Beyond Technique: Conceptual Advances in Clinical Surgery Research

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Abstract:

Time has changed. We now live in a society, where new technologies and information dictate the rapid pace in which we live. This has implications and changes in people's lives' and in the working world. Life and career are becoming less foreseeable. So, design and construct a life and career poses a major challenge for people. During college, students should seek to learn on how to design and build their life project, including career. They need to get engaged and take actions. In this article, we intend to draw attention to the importance of helping and empowering college students to better design and build their lives and career in a meaningful way and the role that a career counsellor, like a psychologist in a college setting, could have in this context. Also, we address the importance of medicine college students' change their mind-set and behaviours towards the construction of their lives and careers. Futhermore, we present some considerations on how career counsellors can help college students in this process. Empower college students with resources and opportunities to better design and carry out their life projects is essential, allowing them to become more productive and active citizens and thus, contribute to their society.

keywords: career counsellors; life/career behaviours; medicine college students; intervention

Introduction

"What am I going to make of my life?" (p. 241) is a concern not only for adolescents but also for everyone as they face and negotiate major transitions in their lives (Savickas et al., 2009). When trying to answer this question people tend to consider on the major principles that provide directions in life and what makes a life indeed significant (Taylor, 1989 cited in Savickas et al., 2009).

College is often a time when students are looking for meaning and purpose in their lives. A sense of purpose and meaning in life are important, as it is related to psychological health and wellbeing in individuals (Adams, 2012; Soares et al, 2012). This article explores the need to assist college students in designing and building their lives and career projects so that it is satisfying and meaningful for them. Furthermore, it provides some considerations on how career counsellors, working in a college setting, can empower college students in better design and construct their life projects as they may face many challenges and obstacles through the course of life. It also addresses the importance of changing the mind-set and behaviours of college students towards life and career in order to adapt to an every-changing world in which they move trough (Soares et al, 2011; Santos Silva, Soares & Schifferdecker-Hoch, 2024).

The need to assist college students in designing and building their life project and career

Living in a changing world (Maree, 2010; Savickas, 1997, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; roque & Soares, 2011) imposes many challenges to individuals and for college students, too. As a result, individuals can feel alone and abandoned because today's context does not yet provide the same psychological support and sense of security that past contexts would give to individuals (Giddens, 1991 cited in Savickas et al., 2009). The uncertainty what tomorrow will brings, makes it difficult for college students to envision their future and design their lives. After completing the college, graduate students may face unemployment (Brown & Levy, 2006; O'Reilly et al., 2015) and ending up in non-standardized work (O'Reilly et al., 2015). Therefore, the newcomers in labour market are facing more and more challenges, which entail, in turn, more effort, self-knowledge and greater confidence on their part (Savickas, 2012; Soares et al 2013; Soares 2025b; Soares, 2024). Additionally, college students, future workers of tomorrow, through the course of the life, may have to change frequently the jobs, transit from one organization to another and even the careers, too (Ball & Jordan, 1997; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood,

2003; Krumboltz, 1998; Maree, 2010; Savickas, 2012). To address this, the individuals must be long-life learners, flexible (Maree, 2010; Savickas, 2012; Soares 2025a) as well as develop and strengthen skills that enable them to create their own opportunities and remain employable in work world today (Koen, Klehe, & Van Vianen, 2012; Savickas, 2012; Santos Silva et al, 2025). As a consequence, career paths have become less and less predictable and blurred (Amundson, 2006; Krumboltz, 1998; Maree, 2010; Savickas, 2012) as well as diversified. The same happens regarding people's life trajectories, which are more and more destandardized (Duarte, 2009; Savickas, 2012). Finish college, get a job, get married, have kids and so on, is just one among several possible life trajectories to craft or follow by individuals. Taking all this into account, many authors highlight the importance of empowering and enable people to design their own lives in a way that is experienced as satisfactory and with meaning (Krumboltz, 1998; Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999; Maree, 2010; Savickas, 2012; Savickas et al., 2009; Baras et al 2018).

How can career counsellors empower college students to better design and build their life plan and career?

Design and build a life project, including the sphere of work, is a complex task as people and college students are likely to face several challenges through the way (Maree, 2010; Savickas et al., 2009). It is also a life-long process (Savickas et al., 2009). Thus, college student must think, design, plan and take actions towards its construction, even during the years at college and so on. Offer assistance to college students, preparing them for future to come (Hughey & Hughey, 1999; Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999; Kuijpers & Meijers, 2012) and for better design theirs own life and career it is, therefore, a top priority. Career counsellors could, therefore, develop and adopt a markedly preventive approach in supporting college students in the life designing process, according to the life designing framework (Savickas et al., 2009). To reflect and discuss the construction of the life project with college students, career counsellors might cover the following issues: (re) defining the vision of future, help students assume authorship and individual responsibility in the construction of the life project (including career project), proactive attitude towards career construction, career adaptability and self-efficacy in relation to the construction of life project.

Redefining how college students "look to the future"

One important key issue to work with college students is the way they see, think and look to the future and how they cope with increasingly uncertainty associated to it. The conception of future and how young adults related to it can shape how they make their plans and projects (Leccardi, 2006, 2012). In a study about young people's relationship with time, Leccardi (2005) concluded that young people may often experience the feeling that time today has accelerated the pace and everything happens at a faster speed than ever before. But, at the same time, the author refers that young adults may perceive that transition times are slower, since the steps had lost their link to well-established temporal milestones (finished the studies, entry into a working world, starting a family). As a result, this can accentuated "the sensation of not being personally fit for the times, of not being able to keep up the fast pace of collective living, of being too slow in relation to what is necessary to satisfactorily construct one´s biography (Leccardi, 2005, p. 135). In response to uncertainty and risky social context, many young people seem to rely mainly on short or very short projects (Leccardi, 2005, 2006, 2012). In some cases, this reflects the apprehension and discomfort of the idea towards the future itself (Leccardi, 2006). Engaging in such projects,

it can also be a form to control temporal anxiety, incited by the unknown. It can generate in individuals the impression of relatively biographical mastery (Leccardi, 2012). It is important to note that the fact that young people tend to invest in short-term projects does not necessarily mean that it is not something desirable, if we consider the demands and current arrangements of our reality (Leccardi, 2006, 2012). In addition to all this, uncertainty over the future can make some students feel stressed or anxious about planning the future. Consequently, they can avoid or postpone making important career decisions (Campbell & Ungar, 2004; Krumboltz, 1992). This is related to the fact that students assigning a large weight to that task (i.e. seeing as something very important and crucial), which in turn lead to feel overwhelmed and think they are not able to handle it. However, such behaviour shown by the students can be erroneously labelled as procrastination (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). The uncertainty associated towards the future can heighten feelings of insecurity and apprehension in people, but we cannot forget that future also presents many new possibilities and opportunities for individuals (Krumboltz, 1998, 2009; Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999; Leccardi, 2006). Therefore, redefining the vision we have of the future, integrating both sides of the "coin" is needed. Thus, the role of career counsellors, like psychologists in this context is to encourage college students to: develop an open mind and curiosity towards the future; cope and tolerate the ambiguity; accept the unplanned and unexpected events (which are a part of everyday life and an important component in career building); and to reframe the unplanned events more positively as challenges to overcome as well as opportunities for learning and not just annoyance they must have to deal with (Krumboltz, 1998, 2009; Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999). Promote contexts and opportunities to consideration and discuss with students these issues are essential. Ask questions such as: "Are other ways of seeing and thinking the future and uncertainty?"; "How can we deal with the inevitable uncertainty?"; "How can we take advantage of the uncertain of the future?". This generates critical thinking in college students and shapes their views of future and also increases their awareness to openness towards the future.

Inspiring college students to embrace the authorship of their life project and career

Life design is a self-construction (Guichard, 2005; Savickas, 2012; Savickas et al., 2009). Individuals are the authors of their own life story (Savickas, 2012). Therefore, individuals and college students must assume the command of their lives. Career counsellors can help individuals by assisting them in writing their lives stories (including career), with personal meaning (Savickas, 2012).In this regard, it can be important to explore the meaning that work has and the role it plays in college students' lives. Work, in general, plays an important role for people (Savickas et al., 2009). However, does not have the same importance for all of them. At the same time, it is essential that the career counsellor understands how the work interplays with other relevant roles that individuals play in daily life (Krumboltz, 2009; Savickas et al., 2009), and what are these other roles. It is important to note that work is not something isolated and decontextualized, but integrated in people' lifestyle (Maree, 2010) and consequently, reflects such. Therefore, life design counselling for college students must focus on these aspects. Futhermore, it is central to address college students' personal goals regarding their life project and career. Personal goals are important because it helps them to direct attention, to mobilize efforts, to persist and to organize individual behaviour, allowing therefore to regulate his/her behaviour (Abele & Spurk, 2009). Thus, impels people to get involved in

their life plans and career. Additionally, career counsellors must reflect with college students about the importance to take responsibility for their lives and careers. As said by Ball and Jordan (1997) in future those in labour market must take more responsibility for their career and its development. With the changes that occurred in the world people are now seen as being responsible for their own career rather than the work organizations (Duarte et al., 2009; Maree, 2010; Savickas et al., 2009). Therefore, this implies a paradigm shift, that is, a shift in the way individuals conceive their role in its construction. It claims, thus, a mind set change among college students regarding their own role in this process. In career counselling college students still ask questions such as "What kind of course/career do you think I should or shouldn't choose?"; "What kind of job/career best fit me?"; "What kind of job and career will give me more chances to be successful?", which seems to reflect the way they still comprehend career responsibility – attributing, in part, to third parties. With respect to this issue, career counsellors should not tell them what to do, but instead should help them to think for themselves what they want and what have meaning for them (Mitchell et al., 1999; Savickas et al., 2009). Choose and take responsibility for their own choices as well as ensure autonomy in this process should be encouraged among college students. Moreover, career counsellors should emphases in increasing college students' intentionality towards design and build their lives and careers. This intentionality process is central to life design construction, considering that taking action denotes behaviour and meaning (Duarte et al., 2009; Savickas, 2012; Savickas et al., 2009). Engage in diverse activities allows individuals to construct their career journey. To think on activities' outcomes opens opportunities for people to change the perception that they have of themselves as well as discover new skills and interests (Savickas et al., 2009) In short, it is important that career counsellor stimulate and encourage individuals to take the authorship of their lives and the responsibility for their own actions and choices as well as increase their intentionally in this process.

Encouraging college students to adopt a proactive attitude towards building their life project and career

Given the need to adapt to mutable and an ever-changing working world and to take charge for owns' career (Eby et al., 2003; Hirschi, Lee, Porfeli, & Vondracek, 2013), promoting proactivity and engagement in career is central among individuals and college students (Eby et al., 2003; Hirschi et al., 2013; Kuijpers & Meijers, 2012). Proactive career behaviors comprehend deliberated actions undertaken by individuals to strive and accomplish their career goals (De Vos, De Clippeleer, & Dewilde, 2009). Individuals who are highly proactive, therefore, identify opportunities, take necessary action on them, show initiative and persevere when encounter obstacles and setbacks, according to Bateman and Crant (1993).Moreover, proactive career behaviors are related with career success (De Vos et al., 2009; Eby et al., 2003) and successful job search among young adults college students (Brown & Levy, 2006). In sum, it is essential to incite college students to adopt a more proactive attitude in relation to the construction of their lives and career rather than a more passive and reactive approach. They should, rather, seek to purse their projects and goals, not leaving it to the mercy of fate, luck or third parties (such as work organizations).

Promoting and developing career adaptability among college students

"Readiness to cope with the predictable tasks of preparing for and participating in the work role and with the unpredictable adjustments prompted by changes in work and working conditions'' is defined as career adaptability by (Savickas, 1997, p. 254). It is seen as a key aspect in today's world (Duffy, 2010; Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004; Koen et al., 2012; Savickas, 1997; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). It comprises four psychosocial resources (that is self-regulation strengths or capacities), which are: concern - looking ahead and prepare for the future; control - take charge of future by being responsible and conscientious in making career-related decisions), curiosity - exploring the environment and thinking about the self in many possible situations, scenarios and roles; and confidence - having self-efficacy to undertake necessary activities to implement a life design (Koen et al., 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). These resources can be developed in individuals (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). The degree of career adaptability shown by people depend more on how they make use of these resources and how they engage in each related work activity, and not so much on having the possession of them (Koen et al., 2012). Thus, an individual adaptable is someone who reveals great concern about his/her vocational future, takes more control over his future, shows great curiosity by exploring its many possible selves and future sceneries and opportunities, and exhibit confidence in achieving his goals (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Career adaptability brings many benefits for individuals. For example, it is related with finding a suitable and quality job (Koen et al., 2012) and self-efficacy in finding a job (Gamboa, Paixão, & Palma, 2014; Guan et al., 2013), enhancing career success, well-being among individuals (Koen et al., 2012).Taking all this into consideration, interventions targeted to training career adaptability resources among college students is indispensable (Koen et al., 2012). In this context, it is also important to reflect with the student that being successful in design and build a life project entails, above all, the ability to make the necessary adjustments and changes in the life project and personal plans, so those still functional and adaptable to the ever-changing life context. Therefore, adaptability instead of inflexibility regarding a life project should be embraced. Enhancing a sense of self-efficacy among college students in designing and constructing their lives and careers Actions and behaviours undertaken by individuals rely mainly in their sense of self-efficacy. Individuals who show a greater sense of self-efficacy are more likely to persist and perform successful within a domain (Bandura, 2001; Brown & Levy, 2006). Therefore, self-efficacy is seen as a vital component in vocational development and career outcomes (Gamboa et al., 2014; Hirschi & Freund, 2014; Hirschi et al., 2013). It is, for instance, linked to job search behaviour, job search effort and job search outcomes (Brown & Levy, 2006), career engagement (Hirschi & Freund, 2014) and career exploration and planning (Hirschi & Freund, 2014). These behaviours are, thus, essential to obtain a job. From this, college students who show self-efficacy can benefit from it in planning their careers and in search of a job after completing college or even when throughout their lives when they have or want to change jobs. Attending that, work towards the way college students recognize their sense of self-efficacy to design and construction their lives and career are fundamental. Students will more easily strive and persist in the construction of their projects if they "see" themselves, as someone able to carry out their projects. Therefore, career counsellors should promote activities aimed to discuss with college students, in particular, their beliefs of self-efficacy, the importance of building a sense of self-efficacy and how they can cultivate them along the way.

Final remarks

Uncertainty, unknown and complexity increasingly characterized our today's life contexts and work as well as tomorrow. Therefore, careers

and life projects can no longer be conceived, designed and built in the same way they were made in the past. Follow or copy the life projects of parents' or/and older people (e.g. finding a job in the field after completing the college, look for a lifetime job, and work in the same field throughout life) can no longer fit into today's reality. College students, therefore, have to find other ways to build their life projects and careers that are meaningful to them. Making it meaningful for them is mainly what must guide the construction of their life projects (Savickas, 2012; Savickas et al., 2009). Also, the life projects must embrace and involve ambiguity (Krumboltz, 1998, 2009) and be flexible and adaptable throughout a lifelong. With this in mind, the career counsellors in college might assist college students to better design and build a fulfilling life. Career counsellors are, above all, educators (Krumboltz, 1998, 2009; Mitchell et al., 1999) and co-constructers in this whole process. So, their main role is not do "matchmaking" between people and jobs but to help college students to discuss and learn about their own lives and careers, to design them and to find ways on how they can do it (Mitchell et al., 1999) Career counsellor practice should underline the individual's uniqueness (Savickas et al., 2009). Hence, it is vital to discuss with college students about the different opportunities and possible becoming's by encouraging them to explore, to be curiosity and open towards it. Intervention in supporting individuals in the process of designing their lives should, therefore, be holistic and contextual as suggest by Savickas et al. (2009). In addition, it should be preventive (Savickas et al., 2009) thus helping and empowering college students to better deal and face possible challenges in the future as they create their lives. Individual career counselling (e.g. Di Fabio, 2016) and group counselling (e.g. Barclay & Stoltz, 2016) can be one of the ways. Individual career counselling has been proven to be effective (Whiston, Sexton, & Lasoff, 1998). Create and develop seminars, such as self-management career (Pinto, Loureiro, & Taveira, 2015), and other activities are also important. These initiatives should seek to adopt a dynamic approach (Savickas et al., 2009) One last important remark is that the ultimate aim of the intervention with college students, in this domain, ought to be guided by: encouraging a greater interest on taking responsibility and intentionality over their future and lives; foster greater openness to future and learning; heighten career adaptability; develop a greater sense of self-efficacy towards the construction of their life project; and to encourage a more proactivity attitude among college students in building their lives. Therefore, it should not stress them out to make definite choices or long-term plans related to career when future is unclear (Krumboltz, 2009; Mitchell et al., 1999). Also, we cannot forget that the life designing is a long-life process (Savickas, 2012). In fact, what matters most is to give the resources and conditions so that college students can influence their life stories in a sense to be satisfactory. In conclusion, empower college students to design and construct their lives is essential, thus opening avenues and opportunities for college students to become more reflexive, active and productive citizens, and consequently more involved in their society and contributing to the social good.

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