choose appropriate 
vocational education programs.\textsuperscript{52}

However, as is common during the development of new ideas, conflict over the 
roles of vocational education and vocational guidance in the schools occurred. It was 
mirrored in disagreements that occurred in the new professional associations that were 
created to advocate for these educational agendas. In the National Society for the

\textsuperscript{52} Stephens, *Social Reform and the Origins of Vocational Guidance*, 35.
Promotion of Industrial Education founded in 1909, there was general disagreement among members about the relationship between vocational education and vocational guidance. Some members felt that vocational guidance was essential for vocational education to succeed as a reform of secondary education; others felt that the two fields ran parallel to each other or that one needed to precede the other. This role confusion extended to the newly formed National Vocational Guidance Association itself. In an analysis of the Bulletin of the NVGA done by Arthur Payne in 1924, almost 200 definitions of vocational guidance and vocational education were in common use, thereby highlighting the identity confusion of the two fields. According to the organizations’ records, the struggle for identity continued from 1921 to 1925. This period encompassed Kitson’s presidency of the NVGA so surely he was involved if not a key player in debating these issues. Both professions - vocational education and vocational guidance - had a focus on the reform of schools in order for them to fulfill their roles in relation to the promises of democracy. Disunity and disorganization blocked initial efforts to establish each field’s clear identity and lessened their effectiveness temporarily.\(^5\) However, by examining the membership lists and editorial boards of professional groups in both fields, it can be seen that practitioners of both vocational guidance and vocational education were active in each others’ professional groups so these barriers were eventually reduced if not overcome.\(^6\) With the support of President Theodore Roosevelt and labor unions such as the AFL and the National Association of


\(^6\) Ibid.
Manufacturers, both industrial education and agricultural education were implemented in the schools. Eventually those programs would be joined by technical programs, home economics, business education, science education and other technical and industrial fields. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 established the principle that agricultural education and other forms of vocational education could be offered in separate vocational schools. This decision continued the controversy about vocationalism with educators such as John Dewey objecting that separate schools for vocational education were anti-intellectual and would undermine democracy. Nonetheless, vocational schools remained, focused on retaining young people in secondary education and preparing them for entry-level positions in agriculture and industry, thus heightening the need for vocational guidance to navigate this increasingly bewildering number of educational and vocational options.  

**Vocational Guidance Matures as a Field**

Differences of viewpoint began to emerge after World War I when psychological testing became more common and well-known. Advocates of vocational guidance were familiar with and often favorable to psychological tests but felt that it was impossible to develop tests for every job. By 1916, references began to appear in journals to the application of vocational guidance to educational choice, not only vocational choice, and while guidance practitioners first hailed tests, they became increasingly skeptical. It may

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be that Dewey’s view that the educational system should not be exploited by industry had become influential, thus contributing to this trend.

The Depression years from 1923-1939 had a major impact on the evolution of vocational guidance. During that time, public schools were struggling, jobs were scarce and there were many unemployed. With the support of the Carnegie Corporation, the National Occupational Conference was established to serve as a national clearinghouse for policy concerning employment issues. The journal *Occupations*, published jointly with the National Vocational Guidance Association, was an important vehicle for dissemination of employment information. During these years, an Occupational Index was created to collect current occupational literature, and abstracts were published in book and pamphlet form, continuing on a large national basis to fulfill Parsons’ wish that job seekers should have access to accurate occupational information. After the occupational information and guidance service was created in the U.S. Department of Education in 1939, the National Occupational Conference disbanded, and the NVGA reclaimed its role as the primary professional organization for vocational guidance practitioners. Kitson served as editor during this period while the journal was published by the National Occupational Conference and continued in that role when *Occupations* returned as a publication of the NVGA. Many of his most significant contributions to the field of vocational guidance were made or launched during these early years for the field.

In the opening chapter of *Man in a World of Work*, the editor, Henry Borow, cites a chronology of notable events in the history of vocational guidance. He places Parsons in a line of writing beginning with Plato that refer to the need of young men for guidance,
including a short 1894 book by Andrew White, then president of Cornell University What Profession Shall I Choose and How Shall I Fit Myself for It?, work on mental tests by James McKeen Cattell and a 1901 article that relates mental tests to college achievement. According to Borow, the early twentieth century was the right time for the creation of vocational guidance with its focus on industrialization and on social reform, and psychologists such as Binet, Munsterberg, and Cattell might have received credit for the movement had Parsons not written his seminal work. Borow applied three criteria to select events for his notable events list: they could represent improved professional practices with fresh insight, refined tools or techniques; they could reflect policy enactments that moved the profession forward or they could be books and other documents that are considered classics in the development of vocational guidance and personnel psychology. Among the classics, he listed Kitson’s book The Psychology of Vocational Adjustment, published in 1925 and described Kitson as a “pioneer in the training of vocational counselors…who saw vocational guidance as a highly specialized field for trained professionals”.

He also noted that Kitson was the first president of a loose federation called the American Council of Guidance and Personnel Associations, formed in 1934 from six societies including the NVGA which grew by 1939 to include twelve organizations.

Harry Dexter Kitson completed his dissertation in vocational psychology in 1917 and soon began to educate vocational counselors at both Indiana University and Columbia University where he spent the majority of his career. Respected by his

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colleagues as a teacher and a scholar, he held leadership roles in the National Vocational Guidance Association and other professional groups. A prolific scholar, he published extensive research on a wide variety of vocational topics after his dissertation, *The Scientific Study of the College Student*, considered the first dissertation on a college student personnel program, was completed.\(^{57}\) Throughout his career, he was convinced that vocational interests could be developed in an individual and that individuals had the capacity for self-guidance. Unlike many of his colleagues doing pioneering work in vocational psychology, he did not study individual difference and personality traits, preferring to focus on the process of maturation and decision-making and the contribution that trained vocational guidance practitioners could make to an individual’s choice. This focus and his interest in self-relevant processes such as self-evaluation and self-regulation place his work squarely within the field of vocational guidance.

**The Growth and Development of Vocational Psychology**

Unlike vocational guidance, there has not been a great deal of history written on vocational psychology as a field of applied psychology. Two sources - a list of landmarks in vocational psychology in Fryer and Henry’s *Handbook of Applied Psychology* and the important events in vocational psychology cited by Crites in *Vocational Psychology* along with two eyewitness accounts, one by Kitson and thirty years later one by his student, Donald Super – appear to be the only historical materials.\(^{58}\) This historical record also credits the impact that Parsons had on the field of vocational guidance.

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guidance as the force that moved it from an activity to a profession. By providing a theoretical model and a scientific viewpoint, Parsons allowed vocational guidance practitioners to distinguish themselves from social workers and to establish their own unique professional identity. While Parsons was establishing the Boston Vocation Bureau in 1908 and 1909, he recognized that his methods rested on character analysis rather than scientific data and turned to psychologist Hugo Munsterburg at Harvard for more objective measures. Munsterburg believed individuals were incapable of knowing their own mental functions, and modern psychology laboratories were more suited to assessing mental abilities. He called on cities to establish psychological laboratories in their vocational bureaus. Several cities followed his suggestion including Cincinnati and Detroit under the leadership of Helen Thompson Woolley and Mabel Ruth Fernald respectively. Both received PhDs from the University of Chicago under Angell. In 1921, these two women and Kitson were the only psychologists to be members of the National Vocational Guidance Association, and all held leadership positions there at different times.

In the very early twentieth century at Columbia University, three strands of applied psychology were developing: the study of individual differences, the measurement of intelligence, and experimental methods and statistics. There Harry Hollingsworth received the first doctorate in vocational psychology in 1909. His book, *Vocational Psychology*, was the first on the subject. Hollingsworth addressed three problems of vocational psychology: how individuals learn about their capacities, interests, and aptitudes and how they compared to their peers, how individuals gather
information about occupations in order to select an appropriate one, and how employers might choose the best employee for a job. He identified one of the goals of vocational psychology as clarifying the traits needed in work so that a choice could be made once people knew their own characteristics. Meanwhile at Carnegie Institute of Technology, the first program of applied psychology was established that attempted to identify interests and abilities, and James Burt Miner, later to be Kitson’s masters’ professor at the University of Michigan, constructed the first vocational interest inventory.\textsuperscript{59}

The development of the Army Alpha and Beta tests during World War I is a well-known landmark in the history of vocational psychology, although this intelligence test had little impact on the war effort itself other than to create data for subsequent research.\textsuperscript{60} Following the war, large numbers of vocational tests were developed as part of the effort to rehabilitate veterans, and the first standardized interest inventory was developed at Carnegie Institute of Technology. E.K. Strong, a member of that original Carnegie Institute faculty, worked on perfecting interest inventories, resulting in his well known Vocational Interest Blank, for many years known by his name as the Strong Interest Inventory, and developed a research program on interests, choice and vocational satisfaction. Increasingly, vocational psychologists were focusing on personality, abilities, values, interests and aptitudes, emphasizing individual differences and the use of tests to identify those differences. In 1927, Elton Mayo and others at the Harvard School of Business Administration conducted research at the Hawthorne Plant of the Western

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 15.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.
Electric Company near Chicago where they learned for the first time that workers have a culture and make decisions about their vocational behavior based on peer group norms and not only on the physical conditions of the workplace. This far-reaching and influential study and its conclusions about work group productivity changed the research target of vocational psychology from physical to psychological conditions of work and added the term “Hawthorne effect” to the American vocabulary.\footnote{John O. Crites, \textit{Vocational Psychology: The Study of Vocational Behavior and Development} (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969), 384.}

When the Depression years began, the first large scale study of vocational choice and adjustment was conceptualized and conducted as part of the Minnesota Employment Stabilization Research Institute to achieve three goals: to test methods of diagnosing vocational aptitudes of the unemployed, to identify their re-training problems and to consider means of re-education of workers. To accomplish this, vocational psychologists at the University of Minnesota including John Darley and Donald Paterson constructed new tests to identify qualities that distinguished among groups of the unemployed, later replicating this study with other subjects. It became one of the first lengthy studies of vocational adjustment. This effort to assist depression-era workers was aided by the creation of the United States Employment Services, authorized as part of the 1933 Wagner-Peyser Act to act as clearinghouse of job openings for the unemployed, among other functions previously mentioned.\footnote{Ibid., 7.} When the United States became actively involved in World War II, these efforts came to a halt and all attention of vocational psychologists focused on the massive task of identifying and classifying men for duties in
the armed services. Using the new technique of “factor analysis” to construct and analyze tests, it became clear that men differed on as many as 50 to 100 different traits, rather than the 10 to 20 previously identified. Combined with improved research on the qualities for success in specific jobs, this insight led to a switch from an emphasis on the requirements of a job to a focus on the characteristics of individuals, now commonly known as the trait and factor theory, spurring a dramatic change in the work done by vocational psychologists.63

Following the war years, one of the most significant events in the history of vocational psychology occurred with the publication of *Occupational Choice*. This book by Eli Ginzberg who was not a psychologist but rather an economist strongly influenced by Freud laid out a theory of the process of career decision making, rather than the results of individual research studies that had previously been the focus of the field. In this landmark book, he described career decision making for the first time as a continuous developmental process occurring until early adulthood and not as one singular choice made by an adolescent, causing a significant change in thinking for the field. Within a few years, many more theories would be proposed, and the era of “dustbowl empiricism” in vocational psychology would be over.

Looking at the field in hindsight, it can be divided into three periods: the observational period from Parsons to World War I prior to the availability of statistical analysis of data when most studies were qualitative, the empirical period when variables were identified and statistical methods developed, and the theoretical period that followed

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63 Ibid., 8.
as hypotheses were formed and tested.64 As vocational interest testing was becoming more valid and effective during the empirical period of vocational psychology, there were those psychologists and vocational guidance practitioners, Kitson among them, who continued to focus on the process of decision making and maturation rather than the content of personality and occupations. Although he was well versed in statistics, having pioneered the conversion of raw scores into sigma values to be used for comparison of tests during his dissertation research, Kitson questioned psychological tests due to their low validity coefficients in favor of individuals’ own appraisal of their interests and abilities. Along with Leonard Ayers, an early 20th century statistician, he shared a concern about a logical flaw in vocational psychology’s paradigm: that tests worked better to select a person for a job than to help an individual choose a profession.65 Kitson and Ayers agreed that individuals needed occupational information more than personality tests. Two quotes sum up some of their beliefs. Ayers stated that “people and positions are both plastic, not rigid, and much mutual change of form often takes place without injury to either person or position” and Kitson quoted William James’ position that “vocational biographies will never be written in advance.” Both of these concepts are still prevalent among career development practitioners.66 Throughout Kitson’s active professional career and after he published his well-known textbook, The Psychology of Vocational Adjustment which clearly laid out his belief in self-analysis, maturation and the development of the self, the research and scholarship on psychological testing of

64 Ibid., 9.
65 Ibid., 384.
66 Ibid., 7.
abilities, interests and aptitudes was also developing. During the 1940s and 50s, testing as a movement captured the national imagination, ushering in several decades of aggressive growth of test development and test use in schools and colleges. Major research growth occurred in industrial psychology as well when industry availed itself of new knowledge about employee selection and vocational adjustment.

Although more recent history of vocational psychology is outside the scope of this study, it is interesting to note that vocational psychology, which was such a significant specialty in applied psychology through the 1960s and 70s, gradually lost its preeminence in the field. As counseling struggled with its own identify and sought to differentiate its scope of practice from psychiatry, graduate programs in counseling split into clinical psychology and counseling psychology. Vocational psychology as a specialty essentially vanished, and some historians of the field believe its contributions to applied psychology have now been forgotten. For a variety of reasons, vocational psychologists became isolated from the mainstream of applied psychology and moved gradually into university departments of education, while industrial and organizational psychologists shifted their employment out of universities and into businesses. Soon after, vocational psychologists in academia began to focus on high school and college student career choices while vocational psychologists in business focused on employee selection and adjustment.67

The productive period of research and scholarship in vocational psychology slowed, and within Kitson’s lifetime, began a slow period of diminishing influence in psychology that still plagues the field. His lifetime concern with career choice, maturation and

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67 Ibid., 41.
development is no longer a paramount focus within psychology, and vocational psychology no longer focuses on both processes of guidance and selection that concerned him.68

This early period of vocational guidance and vocational psychology concluded by identifying several significant questions that still needed to be studied and that relate to social and educational considerations still of concern to vocational psychologists. How should liberal education be related to vocational preparation? Should self-guidance be encouraged or would “advice” provided by experts or computers. . . be faster and more efficient? Is the student a passive or active agent in vocational choice? And should guidance be an educational choice for the individual or a social service to meet the needs of passive consumers or the economy?69 These issues remain unresolved and remain topics of discussion in college career advising and career development where vocational guidance continues today.

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CHAPTER III

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE AND VOCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY MATURE

When it became clear that vocational psychology would become a field of its own, separate from psychology and vocational guidance, the field began to assume the characteristics of a profession. Among those characteristics were theoretical differences which began to emerge in the 1920s. The two main strands differed in conceptions of locus of control for vocational decision-making, in the tools that psychologists used to assist their clients and in the assumptions that lay behind the theories that drove each group of vocational psychologists. This chapter will explore the role that Harry Dexter Kitson and his students at Columbia and other eastern universities played in establishing one view of how people choose a vocation and how other vocational psychologists developed a contrasting view that emerged in Midwestern universities where psychological testing assumed a primary role in vocational choice.

Kitson and Vocational Guidance

At the end of his undergraduate education in 1909 at Hiram College in Hiram, OH, Harry Dexter Kitson who had studied Latin and Greek took the only two psychology courses offered. In an autobiographical essay, Kitson reported that his professor, who may have been Dr. E. E. Snoddy, head of the Philosophy Department, showed him Parsons’ new book, Choosing a Vocation, which ignited his interest in vocational
guidance and impressed him with its universal importance. Following a few years in the family furniture business in Mishawaka, IN where he worked every job while reading all he could find on vocational guidance, he studied for his Masters’ degree at the University of Minnesota. There he was exposed to Cattell, Hollingsworth, and Binet and reviewed the early and limited literature on tests. Vocational tests could not at that time be administered economically as test batteries were unknown. When Walter Scott Dill bound tests in booklet form for easy administration, Kitson imagined himself traveling the country, using tests to help people solve vocational problems scientifically. His enthusiasm was short-lived. When he became a young faculty member at Columbia, he taught himself the new field of statistics. The more he learned, the more he distrusted its methods. He wrote an article in 1920 on the relationship between test scores and vocational accomplishment and expressed the results in terms of probability but remained unconvinced that human behavior could be reliably expressed in statistical terms. In another article, he acknowledged that offering vocational guidance and vocational information should be the role of a public school whose first job is to provide facts about occupations for student use. He questioned, however, the idea that there is only one vocation for each individual which can be found if enough psychological tests are given; avoiding a “round peg in a square hole” implies that people move smoothly into their appropriate shapes if only adequate testing tells them where they should fit. Warning of the problem that charlatans can present, he described the limitations of current

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psychological knowledge and cautioned the public against too much enthusiasm for the young science. Interests, another aspect of personality attracting much attention, were sometimes strong and guided an individual towards a clear vocational choice. However, in those instances where people felt the need for vocational guidance, interests were often either strong in several areas or too vague to be helpful guides. He quoted William James from his book, *Principles of Psychology* “It is safe to say that individual histories and biographies will never be written in advance, no matter how evolved psychology may become”. Instead, Kitson believed that vocational guidance should provide facts and caution about interpreting those facts, offering pros and cons for each possible occupation and encouraging the individual to weigh and choose among them, keeping in mind the dynamic nature of individuals. He called this process monitory guidance. In offering this caution about the use of psychological tests, Kitson concluded that his position was more scientific than the position held by supporters of extensive psychological testing since it relied solely on facts without inserting the potentially unreliable features of tests.\(^{71}\)

Interest inventories, then in their infancy as well, also did not impress Kitson as he was unconvinced that interests were genetic or could be identified in youth. His extensive counseling practice taught him that many youth had no interests. Instead of being inherent, he believed that interests could be *developed* with the help of counselors

who could promote the application of interests to vocations after learning more about the individual and the environment.\footnote{Harry Dexter Kitson, "Psychology in Vocational Adjustment," \textit{Personnel \& Guidance Journal} 36 (1958), 314-319.}

In grounding his conception of interests, Kitson was influenced heavily by James’ \textit{Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Life’s Ideals} and Dewey’s \textit{Interest and Effort in Education}. Dewey described interests as active, direct and personal, and attached to an object. However, the object allows the interest to be acted upon or to bring emotions into being. Objects or subjects become interesting as they come into relationship with an already existing idea or subjective feeling or goal. It was a mistake, Dewey believed, to consider any interest completed or unimportant in such a way that new interests could not be developed as an outgrowth of existing ones. He encouraged teachers to identify a course of action that students might take and to tie a new interest to their desire to fulfill that course of action.\footnote{John Dewey, \textit{Interest and Effort in Education} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 114 (accessed May 9, 2010), 43.}

Following a similar train of thought, James believed that any interest could be linked to an existing interest; through this association both become more interesting, associating a native interest with a new one.\footnote{William James, \textit{Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Life’s Ideals}, 1899), 626 (accessed May 12, 2010), 47.} Kitson drew upon both these philosophers in his thinking about vocational interests and how they could be stimulated by employers. He hypothesized that employers could encourage further employee commitment by providing more information about both the product and the industry itself and by linking these new interests to the employee’s existing values.
and interests, thereby encouraging greater employee loyalty and dedication. In addition, youth could be stimulated to be interested in vocations by linking their existing interests to aspects of a vocation that might be conceptually related, which could lead to a broader set of vocational interests and additional vocational choices. This belief in the ability of interests to be developed rather than interests as a static variable was linked to his view of the self and to how self-knowledge developed which will be explored further in the following chapter.

Kitson’s distinguished career included the first dissertation on the vocational choices of college students, an active life as an editor of the National Vocational Guidance Association journal, Occupations, and a hand in new educational techniques such as hosting the first weekly radio program on careers “On Your Job” on NBC, editing the American School of the Air series on careers, the first educational talking picture and two additional movies. All of these activities focused on providing guidance to youth and adults with vocational choice and adjustment problems. His focus on vocational guidance as a way of helping people through useful advising, rather than on vocational psychology as a research science is a signature concept behind his “school” and one with which his students became imbued as well as they prepared for careers as vocational counselors.

Mentoring a generation of new professionals is one of the significant contributions that an academic can make to a field. After Kitson was invited to teach at Columbia University and asked to develop a coherent and thoughtful training program for vocational guidance practitioners, not only did he plan the program but he taught and mentored students from all over the world who became international leaders in the field
in China, India, Egypt and other countries. Among his domestic students was Donald Super who would become one of the most influential vocational psychologists of the 20th century.

Super was born into a family where vocations were already a concern. Son of a personnel specialist who worked for the YMCA throughout his career and a writer who explored foreign relations, Super spent part of his childhood in the United Kingdom, attended a French boarding school and lived in Warsaw for several years as a child, enabling him to speak fluent French, Polish, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. After graduating from Exeter and Oxford with Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees, he returned to the U.S. to explore his career ideas. While working at the Cleveland YMCA, he established a volunteer community counseling agency to reach out to people with vocational problems, crystallizing his interest in working with the unemployed and introducing him to Harry Dexter Kitson, who served on the agency’s advisory board. At Teachers College with Kitson’s mentoring, he studied vocational guidance and vocational psychology but soon established his own views of vocational choice as a developmental process rather than a single choice. As he established his career, he taught at Clark University, served in the Army Air Corps during World War II, and returned to Teachers College, Columbia University to become Kitson’s colleague until Kitson’s retirement in 1951.\(^5\)

Super’s early work drew upon his emerging interest in career decision making as a developmental process which diverged from Kitson’s focus on vocational choice as a single event but retained Kitson’s views of the importance of self. Among his important theoretical contributions, his belief that career development is a process of the implementation of self-concept has been especially influential in the field. Defined as “the constellation of self-attributes considered by the individual to be vocationally relevant,” Super focused on personality traits such as self-esteem, stability and realism as factors in career decisions. In further research, he considered the relationship between self-concept, occupational preferences and choices, moderated by beliefs about the actual self, ideal self and occupational choices. An outgrowth of this work has been research on the relationship to self-efficacy theory and career choice which measures an individual’s belief in their ability to perform a given behavior. This has been found particularly salient in women’s career development.76 Although there are considered to be some issues with operational definitions, and more contemporary research has resulted in significant changes in the use of these terms, the idea that self-concept, self-efficacy and self-esteem are related to career development, particularly for women, has made an important theoretical contribution to the field.

Another major contribution Super made was the introduction of the concept of work values into career development theory. Although he was not the first to observe that different workers derived satisfaction from different aspects of work, he expanded on this

idea and named these factors “work values”, a term now in common use in the vocabulary of career development and occupational choice, where they have joined interests and abilities as key concepts in understanding individual differences. The Work Values Inventory created for Super’s Career Pattern Study was the first test designed specifically to measure them. Since the 1970s, the researchers who developed SIGI Plus and Discover, computer-assisted vocational guidance software, have relied heavily on work values such as variety, income, and helping others to help college students distinguish among occupations. Although there has been relatively little empirical research to support their validity, work values are still in common use in the vocabulary of occupational choice.

Because Super came early to believe that career choice was a series of choices, not a single decision point, he worked on understanding the process that individuals experience as they choose, enter, and then leave an occupation upon retirement. Using his linguistic background, he carefully defined life stages as growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement, and clarified tasks that needed to be completed at each stage. As he worked on researching stages as they apply to career development, he learned that both career maturity and task coping were important in understanding adults at different developmental points in their life stages and helped to explain variability of behavior. The instruments he developed in this effort were used in his longitudinal Career Pattern Study where he explored developmental tasks of

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adolescents and young adults as they were completed during different life stages, resulting in the addition of the concepts of career maturity and adaptability to the vocabulary of career development. He also expanded the definition of vocational guidance, adding concepts that reflected his contributions to the field - the process of helping a person develop an integrated and adequate picture of themselves and of their role in the world of work through stages over their lifetime.\(^78\)

Later in his career, Super combined all the concepts that he then believed impacted career development into the Life Career Rainbow and the Archway of Career Determinants, visual representations of his years of research. The Life Career Rainbow drew together the five stages of development, life roles held during the life span such as student, workers, spouse, homemaker, leisurite and parent, five vocational tasks, and personal and situational determinants such as home, community, education and work. The Archway of Career Determinants continued his theoretical description, using the “self” as the keystone of the arch as he tried to meld personal developmental tasks with the challenges of the labor market and economy including social policy, peer influence, employment practices, and family and community influences.\(^79\) Super conceded in some of his later work that his theory was not comprehensive and testable but believed he had put in place segments of theory that would ultimately result in a significant contribution to the field.


As with Kitson, part of Super’s legacy to the field were his students. Early in his years as a professor and mentor at Teachers’ College, John Crites, a young professional with a background in personnel psychology, joined the program and became his student and later, his life-long friend. Crites assisted with research on Super’s Career Pattern Study and used data from it to write his dissertation on ego strength and interest patterns. While continuing as co-author with Super on the second edition of *Appraising Vocational Fitness*, a well-known textbook on career assessment, he took a position as senior counselor and later director of the Counseling Center at the University of Iowa, keeping his roles as practitioner and researcher in balance. Crites’ primary research interest at that time lay in understanding career maturity and resulted in the publication of an assessment now called the Career Maturity Inventory which has been widely used in research especially with high school and later, college students and other adults to identify attitudes towards the career choice process. The test consists of an Attitude scale and five competence scales (knowing yourself, knowing about jobs, choosing a job, looking ahead, and what should they do), and it resulted in higher scores for more mature responses.  

In 1969, Crites published *Vocational Psychology: The Study of Vocational Behavior and Development*. Part history of the profession and part analysis of vocational psychology as a field of applied psychology, Crites reiterated definitions that could further serve to distinguish each area of concern about vocational choice. He defined

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vocational psychology as the “study of an individual’s vocational behavior and development through years of choice and adjustment”. He reminded readers that vocational guidance was the “process of assistance designed to aid the individual in choosing and adjusting to a career” and that career counseling was a profession, not a field of academic study, although its methods could be researched and validated. He contributed to the field by delineating then current theories of vocational choice: accidental, supply and demand, cultural and sociological theories, psychological theories, trait and factor, psychodynamic or psychoanalytical theories, self theories and typological theories and described additional problems in vocational adjustment. His goal was to further clarify the role of vocational psychology as a distinct discipline in applied psychology and to distinguish it from the profession of career counseling.

Due to his work as an active professional in career counseling, however, he later turned his research from vocational psychology to methods of career counseling and built on the substantial scholarship he and his colleagues at the University of Iowa Counseling Center were accumulating. His work contributed to the development of the profession of career counseling as it continued to distinguish itself from vocational guidance.

Finally, Crites was a critic of the psychologist, Dr. John Holland, whose lifelong work on vocational interests resulted in a well-known interest inventory, the Self-Directed Search (SDS). Holland occupied a different theoretical home and worked with the psychometricians at Midwestern universities who will be described later in this

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82 Ibid., 24.
chapter. In a review of the SDS in 1978 in the *Eighth Mental Measurement Yearbook* where psychological tests are listed and evaluated, Crites described the characteristics of this individually administered and self-scored interest inventory and raised a number of issues he concluded would make the test unreliable. The main foundation of the test is the “matching men and jobs” approach which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. The SDS summarizes the test taker’s characteristics and relates them to occupations where others share those characteristics, assuming that similarity in interests and work environment provide satisfaction. This is sometimes called “birds of a feather flock together”. While not disagreeing with the clichés that formulate the principles of interest inventories, among other failures Crites condemned Holland’s scoring methodology due to the possibility of scorer error and the weighting of score totals in the summary section. The now-famous hexagon, which visually shows the relationship of each personality type and work environment and is used for demonstrating congruence among them, was faulted for its conceptual distortion. Words such as “simplistic, naïveté, and mishmash” were used to describe Holland’s work. It is clear that there were significant professional differences between these two branches of vocational psychology, which resulted in both personal and professional tension.

**Psychological Testing Comes of Age**

From the preceding summary, we can see that Harry Dexter Kitson, his students and their descendents made significant contributions to the evolution of vocational psychology.

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guidance and the emergence of vocational psychology as a subfield in psychology, as well as in the development of the profession of career counseling. Their scholarly research, contributions from their professional activities in organizations and meetings, and their teaching and mentoring of future academics and counselors influenced the field through its most productive period in the mid 20th century. Under the initial influence of Kitson followed by Super, Crites and more recently Savikas, the field of social cognition was built upon self-knowledge and self-evaluation. These processes which are general to all people rather than unique to one individual form the paradigm that characterizes their work. As counselors, they work as partners or guides to their clients and consider the needs of the clients to resolve issues in their lives to be the focus of counseling.

Another paradigm, meanwhile, had been developing in Midwestern universities where a commitment to scientific research on psychological tests resulted in a different view of how individuals made vocational choices. Starting in the 1930s, psychologists including John Darley, Donald Paterson, and E.G. Williamson at the University of Minnesota researched vocational choice and college student career behavior. Founding researchers for the Minnesota Employment Stabilization Institute, established to determine best practices to assist unemployed adults during the Depression, they were under pressure from the large numbers of unemployed and intensified their search for psychological tests that would identify an individual’s abilities and personality. These tests were intended to be combined with occupational information and employment retraining in order to get adults back into the labor force. This unique set of economic and political circumstances, combined with their training and philosophy, resulting in a
conceptual framework for vocational guidance and vocational psychology including what came to be known as trait-factor counseling. They would be joined later by John Holland, a doctoral candidate at the University, whose work on interests and interest inventories and extensive publishing would make him one of the well-known and influential vocational psychologists of the 20th century.

While Kitson and his students explored the process of maturation and decision-making, focusing on occupational knowledge and self-knowledge, the Midwestern psychologists concerned themselves with the content of personality and occupations, applying Parsons’ person-environment fit/matching men to jobs concepts. In response to pressure to serve their Depression-era clients, they established a counseling philosophy based on psychological tests that has been stereotyped as “three appointments and a cloud of dust”, since an introductory counseling session, a testing session followed by one test interpretation session was all the time they spent with them. In their paradigm, the counselor was the expert, selecting appropriate tests, analyzing the results and recommending action resulting in placement for the clients. Heavily influenced early on by Wundt’s experimentalism, this group of psychologists conceptualized the self as a cluster of personality traits and focused on increasing knowledge about individual differences through more sophisticated psychological testing and interpretation. Ultimately, this resulted in the field of personality psychology.

The main conceptual approach associated with this group of psychologists is trait-factor theory. Influenced by Parsons’ notion of “matching men to jobs“ and further refined by psychometric tests that were being developed at Minnesota, traits were defined
as unique characteristics of an individual, and factors were the characteristics of work that make up an occupational profile. Based on scientific research and experimentalism, trait-factor counseling utilizes scientific problem solving and values a rational model of decision-making. In order to place people in jobs, occupational information to inform the client about the environment and the qualities needed for success in an occupation is critical. During the 1930s and 40s, the need for this information burgeoned and resulted in the creation by the U.S. Department of Labor of the Occupational Outlook Handbook and Dictionary of Occupational Titles, enormous works even in their online versions and still considered primary resources on occupations. One of the largest uses of trait-factor theory occurred during World War II when the country was forced to quickly analyze and place millions of men and women into critical military occupations. Teams of psychologists were mobilized to develop psychological tests such as the Army Alpha and Beta and much data on the effectiveness of their theories was created for later analysis and interpretation. As other theories of vocational choice and career counseling appeared, trait-factor counseling took on an outdated aura. However, in analyses by Crites and others of counseling strategies in use in the latter half of the 20th century, trait-factor theory can be seen in the work of Super and in that of John Holland, whose tests matched individuals with work environment, as well as in common counseling techniques used by computerized guidance systems such as SIGI Plus and Discover.

84 Crites, Vocational Psychology: The Study of Vocational Behavior and Development, 103.

There are four principle theorists whose work on psychological testing and individual differences will be described here – Donald Paterson, Dr. John Darley, Dr. E.G. Williamson and Dr. John Holland, author of the well-known interest inventory, the Self-Directed Search. Professor Donald Paterson established his career in applied psychology following World War I when he was assigned to administer the Army Alpha and Beta tests under the guidance of Robert Yerkes, one of their principal developers. After the war, he worked for the Scott Corporation, founded by his wartime colleague and psychologist Walter Dill Scott, where he continued his work on personnel selection. Despite the lack of a PhD, he was invited to the University of Minnesota to assume a faculty position and took with him the insight that an enormous amount of employee turnover, absenteeism and dissatisfaction was the result of lack of adequate vocational counseling and guidance during school. He dedicated his academic career to understanding and providing solutions to that problem, as did his doctoral students. With his colleagues, Paterson developed the “Minnesota Point of View” which included three tenets: that the unique individual should be the focus of concern by vocational psychologists, that objective data and research were critical, and that test results and data could guide actions. These pragmatic conclusions meshed well with the atmosphere in land grant institutions such as Minnesota, Kansas, Iowa, Michigan State and the University of Missouri where meeting the needs of people and using knowledge in a practical way to provide a livelihood was engrained. This thinking has been called

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86 Jesse Erdheim, Michael J. Zickar and Maya Yankelevich, "Remembering Donald G. Paterson: Before the separation between industrial–organizational and vocational psychology," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 70, no. 1 (2, 2007), 209.
“dustbowl empiricism” which, in psychology, endorsed empirical means of knowing such as observation, quantitative methods and measurement, and devalued theory. Paterson was soon involved in the Minnesota Employment Stabilization Institute, established to understand and assist with unemployment during the Depression. As part of the Unemployment Research Project, Paterson chaired the division on vocational diagnosis, guidance and training and was involved with efforts to establish more effective public employment offices. While he valued psychological tests, he also believed in the role that counselor could play in guiding clients to assess their health, financial stability, and interests, all of which played important roles in vocational choice and satisfaction. As an outgrowth of the work he was conducting with the unemployed, Paterson and his student, E.G. Williamson, played key roles in the development of student personnel counseling and student services where he maintained his allegiance to data. With others who were implementing the Minnesota Point of View, Paterson and Williamson developed and implemented an extensive program of ability, interest and aptitude testing and evaluation to help students make vocational choices. In addition to the test results, however, Paterson believed in the importance of advising and counseling students experiencing problems. A committee of faculty counselors was established at Minnesota during his tenure there where attention was paid to other aspects of students’ lives such as financial resources, health and family situations. Data on the counselor’s work and on students was

carefully collected as a program of student personnel evolved. The relationship between student personnel counseling and vocational psychology will be examined more thoroughly in the next chapter.

Throughout his career, Paterson also retained his interest in personnel selection and worker adjustment. He continued his involvement in selection testing where he focused on improved testing and validation of ratings. Recent observers of vocational psychology regard Paterson as one of the last psychologists to work in both vocational psychology and industrial-organizational psychology before they divided into distinct fields. His focus on individual differences as well as on a comprehensive approach to vocational guidance and employee selection has made a lasting difference in the field.

John Darley, who earned his PhD at the University of Minnesota in 1937, developed his career as a clinician and practitioner by taking on the directorship of the Student Counseling Bureau. There he continued his interest in individual differences nurtured by Paterson, focusing on psychological profiling of college students, personality test development, and the case study method of counseling. He conducted extensive research on the Strong Vocational Interest Blank and worked towards moving interest testing closer to personality assessment. In addition, with his mentor, Paterson, he co-authored a book on the work of the Minnesota Employment Stabilization Institute, *Men, Women and Jobs: A Study in Human Engineering*. The book offered an analysis of

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88 Ibid., 141.

the causes and solutions for unemployment. They found that during the Depression whether a person lost a job early or late was not a significant factor in their ability to find another. The study confirmed the unemployed were not “human production units”, as they were sometimes described, to be categorized and studied as a group but that they differed in abilities, physical condition, background and personality, all of which related to their employment status. Even within groups of unemployed with special needs such as drifters, workforce beginners, the physically handicapped or maladjusted workers, there was still considerable variability. At the time, this was a significant finding that added to the understanding of individual differences. Paterson and Darley also explored the role that education played in unemployment and concluded that the educational system had some responsibility for vocational maladjustment because schools did little diagnosis of the relationship between students’ interests, abilities and aspirations. They also cited the common American belief that any student who tries can accomplish anything as the source of false expectations of the educational and employment system, confusing access to educational opportunity with equal outcome of education. Progressive education, they concluded, would fail unless it was individualized to meet children’s needs. They also analyzed problems with state employment bureaus, which had recently been expanded to assist the unemployed. At that time, data was not available to allow employment bureaus to test individuals and match their skills with those necessary for certain types of work; no employment trait patterns of work had yet been identified although it seemed likely to the researchers that they existed and would eventually be described. Despite this failing, they recognized the social significance of the employment bureaus insofar as they served
a dual role in accumulating data about employment cycles and acted as clearing houses for labor supply and demand. Darley and Paterson concluded their research on human engineering by suggesting three principles: that traits of behavior can be measured with careful methodology, that individual and group differences uncovered by tests can be used in differential selection and guidance of workers and that no measuring instrument is perfect, requiring further research.\textsuperscript{90}

Darley also wrote extensively about vocational interest measurement with another colleague, Theda Hagenah, in \textit{Vocational Interest Measurement}. In a thoughtful introductory chapter, the authors explored the meaning of work and jobs, considering topics such as mobility in employment, the complex relationship of interests to work satisfaction and of satisfaction to work-related interests at various occupational levels in American society. At the same time, they conceded that counselors working with clients should deal with the individual’s interests and concerns and not economic trends or workforce needs. Tension over this issue still exists and its contemporary manifestation will be explored in the next chapter. Sources of satisfaction for those whose interests could not be fulfilled through their work were also examined. The primary focus of the study was an extensive examination of the Strong Vocational Interest Blank for Men, exploring the history of interest measurement and the background of the test.\textsuperscript{91} Of main concern to this study of Kitson and his work, however, is Darley and Hagenah’s

\textsuperscript{90} Paterson, D.G. and Darley, John G., \textit{Men, Women and Jobs: A Study in Human Engineering; a Review of the Studies of the Committee on Individual Diagnosis and Training} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1936), 124.

\textsuperscript{91} Darley, John G. and Theda Hegnah, \textit{Vocational Interest Measurement: Theory and Practice} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), 279.
examination of theoretical considerations on the origin and development of interests which they found lacking, due perhaps to the schism between an individual’s occupation and personal life, inadequate operational definitions in research, or lack of clarity regarding interests as variables. They cited the work done by Fryer on interest measurement in 1931 as an early attempt to differentiate between interests and the motivation to utilize interests as well as Fryer’s historical discussion of the topic. Very early in the history of psychology, interest was not recognized as a factor in vocational choice since work was chosen to benefit the needs of industry. Although this attitude had changed as more knowledge about individual differences included the right to have and act on interests, industry only recognized the concept of worker satisfaction as the human efficiency movement examined modern industrial society. Darley and Hagenah praised Fryer who, despite the limitations of research in the first quarter of the 20th century, was able to identify most of the issues they considered relevant in the 1960s. Strong, with all his research data, did not deal directly with the theoretical problems that interests provided and even some of his statements about them appeared to Darley to be tentative. They concluded that a complete theory regarding interests was still to come in the future but drew some conclusions about the nature of interests and vocational choice based on their distinction between interests and abilities and the need for people to develop a sense that their lives matter in the lives of others. Occupational choice and measured interests represented the value system, needs and motivation of the worker. Occupational status affected work satisfaction with high level status occupations providing intrinsic satisfaction and low status positions requiring external satisfaction All of these theoretical
considerations complicated the role of the counselor. Later in his life, Darley was very active in the APA (American Psychological Association), serving as executive director for three years and later as dean of the graduate school at Minnesota where he was well-respected as an administrator and mentor. 92

Another of Paterson’s students, E. G. Williamson, took his training on individual differences directly to clinical work with college students at the University of Minnesota and spent his career there heading the Student Counseling Bureau, serving as Dean of Students and advocating for a holistic view of college student development and experience. While it is generally although not universally recognized that college students mature and learn outside the classroom through participation in student organizations and athletics, campus employment and residential experiences, Williamson was among the first to stress the importance of students’ co-curricular experiences as well as their academic preparation in their maturation. He worked to professionalize college student personnel as a field distinct from faculty advising and to advocate for the application of the Minnesota Point of View to college student life. He established a counseling bureau that focused on vocational counseling as well as personal counseling and was instrumental in describing all these activities in the Student Personnel Point of View. This publication set out a series of principles about college student growth and development in the college environment that were widely adopted by practitioners until recent years. 93


further discussion of his influence specifically on college career advising will occur in Chapter Five.

As the field of vocational psychology moved towards counseling, Williamson was a founder and promoter of the new profession of counseling psychology. Near the end of his active career at the University of Minnesota, he also filled the role of historian for the profession in his book, *Vocational Counseling: some historical, philosophical and theoretical perspectives*. There he reasserted the importance of freedom of vocational choice in a democracy, and in addition, the role that counselors could play in eliminating barriers and restrictions to choice as well as expanding range of choices for all adults and adolescents despite limits that some claimed were imposed by laziness or lack of aptitude. In his historical review of vocational psychology, he singled out Kitson for a “return to over-simplification” in the profession in one of the more extensive historical examinations of Kitson’s role in the field. He observed that early psychologists such as Bloomfield and Kitson abandoned the external analysis of individuals advocated by Parsons’ in Step One of his proposed vocational choice process for self-analysis of interests and abilities and the observation of work tasks. According to Williamson’s reading of early work such as Kitson’s *I Find My Vocation*, these early psychologists believed that human capacities varied so widely that many could succeed adequately in many occupations, thus creating a need for different means of vocational analysis in lieu of psychological testing. He conceded that what individuals want in an occupation is important, however, and that Kitson’s self-analysis could be relevant in that process. He also agreed with Kitson’s article on “monitory” vocational guidance which warned that
psychological tests posed limitations and could pigeonhole an individual, a still unresolved problem for the field. And he concluded that Kitson may have been misled about psychological testing by his dissertation research with psychomotor sensory tests rather than more current capability tests developed in succeeding years.\(^9^4\)

The final psychologist in this study influenced by the Minnesota Point of View and a key link between psychological testing and college student career advising, John Holland was also a student of Paterson. He became well-known for, among other things, his theory of careers and the practical instruments to be used by counselors to implement it. First published in 1959 and continuously revised based on research data, his theory relied on concepts from previous psychological research which identified a relationship between vocational choice and personality and identified work environments based on the personality of those who inhabited them. The addition of the hexagon to explain the relationship of degrees of congruence among vocational interests and environments made the theory more useful. Interestingly, Kitson himself had written about a hexagon related to careers in 1929 although from a totally different perspective. Using the hexagon as a visual metaphor, one of Kitson’s strengths as a teacher and scholar, he recommended that those choosing occupations examine them from six perspectives: the social, physical, mental, economic, moral and physiological. It appears that Holland was aware of Kitson’s writing about the hexagon but since Holland utilized it to explain the relationship among interest patterns and work environments, he clearly did not view the

relationship between Kitson’s use and his own as strong enough to credit Kitson as the predecessor to his work. Although Holland had a reputation for careful citation of sources and charitable acknowledgement of others contributions to his research, no attribution to Kitson’s work appears to exist.\(^9\) This could be an indication of how Kitson’s influence in the field had waned although no direct evidence to support that view was found.

Holland introduced the first version of his theory of vocational choice in 1959 and using his own and colleagues’ continuing research, refined it several times. His final summary appeared in his 1997 book, *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments* where he summarized the key components of his ideas. Always eager to be useful, Holland explained that the purpose of his theory was to explain vocational behavior, provide practical ways for youth and adults to reach satisfying career choices and to select appropriate jobs. From scores obtained from the Self-Directed Search, the degree of similarity to model personality types can be determined; an individual’s personality traits and behaviors can be determined based on how closely he/she resembled each personality type. His theory is based on personality as well as educational and social behavior and is supported by four simple findings. 1. In our culture, most persons fit into one of six personality types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. 2. In addition, there are six work environments that are dominated by members of one personality type and where the setting offered opportunities for certain types of problem-solving and work

challenges interesting to that personality type. The environments are again realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. People choose environments based on their personality, skills, values and abilities and select those that allow them to take on roles and solve problems that interest them. Finally, factors such as choice of vocation, achievement, personal competence, and educational and social behavior can be determined by the interaction between personality and environment. Other attributes such as congruence, consistency, identity, and differentiation from the dominant type also contribute to explaining vocational behavior, and the relationships among the environments on a hexagon can provide additional insight. In addition, Holland’s research showed that interest inventories are personality inventories where a person’s motivation, knowledge, personality and abilities will be expressed. The environments are based on vocational stereotypes which have reliable psychological and sociological meaning even when they are inaccurate or incomplete. Since many people choose work environments because they share personal qualities with others in that environment, vocations tend to provide consistent types of problems and interpersonal environments. Finally, vocational stability and satisfaction comes from congruence between the person and the environment. This theory which can be applied simply through a self-administered test and explained visually via the hexagon became one of the most commonly used and thoroughly research and validated.

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Early in his research career, Holland also contributed to the conversation regarding the effect of college on students, territory later owned by his colleague from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, Alexander Astin. In a 1957 study of scientists, Holland’s work showed that universities had different outcomes in their production of scientists based not on the experience of those students during college but on students’ differing attributes when they entered the college or university. Astin’s further investigation of college effects resulted in a vast body of research on input-output models. Holland and other colleagues also explored the relationship between academic and nonacademic accomplishments in college selection and success. While this area of research generated controversy, he was able to show that the selection of college applicants solely on the basis of previous academic accomplishments eliminated many talented individuals whose strengths lay in non-academic areas.97

Although Holland researched and published extensive revisions of his career theory over the years based on his own and his colleagues’ research as well as the extensive research using his theory that was produced by other psychologists, he remained the target of criticism by the “Kitson” wing of vocational psychology. This group included the developmentalists Super and Crites who were critical both of elements of his theory and for its alleged similarity to discredited trait-factor concepts. As previously mentioned, Crites in a 1974 review of a revision of the SDS characterized it as the “mis-directed search” and referred to one of the test features much valued by

practicing counselors, self-scoring and interpretation, as a barrier to adequate professional test interpretation and counseling.\textsuperscript{98} According to one of his collaborators, Holland used such tension created by his work to fuel his continued research agenda, continuing in a highly productive career to refine and improve his work, using humor to deflect his critics.\textsuperscript{99} In an article following Crites’ review and other similarly critical publications, Holland concluded his defense of self-administered testing and his advocacy for simple, inexpensive and easily understandable vocational information with this quip: “If all goes well, vocational counseling will eventually be used only for a few unusual clients…. A few psychologists will give demonstrations at conventions to illustrate how vocational counseling used to be done, but eventually they will shunted off to hobby fairs along with bookbinding and calligraphy.”\textsuperscript{100} 

Holland was referring to the field’s more recent focus on career counseling as a form of mental health therapy. This became the primary method for delivering career guidance starting in the 1960s. It is beyond the scope of this study to explore all the events in the evolution of vocational psychology but it is interesting to note that early practitioners concerned themselves with both vocational guidance and work adjustment. However, following half a century of research on psychological tests to identify interests and abilities and the concomitant creation of theories of vocational choice and vocational

\footnote{98} \textsuperscript{98} Crites, \textit{Review of the Self-Directed Search: The Misdirected Search}, 1608-1612.


adjustment, the field turned its attention to the development of effective counseling methods. A new field in applied psychology, counseling psychology, was established. Many who were trained as vocational psychologists moved into this new field, primarily studying adolescent occupational choice. Those interested in work adjustment and personnel selection aligned themselves with industrial/organizational psychology, emphasizing adult work adjustment. In the 21st century, vocational psychologists are struggling for recognition of their extensive research history, and the field is experiencing an identity crisis that has yet to be resolved.101

In summary, since Harry Dexter Kitson entered the field he knew as vocational guidance and vocational psychology early in the 1900s, two primary streams of thought based on differing views of the self and career choice have dominated. One, of which Kitson was a pioneer, was founded on the developmental dimension of the self as described by Dewey. It emphasized the process of maturation and decision-making in vocational choice. The other focused on differences among individual personality traits which can be identified through psychological testing. Kitson’s students and their descendents were key players in the establishment of concepts regarding career development as a lifelong process, now accepted as standard in the field, and on the role that interests play in career choice and satisfaction. The next chapter will explore in more depth the philosophical and psychological underpinnings for these differing views of self

and how Angell, Dewey and James’ ideas may have influenced Kitson and his colleagues.
CHAPTER IV
PHILOSOPHICAL CONSTRUCTS UNDERLYING VOCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Implicit in the differences between Kitson and the Minnesota psychologists are two philosophical and psychological perspectives on the self, each with historical roots and implications. This chapter will explore these differences and where they fit in the history of psychology as well as the impact they had on schools of thought and research in vocational psychology. Kitson’s view of the self was influenced by his doctoral adviser at the University of Chicago, James Rowland Angell, who studied with both William James and John Dewey. James’ early philosophical work laid the groundwork for an exploration of the basic nature of the self while Dewey added the concept of the self as a social entity as well as the role that interests play in the developing self.

Historically, the self has not always been an object of concern to philosophers as they tried to understand human consciousness or to the average person. While self-help, self-actualization, and finding ones’ self are common issues in modern life, our ancestors would have found the terms bewildering and the time and money spent on their pursuit more bizarre. The contemporary philosopher, Roy Baumeister, provides psychologists with an analysis of how the self became a problem to be studied which is useful to understand the concepts that influenced James, Dewey, Angell and ultimately, Kitson. Even though “know thyself” was an exhortation of early Greek philosophers, Baumeister believed it was not understood in the way we would conceive of that phrase today.
Doing one’s duty in life required knowledge of one’s abilities and capacities but that knowledge was not expected to provide satisfaction or fulfillment to the individual.

According to his analysis, during early Christian times, the self had little meaning outside the framework of religious obligation. It was not until the late Middle Ages when the idea that the visible self did not represent the actual self became common that introspection and individual difference began to make the self a problem area requiring intensive exploration. Literature and theatre began to reflect the belief that all was not as it seemed as playing roles to hide the true self captured the popular imagination. While this period focused on identifying the true self and motivation of others, it was not until sincerity was widely accepted as a valuable personal trait that showing one’s inner self in an authentic manner became a virtue, although not yet a problem. It was Puritanism with its belief that only some were among the “elect” to be saved from eternal damnation that forced self-consciousness on its followers. When people became aware that it was possible to falsely believe they were saved, truly knowing and understanding one’s self became important although fraught with uncertainty and tentativeness due to the unknowable quality of salvation. Tentativeness once established has remained a feature of self-knowledge. The Romantic era after Puritanism added the idea that each unique individual had a destiny to discover and fulfill, thus expanding the realm of the self. However, self-scrutiny during the Victorian era was hampered by repression and prudishness, paving the way for Freud and his complex analysis of the hidden psychosexual self which could only be revealed through analysis. Thus by the time the

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new discipline of psychology grew out of philosophy in the 1800s, it was clear to everyone that understanding the self was a difficult task albeit important to a good life. Heidegger and Maslow made additional contributions to this conversation when they added the concept ‘fulfillment of potential’ to the burden of self-knowledge, thus laying the groundwork for psychologists to struggle with three key issues that remain important today: how to form a concept of one’s potential, how to fulfill that potential and how to adjust to lack of fulfillment should it occur.

When psychologists took on the question of the self, new issues that had not concerned philosophers or theologians arose. Originally occupied with mental processes, psychologists soon wanted to understand stream of consciousness, habits, feelings, emotions, and what constituted thought. Initially, psychologists were fearful of conflating the psychological concept of self with the religious meaning of the soul. They also steered away from any suggestion the self could take on characteristics of the homunculus, a tiny ‘person’ allegedly created by alchemists or believed by 16th century doctors to control inexplicable processes within the human body. Needless to say, the new field of psychology did not want to be associated with any such hint of pseudo science as it struggled to describe the processes and qualities that defined the self.

Some clarity was found when the philosopher, William James, explored the self. Due to his own unique upbringing in a prominent family of transcendentalists, writers and theologians, as well as his own struggles with depression and high family

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104 Ibid., 166
expectations, William James was especially interested in thinking about the human self, the meaning of life, and the role of individual will in a social context. It was important to him that his own life had a context in a social environment and that his work had meaning and purpose, topics he examined both for himself and in his extensive writing. In preparation for his own work, he read the classics of empiricism, the rationalist tradition, mental and moral philosophy, works on consciousness, spiritualism, hypnotism and split personality before he constructed his own views of the psychology of the self. James introduced many of the key concepts that would continue to engage psychologists in a famous chapter on the self in both his books *The Principles of Psychology* and its shorter textbook version, *Psychology*. He distinguished between the ‘me–self’, the empirical self, and the ‘thought-self,’ the I or knower. Within the ‘me-self,’ he described three aspects that broke new conceptual ground for psychology. The material self consisted of all one’s important possessions such as body, clothes, family and home as well as wealth produced by one’s own labor. Now sometimes called the principle of multiplicity of selves, James described the social self composed of as many selves as there are individuals who carry an image of you in their minds. Further, an individual would behave differently with each social group since each group could know you in a specific way with the most singular self taking place in the mind of the person who loves you. It is important not to underestimate the uniqueness of this perspective when read with modern eyes. At the time, mental and moral philosophy, the term used as a

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precursor to psychology, viewed the mind as an “indivisible, autonomous unit or as an accretion of discrete, associated ideas.” James wrote about a larger perspective of the self which was social as well as material and which was formed by relationships with the world outside of the individual. This social self was not preexisting but was created from interaction with the norms and values of others.

Finally, James believed the third aspect of the “me,” the spiritual self, consisted of feelings of subjectivity from multiple states of consciousness. He meant this to be the inner or subjective being which was able to think of itself as a thinker with the capacity for self-appreciation and self-preservation or self-seeking. He demonstrated his view of self-esteem with a ratio: self equals success over pretensions and suggested that self-esteem could be increased by lowering aspirations as well as by increasing successes. And he believed that men could and did distinguish their ideal selves from their actual selves.

In exploring the ‘I-self,’ James described self-identity, the ability to recognize the same self continuously. He explained that the sentence “I am the same as I was yesterday” does not really include the material self since that self changes subtly and continuously. In essential ways that change only very slowly, a person as a thinker or knower remains the same and is aware of that continuity of self. He concluded his chapter on the self with a discussion of multiple personalities and the negative effects that

106 Ibid., 109.
107 Ibid., 110.
a break between the ‘I’ and the ‘me’ can have, a topic which led him to explore spiritualism, hypnotism and other paranormal phenomenon later in his life..

Although John Dewey wrote about the self in a wide variety of contexts in philosophy and education including its development through experience, in education and in psychology, for the purpose of this chapter, his work on the social nature of the self and on the development of interests is most relevant. This and his other ideas about the self were profoundly influenced by James’ publication of *The Principles of Psychology* in 1890 after Dewey was already established as a respected philosopher who was thinking about psychology. Dewey’s subsequent work has been explored by scholars to understand the impact of James’ thought on his continued intellectual development. In his early work, Dewey defined psychology as the science of the facts or phenomena of the self and developed an argument based on the importance of intuition, four types of feeling, and on knowledge of God. At the same time, James was establishing American scientific psychology in his writing, using experimental data and incorporating biology and Darwinian evolution. Dewey was apparently quick to praise and to adopt James’ new ideas about the stream of consciousness after he read *The Principles of Psychology*. Within a few years, he had conceived of empirical self-realization and came to believe that the “moral ideal grows out of human experience and that the self that is realized is no transcendent metaphysical entity but rather the present empirical self, continuous with its

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past and future experience.”\textsuperscript{110} In other words, the self is not static and changes with experience.

Kitson received his introduction to James and Dewey via his mentor and doctoral adviser at the University of Chicago, James Rowland Angell, a psychologist who studied directly under both Dewey and James. After a twenty-five year career teaching at Chicago, a position offered to him by Dewey, he later served as President of Yale University as well as serving a term as president of the American Psychological Association. He was one of the main proponents of functionalism, the belief that the function of an organism is to improve the organism’s adaptive ability and that the goal of psychology to study how the mind adjusts to the environment. Angell identified two important psychological contributors to identity: memory and sense of bodily existence. Consciousness related to the concept of the self in two ways: as a subject thinking of its mental presentation and as an object of consciousness. Angell referred to James as the source for this concept, the self as knower, the ‘I’, and the self as object, the ‘me’. He makes clear his view which will come to be shared by Kitson that the self changes with experience and growth.

\textellipsis We see that although the self undoubtedly manifests tendencies toward the systematic unification of its own experiences, it is far from being a simple unity. It is highly complex in constitution, and in many particulars highly unstable. It is

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 102.
distinctly and characteristically a life phenomenon, with periods of growth and expansion, periods of maturity, and periods of decay and disintegration. But after all, the feeling of selfhood is the very core of our psychical being.\textsuperscript{111}

Dewey restated this idea in \textit{Democracy and Education} when he explained that the self is not fixed but rather in continuous formation through choice of action. He explained why people chose to do good when they could do bad things, and he puts the act of choosing a moral good in the context of the developing self, the active self, which is choosing an alternate course of action and an alternate social identity from among many possible choices.\textsuperscript{112}

Dewey also wrote extensively about interests, and it can be clearly seen that Kitson’s view of the development of vocational interests as an aspect of the self was influenced by Dewey’s ideas. In \textit{Democracy and Education}, written in 1916 when Kitson was just completing his dissertation and starting his academic career, Dewey defines interests to mean “the point at which an object touches or engages a man: the point where it influences him.” “To be interested is to be absorbed in, wrapped up in, carried away, by some object. To take an interest is to be on the alert, to care about, to be attentive.”\textsuperscript{113} In discussing the education of children, the focus of Dewey’s book, he goes on to describe the importance of linking interests to something that currently occupies the student rather than attempting to connect abstract concepts. Attaching some attractive


\hspace{1em}\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
feature of the object to some current interest that already occupies the student means that interest will be increased. ‘To become interested’ implies what is in between the current state of the student and the state that is the aim of a teacher. Dewey warns readers not to overlook the fact that moving across this middle is a process. Contemporary educators sometimes use the term ‘scaffolding’ as a means to gradually link a student’s prior knowledge to new knowledge in a similar way.

Kitson said a great deal about interests and the creation of interests, particularly in his major work *The Psychology of Vocational Adjustment*, and it can be clearly seen that he was influenced by Dewey and James.

For millions of generations – ever since the Eden episode – a great part of mankind has regarded work as a curse; has been uninterested in it and has tried to avoid it. Fortunately for the progress and happiness of society this attitude is not present in all human beings. Many exhibit the liveliest possible interest in their work. Still there are many who are only half interested, if not utterly unhappy in their work… How can a person be made interested in his work? This is a psychological question which can only be answered by a thorough discussion of interest.  

He goes on to specify that the word ‘interest’ should mean an impulse or that which arouses an action, clearly based on the idea Dewey suggested that interest is an active state. The average person, he writes, believes interests are inherited or inborn. A person will, therefore, be interested in an occupation because he was born with a predisposition in that direction or with an aversion for the same reason. Kitson now speaks of himself as the researcher. ‘Not only does the psychologist affirm that occupational interests are acquired through experience; he goes further and declares that

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the particular occupational interest of any man might have been cultivated in widely
different fields. “Any object not interesting in itself may become interesting.”\textsuperscript{115}

The question then asked is how to develop a vocational interest. “Two rules must be applied: First in order to arouse interest in an occupation, give information about it.” He goes on to describe various ways that employers can encourage interest on the part of their employees by giving them a broader perspective on the way their work fits into the overall business or the background underlying the production or sales of their product. He then applies the second rule to arouse interests.

In order to evoke interest in a type of work, arouse activity toward it. This principle is habitually employed by clubs, churches, colleges and philanthropic institutions who chose as members of the Board of Directors persons in whom they particularly wish to arouse interest. The victim is first elected a member of the Board…. placed on an important committee... and then becomes more and more deeply interested, finally making the financial contribution that everyone hoped he would make.\textsuperscript{116}

(This is, of course, still the way that philanthropic organizations engage donors 75 years later.)

He then describes various ways in which managers can take promising employees whose jobs may be, in fact, monotonous and not very interesting and create a stronger interest in the product or service by arousing some activity related to a different aspect of the work which would result in increased interest in and commitment to the employee’s job – teaching employees to give tours of the manufacturing plant or helping them learn to research advances in the product, for example. In a subsequent journal article on

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 26.
creating vocational interests, he reiterated his belief that individuals are not inherently interested in vocations.

The truth is that interest in a vocation can come only through experience and most youth have not had experiences conducive to the development of interests in specific vocations. Should we not then revise our view of interest as it relates to the process of vocational guidance? Instead of formulating our task as that of searching for the vocational interests of the individual, let us state it thus: One duty of the vocational counselor is to help the individual become interested in occupations which seem suitable when viewed in the light of his intellectual, physical, social and economic status.  

He then referred back to the treatises of psychology where help can be found. “William James words them as follows: (1) Give information about the object; (2) arouse activity toward it.” As one possible solution to arousing interests in youth, Kitson describes in detail programs of occupational research with library assignments, visits to employment locations, interviews with workers and courses where students can try out tools and other occupational materials to arouse interest in their use. He concluded with information about such a program that was being implement by his colleague at Teachers College, Columbia University which had achieved a great deal of success in converting student apathy into interests.

Dr. O’Rourke’s technique seems to be free from the psychological fallacies that afflict current approaches to occupational interest. It does not seek to discover an interest that isn’t there. It is not designed as a diagnostic instrument. Rather it is an ‘interest-creator.”

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118 Ibid., 567.

119 Ibid., 570.
Two Views of the Self

As the field of psychology developed further, two different interpretations of the self became the philosophical bases of the two viewpoints on vocational psychology previously described in Chapter Three. Personality psychologists often associated with the Minnesota psychologists such as Darley, Patterson and Williamson saw the self as a static item with unique individual traits that could be identified or diagnosed through testing. Social psychologists such as Kitson and Super studied an evolving self that was socially constructed, developing and growing.

In short, research on the self on the one side, and on personality processes on the other, represents two different traditions of theory, research strategies, and findings that have been asking closely related questions about people from two different but overlapping vantage points for many years. As a result there are now two literatures from two different starting points and vantage points that address aspects of the self.\(^{120}\)

The Minnesota psychologists, among others, who focused on identifying and studying stable individual differences saw the self in a dramatically different way as an enduring characteristic of a person that consisted of a series of traits which could be identified through psychological testing. Although trait-and-factor theory has not been popular recently, it held a prominent place in vocational psychology in the 1930s and 40s. At that time, it was based on Parsons’ concept of ‘matching men and jobs’ but additional research and theory had added psychological testing as a key tool in the process of identifying individual uniqueness and matching individuals to potential vocations. Based

on the idea that the self was composed of a variety of traits which could be identified through psychometrics, E. G. Williamson at the University of Minnesota developed counseling methods in which the counselor took an active, often assertive role, in solving vocational problems. Although aligned closely with scientific problem-solving methods, counselors incorporated rational cognitive methods to assist the student/client. Tests were interpreted, occupational information was provided, and the counselor used probing interview techniques to uncover the unique traits that each student possessed. This counseling method has been criticized as counselor-dominated and information-intensive but supporters believed that it offered information unavailable in other ways to its clients and was based on sound scientific research and theories. The client was responsible for interpreting and utilizing the vocational information as well as for the decisions that could be drawn from it.

Researchers who study the self and also study social cognition concern themselves not with traits but with how people think about their behavior. They are less interested in individual differences between people and more concerned with general self construction processes shared by all individuals such as core goals, motivation and conflict. The focus of their research in social cognition includes self-evaluation, self-regulation and self-construction over time. A person is seen as an adapting, interacting individual responding to behavior from the environment, making changes and adaptations based on self-reflection as well as personal factors. Although genetics is acknowledged to play a role in behavior, a person with thoughts, feelings and actions that can be
controlled is an active participant in her own development. Vocational psychologists interested in social cognition may study self-efficacy, the belief that an individual can influence events that shape his/her life. Persons with a strong belief in their ability to control their futures, high self-efficacy, consider difficult tasks to be challenges, not insurmountable obstacles, and trust that they have the skills and motivation to be successful. A sense of self-efficacy can be developed in individuals through verbal persuasion that they have the abilities required to be successful, through observing successful social models similar to themselves (a key concept in research on women and minorities) and by overcoming difficult challenges in other aspects of their lives. Needless to say, how to build and maintain strong self-efficacy has been a key goal in research by modern vocational psychology as well as a concern of those seeking effective interventions in career advising and counseling.

In recent years, psychologists who continued to study the self and those who branched out to study personality have increasingly been in separate academic worlds. Due to a series of chance events that separated them into different academic departments with their own unique research agendas, training programs and theories, social psychologists now focus on the study of the self and social cognition while the person is the target of analysis for personality psychology. In addition, the line between the

121 Ibid., 22.

definition of self and the definition of personality has also blurred with some definitions of self now sounding exactly like a definition of personality. This has resulted in two perspectives within the field of personality psychology itself. One tradition conceives of personality as a series of traits, commonly identified as the ‘Big Five’: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. According to this field of personality psychology, the five personality factors can be measured and used to conceptualize individual differences that lead to behavior which is stable over time and which often falls within the midrange on interpretive scales. Research by those who view personality in this way focuses on how to identify and describe ways in which people differ and to explain why people differ in stable ways throughout their lives. Several instruments now exist to measure these qualities such as the Big Five Inventory and the International Personality Item Pool. The second tradition has a closer relationship to theory and research on the self. It has resulted in a thread of research on systems of mediating processes and on conscious and unconscious structures with a focus on social cognitive-affective issues. Freud was an early practitioner of this form of personality psychology with his emphasis on psychosexual development followed by other psychologists such as Alfred Adler, Harry Stack Sullivan and Kurt Lewin.


Contemporary supporters of trait-and-factor theory argue that many other psychologists utilize some aspects of this view of self and vocational development without acknowledging its antecedents. Holland’s hexagon that identifies work environments and personality traits applies a matching principle. According to Robert Hoppock, a vocational psychologist who devoted his life to studying occupations and contributed to the development of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, occupations are chosen to meet needs. Thus, learning about yourself and the world of work and matching the two could be seen as an application of trait-and-factor psychology. As occupations change dynamically and rapidly, effectively utilizing current relevant occupational information becomes a more crucial part of the career decision-making process. By viewing the websites of many colleges and universities today, it can be seen that students are often encouraged to learn about themselves and match what they have learned with occupational information on appropriate majors and careers. Thus, despite the critique of the trait-factor approach that has developed in recent years, the view of the self as a constant that can be tested and used to match to vocations is still active. Although Kitson’s theoretical descendents have advocated for a developmental approach to vocational choice where individuals are capable of self-analysis, the belief that there is a simple psychometric solution to enable satisfying vocational decisions persists.

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Modern Views of the Self

In a critique of the lack of linguistic clarity of the term ‘self’ historically in psychology, Savickas recently summarized three models that have been used in vocational psychology. If one examines the history of the field, it can be seen that the self has been described as object, subject and project, each of which resulted in different perspectives on knowledge, different approaches to counseling practice and unique approaches to science. As has been previously described, the concept of ‘the self’ is a modern invention. Prior to industrialization, individuals were parts of a community where ‘character’ was determined by shared values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, thrift and helpfulness. When people left their agricultural communities and moved to urban centers for factory jobs, there emerged an inevitable emphasis on individuality and a new focus on the quest for individual meaning and sense of purpose in this new lifestyle. Character in the context of a community was no longer possible, and much anxiety resulted from the demands of individuality. Parsons initiated the field of vocational psychology in response to this anxiety when he created a three part model to help youth match themselves to vocations. Among other psychologists who followed him, the self was now seen as a scientific ‘object’ to study. Early vocational psychologists examined individual differences that were becoming clear for the first time. Theorists such as Gordon Allport replaced character with personality in their scientific study, focusing on understanding the traits that assisted individuals to adjust to the demands of industrial lives. Personality psychologists looked at individuals from an observer’s point of view, identifying the essential traits basic to the self that were not
considered directly observable. Vocational tests were an outgrowth of personality psychology, using the traits of aptitude, interest and ability to match people as objects to occupations. The identification of stable traits that could be matched to occupations engaged vocational psychologists from the 1930s until after World War II. The self was now seen as an object which was striving to adjust to modern society and attain success, satisfaction and stability.

Questions arose, however, in the mid 20th century about the appropriateness of adjustment as a goal for the self. The events following World War II and the influence of the existentialist European psychologists led to a new emphasis on human growth and development in a democratic context with subjectivity as a source for values. Carl Rogers sparked the human potential movement of the 1960s and 70s with his counseling methods including his assertion that people are capable of growth on their own without clinical intervention, capable of “becoming” their own selves. In this developmental context, the self was now viewed as a ‘subject’ attempting to attain a sense of personhood and a self-concept. For Donald Super, Kitson’s student, occupational choice became the process of implementing a self-concept and continuously improving the match between the self and a situation. The methods advocated by Kitson - self-estimates of interests and abilities - replaced vocational inventories for self-concept researchers. The focus for these vocational psychologists was self-evaluation, self-regulation and other self-relevant
processes. Elements such as self-efficacy and self-esteem were invoked to understand how one’s self-concept could be implemented.\textsuperscript{127}

Initiated by feminist thought in the late 1960s, the definition of the self used by some vocational psychologists moved again into a new phase. Rather than focusing on the content of the self, David Tiedeman, a Harvard psychologist, began to reconceptualize to form a process theory of self which emphasized that concepts of the self order experience and anticipate the future. Using social construction theory and quantum physics as a model, the process of becoming a self was redefined as an act of self-implementation, a project or identity. Although Super had previously described the implementation of self concept, the self he envisioned was still viewed in relation to things such as interests and occupations. Among the many significant insights he added to the field, Tiedeman demonstrated that career emerges from a self-organizing system that creates vocational behavior. Self-concept is a task in which the individual draws meaning from experience in the social world, allowing the individual to construct an identity. Language is the means by which this “historically situated, socially constructed and culturally shaped” identity is communicated. Through stories, individuals can construct a career by examining their vocational experiences for coherence and meaning.\textsuperscript{128} How this philosophy has been implemented as life design theory will be described further in Chapter Six.


\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 28.
To summarize, the influence of both James and Dewy through Kitson’s mentor, James Rowland Angell, can be seen in Kitson’s belief that individuals could apply self-knowledge and thinking to identifying their own interests and potential. Kitson preferred to avoid the use of ‘interest’ as a noun, using the verb form ‘to be interested’ and ‘to identify one’s self’ instead, a view that he shared with or took from Dewey. From his clinical practice, Kitson believed that many young people had not yet developed an opportunity to be interested in vocations due to a lack of experience, and that others had multiple interests of equal strength which caused anxiety when a vocation had to be chosen. He did not accept that interests were static traits that could be identified by the existing psychological tests or that interests related to ability. Kitson believed that information on a topic could promote interest as could activity in that area. Like James who saw the development of the self as a process, Kitson believed that the process of vocational adjustment was continuous, not static and required a social context. Therefore, he encouraged the development of interests through experience, suggesting that interests be linked to something the individual already valued in much the same way that Dewey recommended teachers tie a new interest to a child’s existing ones to encourage learning. Results would include increased intellectual and spiritual satisfaction from a vocation as well as the potential for increased earnings for the worker and more productivity for the employer. Kitson was skeptical about the reliability of contemporary psychological tests and, like Dewey, thought that the work of vocational psychologists should not be confined to the academic laboratory but rather should be
conducted among workers. Finally, although he strictly adhered to the scientific method and described how it was applied in vocational analysis of workers, he did not believe that statistics were yet adequate to describe the results. He preferred to give only “monitory” advice using probabilities for success and satisfaction, due to the difficulty of accurately predicting the future of work and of fitting a job to a person.  


CHAPTER V

KITSON AND COLLEGE CAREER ADVISING

During his lifetime, Harry Dexter Kitson was known for several ideas that he explored in research and in his writing. He believed that individuals could identify their own interests through self-analysis, a process of thinking about one’s own abilities and interests and comparing them with interests that would be expressed in various occupations. In addition, he thought that interests were not static or fixed at birth but rather could be developed as the result of experience. (In fact, he disliked the use of the word “interest” as a noun and preferred to use “interested” or “to be interested” as an active concept instead). Finally, he emphasized occupational exploration as a means to occupational knowledge. Kitson is believed to be the first researcher to write a dissertation on college students. Although he never worked directly in vocational counseling with college students, he maintained this interest throughout his teaching career as he taught vocational counselors, continuing to write about college students and vocational choice. This chapter will explore whether any of his ideas played a role in the development of college career advising. In addition, although his legacy may not be acknowledged, it will be important to explore the value of his approach for contemporary career advising.

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Progressivism and the Field of College Student Personnel

Historians of higher education such as Frederick Rudolph and Lawrence Veysey have made the facts about the creation and growth of American higher education well-known. This section will review those narratives briefly and then tie the emergence of the field of student personnel work to social and political trends relevant to this study.

From the earliest days of the colonial colleges of Harvard and Yale through the explosive growth of small liberal arts colleges in the first half of the 1900th century when newly founded towns, religious denominations, missionaries and benefactors competed for money and the attention of young adults, America has been a country of colleges. Many of those colleges were founded by religious institutions and in small towns during the westward expansions when status and prestige was attached to having your own college with a bell tower, preferably modeled on a New England town and college. These young colleges also modeled their curriculum on the classical curriculum taught in the eastern colleges. When American graduate students began to study in German research universities in the late 1800s and early years of the 1900s, they returned with an interest in the scientific method, laboratory research and the scholarly university and enabled the establishment of research universities in the United States. Following years of administrative and faculty struggle, the American curriculum was diversified with new subjects such as psychology and modern languages, and the hold of the classical curriculum began to loosen. Starting in the mid 1800s, normal schools were established across the country to train high school graduates, primarily women, as teachers. These schools eventually became state universities offering a diversified curriculum built
around their colleges of education. In addition, the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act created universities where a vocational curriculum in engineering and agriculture was soon connected to professional schools of law, medicine or library science. By the end of the 1900th century, graduates of secondary schools could choose from among urban research universities, Midwestern or western land grant universities, small religious colleges and increasingly nonsectarian liberal arts colleges, each offering a different rationale for a college education at their unique institution but all promising a bright future full of personal and professional accomplishment.133

With all this growth came strains on the traditional means of advising and controlling the behavior of college students. Although college presidents in liberal arts colleges, often ministers as well as college administrators, were the original advisers for students, the growth and complexity of universities and the expansion of both the curriculum and the student body in liberal arts colleges soon made that role untenable. As early as 1870, the first college dean was appointed at Harvard who among his other academic duties held the role of disciplinarian. College presidents gradually relinquished their involvement in teaching every senior student during a final ethics seminar and hit the road for what today would be called development purposes; even in the 19th century, someone had to raise money to keep colleges in existence. As colleges and universities grew and became more urban and more complex, the administrative and disciplinary functions gradually passed from faculty to a new group of administrators who focused their work on students. Student housing, athletic programs, student government, health

centers, social clubs and organizations grew dramatically during the early 20th century, and student personnel administrators were appointed to organize, plan and supervise their activities. Since the desired outcome of college for students and families has usually included a satisfying job, vocational counseling and placement in jobs was one of the functions of this new administrative profession.

A recent history of the emergence of the field of college student personnel ties the development of the field to progressivism. According to Caple in his 1998 book, In the Beginning: A Social History of College Student Affairs, social, political, philosophical and economic trends are always relevant to important changes that take place in higher education. As the United States gradually moved from a rural and agrarian society to an urban industrial one, key concepts of American democracy were shaken by social changes. Original ideas about democracy were modeled on rural life including the town hall meeting and concepts such as grass roots democracy. Industrial and urban growth challenged these national images and unsettled the social fabric of the country. The growth of industry was fed in part by an explosive immigrant population, primarily European in origin. These workers and their families brought with them religious traditions, languages, and social beliefs that gradually eroded the homogeneity of Protestant rural America. Urban social problems, immigrant needs and educational issues made urban life difficult and complex. Progressivism challenged the prevailing conservative nature of the country with its concern about moral and social disintegration and offered a hopeful vision for the role that education could play in ameliorating

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poverty. During the Progressive era from 1890 to 1920, conservatives argued for natural rights and the liberty to own and keep property without government interference and to deal with employers without the interference of unions who were vigorously organizing to protect the rights of urban workers in industry. Conservatives believed that the mind was fixed at birth and not affected by experience in the environment. In addition, many believed that some people were born to be successful and others to poverty. No matter how avidly progressives promoted equal rights for Negroes and women during early civil rights and suffrage efforts, many conservatives felt that nothing could change the fact that both these groups were intellectually and morally inferior.\textsuperscript{135} World War I brought this clash of viewpoints to universities as young men returned from military service with worldly experiences and sought out education. At the same time, in higher education institutions, the new field of student personnel administration was beginning to structure the extracurricular lives of college students. However, returning soldiers had a different perspective on their education and their country from serving overseas than traditionally-aged college students at home. After the freedom they had experienced, they chafed at the restrictions some universities and colleges placed on student behavior such as the requirement to live in dormitories or to maintain separation between the sexes at college functions.

How did these requirements on social behavior such as those for living in residence halls arise? Aside from the obvious need to house students, differing philosophies of higher education also affected their creation. Three different

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 20.
philosophical views have influenced educators during the twentieth century: traditionalism, positivism and experimentalism. Traditionalists believed in the separation between the person and the physical world, the mind and the body, and did not believe in Darwin’s evolutionary theory. Since traditionalists held that moral consciousness is inborn in human beings, they appealed to a higher fixed sense of values and attempted to find order in a chaotic world. They believed that refining the intellectual power of judgment was the main focus of education. The curriculum, therefore, should be intellectual and not relate to practical matters such as those inserted into it by science and vocational/technical courses. In order to ensure this outcome, students would not be permitted curricular choice or to pursue their own interests and experiences.

Positivists saw humans more as a part of nature than traditionalists but also as machines whose behavior could be predicted. Positivists looked to modern science for their methods and authority. They saw the world as logical and predicable based on nature. Therefore, human beings could be studied using scientific research methods, and behavior could be analyzed and predicted. Thorndike, for example who developed many educational and psychological tests described earlier in this study was a positivist as were those who conceived of behaviorism, the belief that all forms of behavior can be observed, measured and conditioned, which was very influential in psychology after World War I.

Experimentalists rejected the dualism of the other two philosophies and drew upon American pragmatism and naturalism to build their theory of education which
included the new social sciences.\textsuperscript{136} Philosophers who have already been mentioned in Chapter Four of this study for their influence on Kitson’s teachers and on his own point of view – William James, George Herbert Meade, Charles S. Peirce and John Dewey – were all involved in experimentalism. Led by Dewey who drew ideas from empiricism and American pragmatism with emphasis on the new social sciences of anthropology, psychology and social psychology, the experimentalists developed their theory of education. Among other ideas, they rejected mind-body dualism and individualism and believed that humans are an integral part of nature and as a result of involvement in a social culture, develop their own personalities. Life, thus, was a continuous process of interaction between the individual and the environment. For a college or university, this implied that students would develop their unique personalities in continuous interaction with the social environment of the college and argued for the wholeness of their experience.

After World War I, experimentalists were most influential in higher education so the professional of college student personnel engaged in activities that would ensure the development of the whole person. Living in dormitories where the social, athletic and co-curricular program could be directed by student personnel staff was part of the education of the whole person, not only a vehicle for protecting young women from young men. Although required dormitory life was common practice on most liberal arts college campuses and many university campuses, returning soldiers after World War I began to push back against what they saw as restrictive social requirements, setting in

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 36.
motion a long but very slow decline in these regulations that finally imploded during the turbulent 1960s.

In addition to conflict over social restrictions, another example of the disagreements that occurred between positivists and experimentalists who were also progressives can be seen in the conflict between Robert Hutchins, then president of the University of Chicago, and ideas about progressive education promoted by John Dewey. Much turmoil in the 1930s was created by discussions of the appropriate curriculum for higher education. Viewpoints as previously mentioned ranged from those of conservatives who believed in a prescribed classical curriculum common to all students to progressives who wanted students to have free choice from among a wide menu of intellectually and vocationally challenging coursework. Battles were waged over a general education curriculum, the addition of laboratory science, social science and modern languages as well as vocational and professional offerings, and the degree of choice which students should be permitted. Hutchins was a proponent of the conservative view that education should involve a common body of knowledge such as those contained in the notable classic works of philosophers, later known as the Great Books. Although Dewey believed there could be common elements in a curriculum, he advocated for a curriculum that allowed exploration of individual student interests which could grow based on their interaction with the curriculum and the educational environment. Neither of these views eventually prevailed on most college and university campuses. Instead, a compromise was struck. Faculty devised curricula that included both common learning as exemplified by general education requirements and allowed for
individual choice through majors and electives. This curricular modification drew additional attention to the needs of individual students, thus again promoting the philosophy of attention to individual student needs that student personnel professionals advocated in higher education.137

This philosophy can be seen clearly stated in one of the seminal documents in college student personnel, the 1937 Student Personnel Point of View, published by the American Council on Education following a planning conference of both faculty and student personnel practitioners. It provided a clear statement of the progressive educational philosophy in higher education by emphasizing the student as a whole person rather than focusing on students’ intellectual development alone. Educational institutions had… “the obligation to consider the student as a whole—his intellectual capacity and achievements, his emotional make-up, his physical condition, his social relationships, his vocational aptitudes and skills, his moral and religious values, his economic resources, and his esthetic appreciations. It puts emphasis on the development of the student as a person.”138 Included in the same document were the services students would require outside the classroom to attain these goals. Supervision of students through these activities and services, generally a middle class value, was clearly endorsed. An emphasis was placed on the obligation of higher education to help students identify an education that would meet their individual needs and to make appropriate vocational choices that would lead them to satisfying employment which the

137 Ibid., 43.

college would help them find upon completion of that education. Linked to the strong progressive belief in democracy, college was seen as part of every young person’s opportunity to succeed. Based on the experimentalist philosophy, students were described as individuals who were growing through their interactions with the environment and community institutions, individuals who were not to be lost among their fellow students. Unfortunately, this document also advocated for the separate profession of “student services”, differentiated from the faculty, which has since been seen as a less expert, even inferior role, than that played by faculty in higher education, a position which the field has sought to overcome ever since.\(^{139}\)

In 1949, another committee of ACE under the chairmanship of E.G. Williamson, the vocational psychologist whose work at the University of Minnesota in counseling and student personnel has been described in Chapter Three, revised the. It restated the experimentalist and progressive view of education of the whole person and the responsibility of higher education to work towards the full maturity of students who were seen as responsible participants in their own development. However, the new statement added three objectives or goals of higher education: education for a fuller realization of democracy, for the promotion of international understanding and cooperation, and for the application of creative imagination and intelligence to the solution of social problems and administration of public affairs.\(^{140}\) The effect of World War II can be seen clearly in this statement’s emphasis on international issues and public service. It also balanced more

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\(^{139}\) Caple, *To Mark the Beginning: A Social History of College Student Affairs*, 45.

effectively the individual and the environment with the surrounding society. Embedded within the full text are hints at the human potential movement to come and to an early conception of student development in the psychological sense as the focus of student affairs.

**Placement: Bringing Employers and Graduating Students Together**

Among the services recommended by the Student Personnel Point of View were placement services, already in effect at many universities by the time the first report was issued in 1937. Helping graduating students find their first professional job was an established procedure in higher education from its early days. Faculty kindly made references to their friends and colleagues about the character and ability of young graduates, often resulting in offers of employment. When college administrators began to diversify into functional areas, the task of helping graduating students was assigned to a position first called an ‘appointments secretary’ after the British model but soon changed to the American term ‘placement director.’ This administrator was expected to get to know the needs of businesses in the area and to link graduating students with their correct place in adult society. Another form of the same task was assisting teachers to connect with school administrators who needed them. In 1924, the first professional meeting of placement directors was held to form a new organization, the National Association of Appointments Secretaries. Composed of twelve members, eleven of whom were women, their primary goal was to place teachers in appropriate jobs. By 1930, the group had reformed twice and chosen a new name, the American College Personnel Association, now with the intended purpose of professional education through meetings, an exchange
of information, and talks by speakers. Gradually, regional associations also formed and employer members were allowed to join to enhance dialogue between both groups. During the Depression, faculty and students began to request vocational guidance as well as placement services. The relationship of vocational counseling offices to placement will be explored in more detail in the following section of this chapter.

It is clear, however, that the focus of placement offices soon became the needs of the employers rather than those of students. Immediately following World War II when there was a pent-up need for educated professional workers that had been stalled by their wartime service, employers came calling on university campuses, looking for managers, engineers, teachers, architects and more. Industry was rebounding and needed service from the university placement offices to identify and hire the best candidates. The professional model to link the two was the campus interview where interested candidates could sign up for initial interviews with potential employers in their campus placement center. Placement directors wooed employers from large corporations with breakfasts and golf outings and got to know many recruiters personally from professional meetings and repeated visits by the employers to campus. This model, perhaps the higher education version of the “old boys club”, lasted, with one exception, into the early 80s with minor barriers from recessions and slowdowns in the economy.

The exception was the 1960s when political and generational conflict over the Vietnam War, the military-industrial complex, nuclear proliferation, and other value, educational and lifestyle issues swept the country. In placement offices, employers were

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the visual representation of employment opportunities that some students felt contradicted their strongly-felt values. This was an enormously challenging period on college and university campuses for student personnel administrators and university administrators of all types as sit-ins, protests, counter-protests, confrontations in the classroom and interpersonal conflict manifest the value changes and turmoil the country was encountering. \(^\text{142}\) Much of the growth and change resulting from all these incidents is outside the focus of this study. However, it is important to note that some placement directors were philosophically and generationally allied with students so that when this historical period was over in the mid-seventies, these experiences became part of the foundations of a new philosophy for placements centers that focused more on assisting young adults with life planning based on values than on placing them directly into jobs offered by corporations.

Other economic realities also influenced the shift away from an emphasis solely on placing graduates in jobs and on close partnership with employment recruiters. The economic downturn of the early 1970s shrunk the number of jobs and thus the number of recruiters visiting college and university campuses. Some campuses resorted to lottery systems to find a fair way for many qualified students to have access to recruiters. Workshops to teach college students how to find jobs in a tight job market became a new feature of college placement offices. Life planning, the concept that work fits into the larger scope of one’s personal life goals, became the focus of more college career advising sessions. This outgrowth of the human potential movement in the larger society

\(^{142}\) Caple, *To Mark the Beginning: A Social History of College Student Affairs*, 229.
changed the emphasis of placement professionals from simply “placing” students in the jobs that were presented to facilitating students’ own choice of their life goals and occupational preferences. The 1972 publication of *What Color is Your Parachute?* by Richard Bolles introduced the idea that individuals could assess their own interests and abilities and make direct contact with employers to identify potential job and career options. This radical idea which included the concept of self-analysis introduced by Kitson opened the door to new ways to help individuals explore their interests that did not involve professional vocational counseling or the use of standardized tests. Bolles, an Episcopalian minister, was active in the civil rights movement of the 1960s and originally wrote his book to help ministers who lost jobs with civil rights nonprofits as the organizing and advocacy work of the 1960s concluded. Staff in placement centers who were already adding responsibilities for internships and experiential education, both a means for students to observe and try out occupations, to their traditional roles in placement embraced the idea that workshops and classes could be offered that would help students with career and life exploration. These events combined with the tighter job market also prompted placement centers, now commonly called career services centers instead, towards offering services to freshmen and sophomores, expanding their offerings into major choice and preliminary career planning rather than solely focusing on the concerns of graduating students.

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As the 1990s began, the economy again pushed college career services to rethink how they helped graduating students transition to the workforce. ‘Right-sizing and down-sizing’ became familiar terms in American society as corporations trimmed their staff and eliminated divisions through massive layoffs. College recruiters and human resources personnel were among those who were disposable. Radical decreases in the number of campus interviews for placement resulted, and the close relationship between recruiters and college placement officers eroded once again. Employers drastically cut their campus visits and limited the numbers and types of colleges and universities where they recruited. Small colleges felt the effects most drastically as cost-benefit analysis concluded that smaller campuses obviously produced fewer candidates per expensive recruiting trip. An ancillary effect of these changes was that employer members participated less actively in joint professional activities and associations with college career services staff. Technology began to replace the personal relationships that had developed between employers and universities with the advent of affordable computers and the internet. In 1992, a task force of the Midwest College Placement Association examined all these events and identified structural changes that were occurring in the profession: a transition in training from specialists to generalists as university budgets and staff sizes shrank, a shift from recruiting and placement to career services for all students, providing more services with a smaller budget, and the need for measurement and accountability.\footnote{Ibid., 28.} The main professional association, the College Placement Council, recognized these transitions by changing its name in 1995 to the National Association of
Colleges and Employers, thus signifying the relationship and common goals of the two groups of professionals but eliminating the word “placement” from its name. ¹⁴⁵

Along with other changes brought to the profession by life planning activities and the self-help model that ensued, career networking entered the field, again changing the focus of the skills taught to students and the activities performed by career advising staff. The focus of the 1940s/50s was placement with attention on graduating seniors and on employers who recruited those students on campus. During the 1960s/70s, skill development for all students through life planning and job search workshops and classes was the key model; career advising staff became counselors and facilitators of student growth and development. When the career networking paradigm entered the scene, career centers became self-help centers where students could access information, connect to alumni, use resources and make connections with employers using technology. Generalists were needed on the career center staff instead of counselors or placement experts.

Each of these periods in college career advising had a theory base which has been previously described in this study in more detail in Chapters Three and Four. The placement era was based on trait-factor theory where individuals were known to have certain traits that could be identified, often through testing. After identification, these traits could lead to an appropriate fit with employment. Parsons described early trait factor theory in his three-step model: clear understanding of yourself, your abilities, interests and limitations, knowledge of the requirements and conditions for success in

occupations and clear reasoning to match the two. Developmental theory as conceptualized by Donald Super, Kitson’s colleague and successor at Teachers College, provided the basis for career and life planning as the process of creating a career replaced the search for a first job. Staffs with a counseling background, experience in the human potential movement and familiar with both vocational and personal life planning issues were common in career development centers, a common office name that reflected this theoretical change. Information management theory has been proposed as the underlying basis of the career networking paradigm now in place since it addresses qualities the student must develop such as knowledge, understanding and decision-making as well as external issues such as technology management, politics and economics.¹⁴⁶

Career Centers have adapted to social changes as well. During a series of annual conferences on the state of the profession sponsored by the University of Missouri Career Center over a period of ten years, innovations such as an increasing emphasis on meeting the needs of diverse students, the use of peer paraprofessionals to extend the reach of career center staff, and the career transition needs of adult students were a few of the topics considered. Cyberspace and increasing need for and use of technology for career counseling, assessment and employment were also topics that focused recent conferences.

In the last ten years, competition for college career centers has arisen from non-college employment service providers. Colleges have employment databases to manage job postings for students but Monster and Careerbuilder also have job databases. Colleges can connect students with employers but third-party recruiters and websites can

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also connect students with recruiters. Colleges can suggest professionals for networking but so can faculty, fraternities, community groups, and professional associations. Staff can provide information and resources but so can Facebook and Twitter. In fact, students can and do make their own networking connections without any assistance through LinkedIn, professional blogs, websites or Twitter. Although a thorough discussion of the future of college career advising is outside the scope of this study, it is clear that challenging events are taking place both in employment and higher education, leading to criticism of the traditional roles of career centers. Around the time of graduation in 2010, for example, blogs for new college graduates were filled with angry polemics about the high debt and low value of new college degrees as well as the lack of preparation students feel they have received from career centers. In a report from a recent national professional conference, career professionals themselves also identified a number of factors driving changes in the field: unemployment, economic uncertainty, state budget cuts, the rise of a global economy and expectations from green industry. Challenges include new legislative requirements regarding placement, learning outcomes and outcomes-based assessment, the complexity of college ranking, ROI (return on investment), and a greater demand to respond to needs of liberal arts students. All of these are compounded by the “expectations, attitudes and attributes” of college

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students. Clearly, another paradigm shift is about to occur that will continue the challenges facing career centers and result in as yet unidentified changes.

**Vocational Counseling on College Campuses: Its Rise and Fall**

Despite all the philosophical disagreements and resulting changes, vocational counseling has continued on college campuses. Embedded in all these career activities – placement, life planning and networking – Harry Dexter Kitson’s thought from the 1920s and 30s can be clearly seen. This chapter will examine three of his ideas that are important in vocational counseling - interests can be identified through self-analysis, interests can be developed through experience, and occupational knowledge can be gained from exploration – and demonstrate how they are being used in contemporary career centers.

A brief review of several concepts that preceded vocational counseling as done on college campuses today may be helpful in understanding how it has evolved into its contemporary form. Early vocational guidance built upon the definition created by Frank Parsons in 1909 as part of the implementation of vocational assistance for young urban immigrant men and women. His three-step paradigm called for a clear understanding of yourself including aptitudes, abilities and interests, knowledge of occupational requirements and what it would take to be successful, and true reasoning on the relationship between the two groups of facts. Vocational guidance, Kitson’s lifelong

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profession, grew from Parsons’ work. During his career at Teachers College Columbia, Kitson taught graduate students to implement its principles. “The final 26 years of my academic life were spent at Teachers College, Columbia University. My assignment was to organize the first complete sequence for training graduate students in vocational guidance and personnel work. Throughout this engagement, I was given free rein….The venture was highly successful. The curriculum I organized was adopted by other institutions as time went on”.

Kitson felt strongly that vocational guidance was a profession similar to law and medicine which required specialized training, and he enjoyed his role in delivering it. During the field’s early years, he often fought charlatans.

I wish I could describe the pressure that was brought to bear on psychologists in those days to produce nostrums. Muensterberg’s book, Psychology and Industrial Efficiency (1938) had portrayed psychology as playing a commanding role in vocational adjustment. Undoubtedly his interest in vocational guidance had been sharpened by Parsons, who, I knew, had consulted with Muensterberg. His book whetted the appetite of the public and stimulated the demand for quick results. Here is a quotation from one of the popular writings of the day: “A guidance bureau should be like a type-distributing machine which will take a hopperful of type of all the letters of the alphabet and place each in its particular niche, the one place of all places where it fits.” This miracle the psychologist was expected to perform. A number of fakers got into the act and we had to spend much time and energy denying their claims.

Although he was writing there about events that happened in 1914 and 1915, he was fighting against a different enemy by the 1930s – vocational tests – that were soon expected to produce similar results. In a 1934 article called “Vocational Guidance is not Fortune Telling, a response to a writer who held the views of the Minnesota

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151 Ibid., 315.
psychologists described in Chapter Three, he expressed the same concerns as those above but for different reasons.

The concept of vocational guidance that pervades Dr. Lorge’s discussion of the investigation carried on by the Institute of Educational Research is that typically held by the layman; vis, that the counselor merely examines the individual and concludes that he would make, let us say, a good optometrist, whereupon the counselor pats the individual on the back and tells him to be on his way. According to this conception the vocational counselor is a fortune teller whose most important stock in trade is a battery of tests by means of which he detects some mysterious aptitude which the individual is assumed to posses and then predicts the future of the individual.152

Kitson was quite clear about the alternatives available to vocational guidance practitioners.

The advocate of psychological tests may inquire, “If the vocational counselor does not rely on tests or make predictions, what service does he render?” While space does not permit an expository answer to this question, we may indicate broadly the functions performed by the vocational counselor. He helps the individual to become interested in worthy occupations, to find information about them, and to examine the conditions, opportunities, and rewards obtaining in them. He also assists the individual in making an inventory of his present assets – physical, psychological, social, and economic. At this point certain psychological tests may be administered, but the results can at best indicate on the present status of the individual, such as the level of achievement in an academic subject or the degree of intelligence – items that have not been and may never be related to future accomplishment in specific vocational situations;153

Kitson goes on to say that such levels of achievement as may be identified by vocational tests are useful immediately, perhaps for educational guidance, one of the possible functions of a vocational counselor, but not for decisions in the future. He also noted three points which apply to the counselor’s role: the individual is not a passive victim to


153 Ibid., 373.
be tested and acted upon but an active agent, the counselor does not work alone but with
the school, training facilities and occupational materials, and that vocational guidance is
not a momentary act but a process for the lifetime of the individual.\textsuperscript{154} All of these
concepts are in active use by college career advisers today.

Throughout his career, Kitson was clear about the role of interests in vocational
guidance and emphasized their ability to be developed rather than discovered by tests.
Despite the criticism mentioned in Chapter Three which he received from the Minnesota
psychologists, he remained committed to the idea that interests could be created even as
new and potentially more useful interest inventories were created.

When I compared results obtained from using several inventories on the same
subjects, I found them confusing and in some cases contradictory. I could not
accept the idea that an interest could be transmitted in a gene, nor did it seem
likely that vocational interests of any depth could be developed by experience in
the mind of the average youth. Indeed, over the counseling table, I found that
large fractions of youth were not seriously interested in any vocation. Then I
bethought me, perhaps one source of our difficulty is that we are trying to keep
alive an outmoded structural psychology. Let’s speak in dynamic terms and use
the phrase, “to be interested.” When I adopted that concept I saw the role of the
counselor in a different light. Instead of being a diagnostician and a
prognosticator, I regarded him as a facilitator responsible for helping the
individual become interested in vocations\textsuperscript{155}

He believed that educational psychology already validated methods for creating interests
in this way, especially as described by James in his essay, \textit{James Talks to Teachers} and
by Dewey in \textit{Interest and Effort in Education}. Despite his pessimistic view expressed
above at the vantage point of his retirement, his opinion has influenced college career
advising, and it will be shown in a later section of this chapter that the development of

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 373.

\textsuperscript{155} Kitson, \textit{Psychology in Vocational Adjustment}, 316.
vocational interests is still being advocated as a tool for vocational choice by college career counselors along with trying out those occupations through internships and other experiential learning.

In addition to developing interests, Kitson utilized other principles outlined originally by Parsons in teaching vocational guidance methods. On the thirtieth anniversary of the vocational guidance movement in 1938, he identified important progress that had been made in the field. Research into occupations continued to be an important focus for vocational counselors who needed accurate local and national occupational information to share with clients. Kitson advocated that vocational counselors should both conduct research themselves, especially in their own communities, and effectively utilize research assembled by colleagues in their work. How to communicate that information to students continued to be a challenge. During the first 30 years of the profession, courses had been established in both secondary schools and colleges; libraries had been assembled. Workbooks and textbooks with occupational information were then on the market. A few diagnostic tests which he believed to be useful for identifying the status of students’ educational and vocational plans had been developed. At the secondary level where many of the vocational counselors he trained were employed, certification standards were spreading from state to state. Non-school agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps or CCC during the Depression ensured that 1 million youth would receive vocational guidance. Social service organizations, service clubs and professional groups were all offering vocational help to youth. Kitson was especially proud of his role in training graduate students as
Kitson wrote specifically about the development of similar programs in colleges and universities. In 1930, he published a list of forty colleges and universities that had a position titled “director of vocational guidance” or “director of personnel” which included a number of liberal arts colleges such as Oberlin, Kalamazoo, Grinnell, Coe, Macalester and Smith as well as universities including Princeton, Yale, Wisconsin, Chicago and Michigan. He acknowledged that there may be programs headed by those who held other titles such as Dean of Men or Women, Professor of English etc. since many colleges taught courses called “Choosing a Vocation” despite the college’s lack of specific professional to teach the course or whose work was solely to provide vocational counseling. 

Finally, Kitson communicated a clear philosophy about how and to whom vocational counseling in schools and colleges should be available. In the foreword to a 1940 issue of the Teachers College Record devoted to Education for Work, he and his colleagues described the assumptions that should constitute the philosophy underlying programs for occupational choice, beginning with an inclusive definition that work should include all gainful occupations.

Applied to a community, the work done by individuals means all kinds of work carried on by all men and women who labor in that community. The work may be simple in both the duties to be performed and the knowledge and skill required,

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as is true of such an occupation as washing automobiles; or it may be
extraordinarily complex, requiring not only knowledge and skills but judgment of
a high order, as is true of surgery or journalism at their highest level. This
assumption does not imply that public schools should offer training in every one
of the thousands of occupations represented in a community. It does lead,
however, to a second assumption: that public schools should provide occupational
orientation and vocational guidance for all who come under their purview. It
must never be forgotten that all those who are attending schools at any given time
come from the homes of the people who are actually carrying on all the work
being done in the community at the time; and that, on leaving school, they will
themselves carry on all the work of the community. …\textsuperscript{158}

He goes on to explain that vocational guidance should include everyone, including those
with limited capacity. He concludes with a description of the responsibility of education
for work as a full community responsibility, not just a role of the school. Rather, he
recommended that a program for education should be created after a thorough analysis of
the social and economic needs of the entire community. Concerns about access, equity,
and inclusion in vocational counseling are still salient issues in colleges and universities
where special programs are provided to veterans, the disabled, students of color, gay and
lesbian students, first generation college students and others whose circumstances or
background might inhibit their vocational options. Labor market response and
involvement with state economic development needs is as relevant today as it was in
1940.

As the 20\textsuperscript{th} century progressed, vocational psychologists added career theories and
psychological insights which contributed to the complexity of the field beyond the initial

\textsuperscript{158} This very modern assumption is the foundation of concerns currently expressed by the Ohio Board of
Regents and other legislative groups about higher education in reports on student success and integration
with labor market needs. See reports at http://regents.ohio.gov/index.php for examples.
choice of vocation which occupied Parsons. Psychological assessments were developed which could identify and measure individual differences and explain the career decision-making process. The ability to chart specific occupational activities and content knowledge grew as vocational psychology utilized scientific research to enhance the field. Effective career interventions, work adjustment, job choice and entry, unemployment and underemployment were all topics where theory development occurred. In addition, the client base expanded to include adults of all ages as well as clients of diverse ethnicities who required unique interventions. A growing literature resulted from counseling more diverse clients, focusing on the difference between women and men in all ethnicities. Career counseling was newly provided to specific populations – persons in poverty, single parents, minority populations, the disabled and more.\(^\text{159}\) A key event occurred when the field, under the influence of Kitson’s student Donald Super, embraced the concept of vocational choice as a developmental process. Adopted by the National Vocational Guidance Association in 1951, the new developmental definition of vocational guidance included the psychological nature of vocational choice, emphasized the whole person with both vocational and personal concerns, and suggested that self-understanding and self-acceptance were dimensions related to occupational choice.\(^\text{160}\) Theorists such as Super, Holland and Krumbolz added new assessment instruments including the Self-Directed Search, the Adult Career Concerns Inventory and the Career Maturity Inventory among many others. Throughout this time, career


\(^{160}\) Ibid., 17.
counselors began to understand the career counseling process and how to structure it to assist clients. Thus as the theory base increased and improved, so did the delivery of services to clients.

College campuses although they included only certain segments of the population making vocational choices were among the early adopters of vocational counseling. As early as the 1930s, E.G. Williamson embodied an interesting intersection between early vocational psychologists and the field of student personnel which included college career advising. Trained as a vocational psychologist, he held positions as a faculty member in the Department of Psychology at the University of Minnesota and later as Dean of Students where he supervised the counseling center which he had established during the Depression to provide services to the unemployed. As founder of the trait-factor theory of career counseling as well as the author of the 1949 Student Personnel Point of View, he occupied influential positions in both the field of psychology and in student personnel work that would be unusual today. He and his staff used counseling methods actively to assist college students with vocational decisions, and they were trained as psychologists to do so. More recently, during many of the years that John Crites, another notable vocational psychologist, researched career maturity, he also held a position as a senior counselor at the University of Iowa Counseling Center. These important theorists based much of their research on counseling interventions conducted with college student clients in university counseling centers where vocational counseling was the primary focus until the 1960s and 70s.
During the 60s and 70s, however, the field of counseling was changing with a greater emphasis placed on assisting clients with personal development and mental health. Although there was also a struggle for balance between meeting the needs of students for personal counseling and their needs for vocational counseling in the same counseling center, both services were offered throughout the 70s. As self-help books such the previously mentioned bestseller *What Color is Your Parachute* became more popular and introduced both professionals and the general public to the option of personal development exercises and assessments to make vocational choices, career counseling activities began to grow in outside of college and university counseling centers in career centers. This raised concerns among vocational counselors who wondered if career services and placement staff were really qualified to offer these counseling services. Up until the early 80s, their concern would have been well-founded but by the early 80s and beyond, an increasing number of staff in career services had either master’s or doctoral degrees that included counseling. This trend towards more counseling in career services, however, was not universally accepted as appropriate by the career services profession or by vocational counselors. In 1984, for example, a debate on the main purpose of career services was held at the annual conference of the College Placement Council. Titled “The Great Debate”, a spirited conference session was held on whether marketing to employers or career counseling should be the key focus of career services programs. Apparently, the final inconclusive vote by attendees reflected the split evident in the profession at the time.\(^{161}\)

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More recently, the field of college counseling has been dominated by the mental health needs of college students. As both American society and the counseling profession changed, college counseling centers have adapted to meet the needs of college students for ongoing treatment, medication management and severe emotional problems resulting in eating disorders, suicide, and depression. Vocational choice, although still a key developmental need of college students, is no longer the focus of most university counseling programs as more urgent psychological needs predominate. This change along with changes in the counseling profession itself coupled with decreased funding for college counseling centers has resulted in a decrease in emphasis on vocational counseling services offered by trained vocational psychologists on college campuses.

Career services staff with their diversified backgrounds and training have responded in a variety of ways. At some universities, a vocational psychologist heads a large staff where psychological training is common. If the university hosts a doctoral program in career or counseling psychology, that may affect staff composition. For example, The University of Missouri-Columbia Career Center, where a large and well-regarded doctoral program is integrated with the Career Center, has ten staff - three with PhDs in counseling, one with an MA in counseling, two others with MAs in related counseling and education fields and numerous graduate student assistants. Some colleges now have executive directors, a title new to the field, who have business degrees and supervise assistant directors with college student personnel degrees. While the

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typical college student personnel degree may offer one or two courses in vocational
guidance with the option for additional general counseling courses, this background is not
required as part of the core curriculum of student personnel administration/higher
education graduate programs but rather an elective so it is not universally required for
college career center positions. Outside of universities, small colleges may staff their
career advising centers with one master’s level professional and other paraprofessionals,
one MBA executive director or a faculty member with credentials from other disciplines.
Many colleges and universities, however, do employ career counselors with master’s
degrees. In 1997, career counseling was offered by 93% of the career services offices
according to the responses to a NACE benchmark survey of universities and colleges. 163
In 2009-2010, about 20% of the career counselors reported that they were NBCC
certified. Counseling also remained the most common degree for staff in career services
centers. 164 Additional training for all staff in vocational counseling is often provided by
professional workshops, seminars by professional organizations, and courses by testing
professionals. Despite these facts and due in part to the diverse professional background
of career services staff as a whole, they may be unaware of the history of the field, the
options for counseling strategies, and the implications of their choices for programs and
services.


164 National Association of Colleges and Employers, "2009-2010 Benchmark Survey for Four Year
Colleges and Universities." National Association of Colleges and Employers, www.naceweb.org/NACE_
2010_Career_Services_Benchmark_Survey_Four_Year_Colleges_and_Universities.pdf (accessed
September 12, 2010).
College and university career centers put together a package of services for students based on a variety of criteria ranging from the requirements of professional standards such as the CAS Standards for Career Services to individual institutional priorities. Each career services center focuses on those services deemed essential to fulfill the educational missions of their colleges, respond to the influence of their reporting structure (while most career advising centers report to student services and about 23% report to academic affairs), and their institutional history. The remainder of this chapter will examine whether one can see in these contemporary college career services any evidence of the legacy of Harry Dexter Kitson and his students.

**Contemporary College Career Advising**

In doing this assessment, several choices were made. There is no obvious reason to think that career services programs would differ by state although they do differ by the variables mentioned above. Therefore, only career services program in colleges, universities and community colleges in Ohio were examined as examples because these were the programs most familiar to the author. This is not a quantitative study; no surveys were administered or interviews conducted. The source of information for all the institutions was the website of the career services center. This online resource was chosen because it is normally considered the main source of information for students on every college campus.

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166 National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2009-2010 Benchmark Survey for Four Year Colleges and Universities, 22.
Many colleges or universities suggest that students begin their career planning with self-assessment activities which is consistent with the self-analysis Kitson suggested. Among the types of self-assessments offered are checklists of transferable skills, online versions of traditional games such as The Party exercise to identify one’s interest patterns using the Holland code, quizzes about values and other exercises which may or may not be linked to further occupational research. Often, assessments are accompanied by advice such as that provided by Lorain Community College to “consider your interests, skills, abilities, values and personality. You need to really know yourself and how these elements relate to various occupational fields”.

Among the common self-assessment tools are online assessments such as FOCUS 2 vocational assessment software whose chief designer was Donald Super, Kitson’s doctoral student whose significant influence on vocational psychology was described in Chapter Three. With assistance from the technical experts at IBM, this system combines self-assessment, career exploration and career decision-making. It is among the top three computer-based assessments used by colleges and universities. Interestingly, some of these assessments use trait-factor theory to match patterns of interests, values and skills to potential careers similar to the original work of Williamson and his Minnesota colleagues. In many cases, students using online resources are left to interpret them on their own as part of their self-analysis due to the nature of online vocational assessments.


and the independent nature of contemporary college students. Many colleges including Ashland University urge students to utilize self-assessment tools with the support of a career adviser, however, as does Ohio Wesleyan, University of Mount Union, and Defiance College. Each of these colleges offers self-assessment tools as well as counseling and advising to assist students as they go through the self-assessment process. Colleges websites sometimes include direct access to a counselor via technology such as the “COACH” link (Consider, Occupations, Analyze, Choose, get Help) at Lorain County Community College which puts a student in direct contact with a counselor via email or as can be seen on the many sites that offer live chat options.169

What would Kitson have thought of computerized vocational guidance? The evidence shows that he was an innovator who sought out new technology. He gave the first psychological tests over the air from KDKA, Pittsburgh in 1921. When the CBS American School of the Air began to broadcast and added vocational guidance to its curriculum, he gave weekly radio programs and served as the first chairman of the NVGA (National Vocational Guidance Association) radio committee where he supervised writing scripts as well as serving as narrator.170 In addition, he was involved in documentary film projects, writing scripts for short films about occupations. He also experimented with the use of visual representations of vocational patterns. Although everyone in the career counseling field today ascribes the vocational hexagon to John Holland who famously used that shape to describe the relationship of interest patterns,

169 Lorain County Community College Career Staff, *Career Decision Help*, 32.

Kitson first suggested that a vocational hexagon could describe ways in which a vocation could be studied from six perspectives, representing the six sides of a hexagon – the physiological, social, physical, mental, economic and moral views. This was a significantly different use of the model than that proposed by Holland years later. Holland used the hexagon to describe interest patterns and their relationship to work environments, using the shape of the hexagon to demonstrate relationships between the patterns of realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional interests. This hexagon is widely used as a tool for vocational assessment and is known by every career counselor today. However, there is no evidence that Holland knew of Kitson’s model and no implication that he used his predecessor’s intellectual work. But the original hexagon remains an example of the creativity and innovation that Kitson valued.

Following Kitson’s view that students can use self-analysis to make vocational choices, college career centers offer occupational information tools such career libraries either on paper or online links to resources about the career planning process, about personality types and careers, about career decision-making or majors. Kitson believed that access to occupational information such as work descriptions, profiles of successful workers which contemporary career centers might provide as “alumni profiles” and employer information was a key part of the vocational analysis process. Many colleges and universities teach career decision-making workshops or credit-bearing classes, offer job shadowing or invite alumni speakers to talk with current students about their career.

choices. These educational programs continue Kitson’s emphasis on “trying out” careers to be sure there is a match between the student’s self-analysis and employment reality. Samples of these resources and programs can be found on the websites of Notre Dame College, Ursuline College, Baldwin-Wallace College, Hiram College, Kent State University and Cleveland State University.

A common theme of many college career websites is the importance of ‘self assessment.’ This exploratory attitude towards life encourages students to get involved with campus activities, community volunteer options, academic departments, study abroad, internships and work experiences. Most colleges explicitly encourage student involvement without specifying exactly what benefits will accrue from it. By implications since these exhortations are commonly found on career center pages, experiences will help you learn more about yourself and become more sophisticated about the surrounding world, all important tasks in learning more about occupations and where your particular interests, skills and abilities might take you. Kitson believed that interests could be further developed through activities that focused on those interests. It seems clear that contemporary college career advisers share that belief since their student websites encourage involvement as a tool for further self-assessment. Interestingly, the same colleges and universities that urge students to use FOCUS 2 to identify their interests and match them to occupations using the trait-factor method also urge students to explore and develop their interests through experience. Either they believe both in the

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173 Ibid.
idea that interests are fixed and can be identified and that interests can be developed through the life span or they are unaware of the potential for theoretical incongruity of the two suggestions.

That career development is a process of self-exploration and growth is explicit even in the name of the office at some colleges (University of Mount Union Career Development Center and Kenyon College Career Development Center, for example). However, the developmental process is emphasized more clearly by the timelines or four year plans many colleges offer their students. These planning tools offer advice and suggestions for typical ways career development occurs during college. Starting with self-assessment, activities are described for each developmental phase, often but not always associated with a year in college. Each year focuses more intently on decisions and skill building until the student is encouraged to apply for jobs or graduate education. In universities that serve students from a broader range of ages and career stages or those that serve only adults, you will see career transition workshops, career advancement for specific occupations, classes for displaced workers over 50 and many specialized services for those choosing work following retirement. The theoretical contributions of Kitson’s influential student, Donald Super, to career development and life span theory can be identified in these programs and services. His life span rainbow that merges personal and professional growth with life stages is reflected in these services for adults which extend from graduation through their active and engaged retirements.174

Finally, college career advising professionals support Kitson’s belief that occupational exploration is important and encourage students to learn more about careers. This can be seen again in the career libraries both online and on paper where students can read about careers as diverse as social media marketing and elementary school teaching, as traditional as the clergy and as cutting edge as fuel cell engineering. Many career services programs also advise students about experiential learning opportunities ranging from job shadowing of alumni or other professionals through intensive semester-long internships to co-op programs that alternate semesters of work and school. Service-learning classes that immerse students in project-based learning help them evaluate how their classroom learning can be applied to solve real world problems and expose them to a broader range of career opportunities than simply reading could provide. Each of these opportunities to explore careers and gather occupational information deepens students’ sophistication and broadens their perspective on career options.

Therefore, it can be seen that colleges and universities do still base some of their vocational services on the theoretical principles that Harry Dexter Kitson advocated. Although there are instances where pragmatism may outweigh theoretical clarity, most college career advisers appear to believe that students can conduct self-analysis of their interests, abilities and values as Kitson urged them to do and encourage students to do so. Furthermore, college career services programs demonstrate that they believe that interests can be developed by encouraging students to explore majors, get involved on their campuses, in their community and the world. And they encourage ongoing intensive
occupational exploration using multiple means of information gathering and experiential learning. Kitson would be especially pleased if these activities resulted in one of the outcomes he expected from individual investigation of vocations: “Does the occupation help the worker to live a good life as a citizen and as a private individual?”

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CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In part, the history of vocational guidance and of vocational psychology in the United States is the professional history of Harry Dexter Kitson, Professor Emeritus of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University and Editor of Occupations (predecessor of Personnel and Guidance Journal) for 14 years. For 47 productive years, Dr. Kitson contributed concepts and techniques to both fields, and in his classrooms and seminars trained many who since have made their own considerable contributions.\footnotemark[176]

This study has explored the history of vocational guidance and of vocational psychology to better understand the contributions that Harry Dexter Kitson made to both fields. An historical review has been conducted of the emergence of vocational psychology as an applied field within psychology. Since 1909 when Frank Parsons first thoroughly explored the needs of Boston youth for vocational assistance and defined the model that would guide vocational guidance for many years, educators in public schools as well as in colleges and universities have attempted to implement and improve on his ideas to provide practical help to youth and young adults. Vocational psychology was one of the first applied areas of psychology. It developed as psychologists attempted to identify traits and abilities that could be measured and used to match individuals with satisfying vocational choices as well as to increase successful employee selection by industry. Harry Dexter Kitson spent his career educating graduate students in vocational guidance methods, editing an important professional journal, conducting research and writing voluminously about both fields. This study has answered three questions about his work. What were Harry Dexter Kitson’s contributions to the development of

\footnotetext[176]{Editor, "A Tribute to Harry Dexter Kitson," *Personnel & Guidance Journal* 38 (1958), 315}
vocational guidance and vocational psychology in the first half of the twentieth century? How did self-analysis develop as a principle theme of Kitson’s body of work but not in the work of other prominent vocational psychologists of his time? And finally, what influence might Kitson’s views have had on contemporary college career advising?

Although a number of historians of vocational psychology had mentioned the importance of Kitson’s work, specifically his book *The Psychology of Vocational Adjustment*, in general histories of vocational guidance and psychology, this study was the first one known to focus on Kitson, specifically to understand ideas on two of his key beliefs – that self-analysis could be conducted to identify vocational choices and that interests could be developed, not simply identified. A survey of the history of vocational guidance was conducted, starting with the contributions of Frank Parsons who with his colleagues established a settlement house program to offer vocational guidance to urban immigrant youth who were struggling with both vocational choice and vocational adjustment in early 20th century Boston. Although many educators and progressive social workers had attempted to provide similar assistance, it was not until Parsons wrote clearly about three steps that could be taken to provide help that the field of vocational guidance began to take shape. Parsons recommended that youth conduct a “thorough review of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, and ambitions, resources, limitations and their causes”, develop “knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospect in different lines of work” and complete the analysis with “true reasoning on the relation of
these two groups of facts." In his autobiography, Kitson said his youthful exposure to Parsons’ new book whose publication coincided with his own graduation from Hiram College in 1909 was the motivating factor in his decision to pursue vocational psychology as a career. The paradigm that grew from Parsons’ work is characterized by an acceptance of self-analysis as an appropriate tool for vocational choice and an emphasis on the developmental nature of vocational selection and adjustment or the process of vocational choice. This view was embraced by Kitson and passed on through his graduate students, remaining an important tradition in vocational psychology today.

In this study, Kitson’s views were contrasted with those in the emerging field of vocational psychology whose practitioners believed that psychological testing of static personality traits, the content of personality, held the most promise for assisting an individual with decisions regarding vocational choice and adjustment. This difference in viewpoint arose early in the development of both vocational guidance and vocational psychology and was caused by divergent views of the nature of personality, the reliability and validity of statistics and of psychological tests, and of science resulting in two sets of theory and career interventions. Kitson played a leadership role in establishing vocational guidance as a profession as well as contributing to its body of research.

This study was conducted using careful reading of the key texts as well as secondary historical and contemporary sources. Although no personal papers were found in either university archives or local historical societies to provide additional insight, Kitson’s own writing and that of his peers and students was sufficient to answer the

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research questions. Survey data from organizations contributed to understanding the history of college career advising.

It is appropriate to follow this historical review by asking how Kitson came to hold the beliefs described above. Kitson was influenced, as many doctoral students are, by the philosophical beliefs of his mentor and adviser, James Rowland Angell. Angell had studied directly with William James and John Dewey as they were establishing their views of the self, and Angell communicated those views to his students at the University of Chicago. Chapter Four demonstrated that James’ views of the self and Dewey’s ideas about the importance of developing interests could be clearly seen in Kitson’s work. Although Kitson wrote pragmatically and practically about vocational guidance and did not write philosophically or directly about his beliefs, he used many of the same terms to describe the process of interest development as Dewey, thus clearly demonstrating a connection in their thought. He quoted James’ description of the self in several places in his work as well as repeating James’ words that “vocational biographies will never be written in advance” to emphasize that the process of vocational choice is also a process of growth and development.

A careful review of reports made by the primary professional association for college career advising centers provided information on trends in college student personnel in higher education as it differentiated professionally into career placement activities in the first half of the 20th century. Evidence can be seen on the websites of colleges and universities in Ohio of the ongoing influence of Kitson’s ideas and those of his colleagues in the recommendations and resources displayed there. Although a direct
connection to his influence could not be shown, the concepts he advocated early in the history of vocational psychology and which have been advocated in ensuing years by his students and other colleagues are still obvious. Interestingly, many colleges and universities also make extensive use of vocational testing which he would not have advocated. Although this study hypothesized that encouraging both self-analysis and the use of psychological tests by college career centers might indicate a lack of professional background in counseling theory leading to philosophical confusion, that did not turn out to be the case. From survey data, it was determined that many college career centers today employ staff who describe themselves as career counselors. Although a strict definition of that term was not part of the available data, it can be assumed that those who describe themselves with that term had graduate education in career counseling. Therefore, since staff members have a background in career counseling to understand the philosophical implications, perhaps expediency could explain offering services that come from differing philosophical directions. However, two additional hypotheses are possible. One is that vocational tests fit the needs of Generation Y college students. These students prefer to use technology (such as FOCUS 2 online mentioned in Chapter 5), expect 24 hour access to information, have a short attention span – a very short attention span – and want to be involved in active learning. Taking tests that tell them what to do is also consistent with the need of Gen Y students for direction and feedback from adults. Finally, Gen Y students are said to be linear thinkers so taking a test and finding the “right” answer may attract them. A second hypothesis about the popularity of tests is that vocational tests fit the needs of college students’ parents. This generation
of parents is paying large sums of money for college. They are fully aware of the serious economic situation the country is experiencing and equally aware of the impact on the job market. They want ROI – return on investment – from college. Pushing or encouraging their students to make major and career decisions that lead to clear outcomes may meet their needs for clarity and career security as well as their students’ needs. Career Centers may, therefore, be responding to implicit or explicit pressure to provide services that students and parents want even if those services are not philosophically consistent with best practices in the field.

It is appropriate to conclude this historical study by looking forward to anticipate where vocational advising might go in the coming years. As was previously mentioned in Chapter Five, new social arrangements for work have provided job seekers with significant challenges as they enter the 21st century. Globalization has dramatically altered world markets and world labor markets. Jobs are insecure, job changes are more frequent, difficult and unpredictable, and the contract between employees and employers that provided security, benefits and advancement is no longer in effect. Starting in the mid 1990s, observers such as William Bridges in his book, *Job Shift: How To Prosper In A Workplace Without Jobs*, began to describe skills as marketable objects that belonged to and moved with an individual through a series of temporary transient contract jobs. This new model of work recognized that a career belonged to the individual, not to an organization, and that individuals were free to or could be forced by economic circumstances to package and repackgage their skills to meet the needs of an ongoing

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series of contract jobs. Vocational psychologists also saw the effects of these dramatic changes on clients. The resulting crisis in career development models and in career intervention methods has challenged existing career development theories that were based on stability of work life and developmental stages that no longer exist. Moreover, whether they exist or not is no longer the question; the opportunity to engage in career behaviors that assume their existence has disappeared. In response, vocational psychologists have examined the consequences of new work and personal life patterns or domains and reconceptualized career intervention to define a process of life design in which individuals progressively design their own lives where work along with family and personal interactions is only one variable in a mobile and complex society.

New research will be required to guide the career interventions that will result from these changes and to answer important questions about life design.

What are the factors and processes of a person’s self-construction? While it remains important to understand how people choose occupations and how careers develop over time we should formulate a better understanding of how individuals construct their lives through their work. We should seek an answer to the question: How may individuals best design their own lives in the human society in which they live? Initially, this research question emphasizes the need to concentrate on activities in different life domains than just work. By engaging in activities in diverse roles, individuals identify those activities that resonate with their core self. Through activity, along with verbal discourse about these experiences, people construct themselves.\(^\text{179}\)

Five presuppositions about life-design counseling that require shifts in thinking result from this paradigm: from traits and states to context, from prescription to process, from linear causality to non-linear dynamics, from scientific facts to narrative realities,

and from describing to modeling.\(^{180}\) While a full explication of these interesting ideas falls outside the scope of this study, it seems that the essence of some of Kitson’s beliefs can be seen in these five shifts. He felt strongly that individuals, not tests or counselors, had within them the ability to understand and explain their own lives as well as to make choices that fit them based on their perceptions of their abilities and life goals. He saw the role of the counselor as facilitator and while he did not use narratives or stories as counseling tools as far as we know, he was open to new guidance methods. While it is unreasonable to speculate about the role he would have assumed in this next phase of vocational psychology, it is possible to say that Harry Dexter Kitson was a scholar, scientist, teacher and leader in his profession who had an important, even if previously underappreciated, effect on vocational guidance and its many practitioners. It is an honor to add to the recognition of his accomplishments.

This dissertation began with a scene from a conference room at a liberal arts college where a psychologist, concerned about college students who were having difficulty choosing careers, asked “Why don’t you just give them a test?” Harry Dexter Kitson would have responded by telling her that individuals have within them the ability to analyze their own interests, values and abilities and to use occupational information and “trying out occupations”, what we might call internships today, to gather information to make a tentative vocational choice. Although he might have conceded that modern vocational tests are more valid, reliable and useful today than during his career, he would have supported many of the self-exploration methods still in use today.

\(^{180}\) Ibid, 243.
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