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The career counselling interview

Jennifer M. Kidd

INTRODUCTION

The interview is probably the event that most lay people associate most directly with careers guidance. Many would be surprised, however, to learn of the variety of 'models' of interviewing that guidance practitioners may employ. Ten or fifteen years ago, the main differences in approach could be characterised quite simply: the choice was between a counselling-type interview using Rogerian relationship skills, and a content-oriented model where the aim was to obtain certain categories of information from the client and make recommendations as to the action he or she should take. Rodger's Seven-Point Plan (Rodger, 1952) was often used as a framework for this latter approach.

In recent years, though, there has been an increase in the range of approaches on offer to the guidance practitioner. To some extent this has been due to the proliferation of American writing on contemporary theoretical perspectives on career counselling, but the influence of British (more practice-oriented) work is also apparent. Crites's (1981) and Walsh and Osipow's (1990) volumes are good examples of the contemporary American literature in this area: both contain comprehensive reviews of a range of models, and attempt to describe and differentiate them along a range of dimensions. These are discussed later in more detail. There appear to be no British reviews of career counselling theories specifically, though Millar et al. (1992) deal thoroughly with the theoretical background to interviewing practice in general, across a range of settings. Ball's (1984) and Nathan and Hill's (1992) discussions of practice have also made useful contributions.

The provision of interviews within the total guidance process varies somewhat between professional groups. In higher education careers services, for example, there has been a move away from individual hour-long interviews, and in some cases more emphasis is now placed on access to information and group work. In other contexts, however, the interview is still seen as a central core of provision: for example, adults receiving guidance through Training and Enterprise Councils are sometimes given a voucher to 'pay' for an intensive interview as part of the service provided.

Whatever model for one-to-one career counselling is adopted, the interview should be seen as only one possible guidance activity among many. It might also be argued that where it is offered, the interview should come later rather than earlier in a sequence of activities, since research suggests that clients who have participated in careers education programmes before the interview gain more from the interview itself (Bedford, 1982a). It may further be noted that although individual guidance seems to be more effective, in terms of a range of learning outcomes, than other types of interventions, it is much more costly (Oliver and Spokane, 1988). Practitioners need to consider carefully, therefore, how far the one-to-one interview is the most appropriate intervention for a particular client or group of clients.

Guidance interviewing practice also varies between professional groups. It is dangerous to generalise, but practitioners working in independent career counselling and outplacement agencies are more likely than other guidance workers to offer clients a battery of tests (which may include interest and personality inventories and aptitude tests) and to make recommendations based on interpretations of their results. Outplacement counsellors are likely to focus on coaching and support in job hunting and also may be more prepared to devote more time to providing emotional support to clients who are recovering from the trauma of redundancy. In the face of limited information about their clients' interests and abilities, educational guidance workers may have to give a fair amount of attention to assessment too, though they are unlikely to be trained in the use of psychological tests and their assessment techniques may be more wide-ranging (Kidd, 1988). Recent research suggests that careers officers, higher education careers advisers and educational guidance workers vary considerably in their familiarity with different models of guidance interviewing (Kidd et al., 1993) and for careers officers at least this seems to affect the way they describe their interviewing practice (Kidd et al., 1994).

Space precludes a full discussion of the range of models of interviewing promulgated in the literature: the reader is referred to the reviews cited above for a detailed discussion of the orientations summarised here. What is attempted in this chapter is a fairly comprehensive (though, of necessity, broad-brush) overview of the main approaches to interviewing which appear to be applied in Britain. These are discussed within four general 'orientations': person-environment fit; developmental; person-centred; and goal-directed. Throughout, the techniques and methods derived from British theory and research are given more prominence than the American models, since reviews of the latter are more readily available. What some may consider as an important orientation, the psychodynamic, is not covered, because such approaches rarely inform practice in Britain. Even in the United States, where more use is made of them, the underlying psychodynamic theories have not been well applied, beyond the use of certain techniques such as card sorts and projective techniques, which are often used within other career counselling orientations.

The overall aim is to go some way towards reducing the gap between theory and practice by outlining some of the ways in which it is possible to learn from theory and by highlighting the main implications of the various orientations for career counselling methods and techniques. The orientations and approaches covered are set out in Table 1. To some extent this taxonomy describes ideal types, and categorising models in this way over-emphasises differences at the expense of similarities. Furthermore, the scheme may be too blunt, since it conceals some important distinctions between approaches within the same general orientation. Placing Egan and Krumboltz in the same category, for example, fails to draw attention to the fact that Egan's model is a framework for helping generally, whereas Krumboltz's model derives directly from his social learning theory of career decision-making. The scheme also fails to acknowledge differences in the degree of centrality of the interview itself within the various approaches. Within person-environment fit orientations, for instance, the interview is at the heart of the guidance intervention, but in Super's developmental approach it is only one component of the guidance process. Notwithstanding these caveats, a more elaborate classification of models is likely to be over-cumbersome for present purposes.

Table 1. Major orientations and approaches to interviewing

Orientations	*Approaches*
Person-environment fit	Seven-point plan (Rodger) Congruence models (e.g. Holland) Information-processing principles
Developmental	Developmental careers counselling (Super) FIRST (Bedford)
Person-centred	Client-centred counselling (Rogers) Personal construct theory techniques
Goal-directed	Social learning model (Krumboltz) Skilled helper (Egan) Interpersonal interaction models

Following this overview of orientations and approaches, the final three sections of the chapter discuss some of the issues that guidance workers may need to consider in applying the various approaches in their work. Some general matters on the relationship between theory and practice are dealt with, and a classification scheme is presented which suggests how far each orientation and approach offers specific guidelines to the practitioner with respect to a number of criteria.

2 PERSON-ENVIRONMENT FIT ORIENTATIONS

Often called talent-matching or congruence theories, these models derive from trait-and-factor theories of occupational choice and guidance. They emphasise diagnosis and assessment, and the expected outcome is a recommendation to the client on an appropriate course of action. The practitioner is likely to use forms and questionnaires completed before the interview as aids to assessment. Sometimes the results of psychometric tests are used as well.

Perhaps the most well-known person-environment fit model in Britain is Rodger's seven-point plan (Rodger, 1952). This is simply a list of questions organised under seven headings. Rodger suggested that these should be regarded as a short list of items that need to be considered in guidance. The seven headings and their associated questions are shown in Table 2. For many years, this was the main model of interviewing used by careers officers. It has fallen out of favour in recent years, however, largely because of its diagnostic and directive nature, its perceived rigidity, and its focus on the content of the interview rather than process issues. Nevertheless, many guidance practitioners still appreciate the *aide mémoire* provided by the seven headings.

Table 2. Rodger's seven-point plan

Heading	Questions
1. Physical make-up	Has he [sic] any defects of health or physique that may be of occupational importance? How agreeable are his appearance, his bearing and his speech?
2. Attainments	What type of education has he had? How well has he done educationally? What occupational training and experience has he had already? How well has he done occupationally?
3. General intelligence	How much general intelligence can he display? How much general intelligence does he ordinarily display?
4. Special aptitudes	Has he any marked mechanical aptitude, manual dexterity, facility in the use of figures, talent for drawing or music?
5. Interests	To what extent are his interests intellectual? practical? practical-constructional? physically active? social? artistic?
6. Disposition	How acceptable does he make himself to other people? Does he influence others? Is he steady and dependable? Is he self-reliant?
7. Circumstances	What are his domestic circumstances? What do the other members of the family do for a living? Are there any special openings available for him?

Source: Rodger (1952)

One of the most influential and widely researched person-environment fit models in the United States is that of Holland (1973), who proposed that people seek occupational environments that are congruent with their personalities. Holland's theory of occupational choice states that:

1. People fall into six personality or interests types (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional).
2. Occupational environments can be classified in the same terms.
3. Individuals seek to achieve congruence between personality and environment.
4. Where congruence is achieved, optimum satisfaction and performance will result.

According to this model, one of the main activities of the career counsellor is to assess individuals along the six dimensions of occupational interests and to recommend occupations which match the individual's profile. A number of instruments have been developed to assess Holland's interest types. These include the Vocational Preference Inventory (Holland, 1985b), the Self-Directed Search (Holland, 1985a) and the Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (Hansen and Campbell, 1985).

Holland's work has been criticised for its static view of individuals and occupations. Furthermore, as noted above, and as Rounds and Tracey (1990) have pointed out in their review of person-environment fit approaches, the historically pragmatic focus of these approaches fails to consider the counselling process in any detail. Until now, their emphasis has largely been upon the reliability, validity and type of information gathered about occupations and individuals; little attention has been given to how that information is processed. Rounds and Tracey argue that problem-solving and information-processing are inherent in the person-environment fit models. Theories of problem-solving can be applied to understand better how clients make decisions, how counsellors go about diagnosis, and how they might make decisions about the type of intervention most suited to a particular client. Anderson's (1985) Adaptive Control of Thought theory is used to discuss how information is processed. Vocational interventions need to facilitate the translation of declarative knowledge (facts) into procedural knowledge (ways of acting). This translation is a four-stage process of: (1) encoding (perception of information and appreciation of meaning); (2) goal setting; (3) development of plans and pattern matching; and (4) action.

Person-environment fit approaches have had a bad press in recent years, largely because of the move towards what have been perceived to be less-directive approaches where the guidance worker acts as 'facilitator' rather than 'expert'. It is undoubtedly the case, however, that guidance workers do make judgements and diagnoses in the course of interviews. It has been argued that we need to accept that this is so and to look more closely at these processes. Clarke (1994), for example, has drawn on the literature on medical diagnosis to put forward some hypotheses about the way in which careers officers use information cues to make judgements about clients in interviews. She suggests that an underlying feature of many interviews is a matching process using heuristics and cognitive maps of opportunities. Through this process, careers officers arrive at judgements about their clients, although they may not recognise that this is happening. She goes on to argue that this is an essential procedure within an effective mass careers guidance service, since it enables large numbers of clients to be interviewed in a limited amount of time.

3. DEVELOPMENTAL ORIENTATIONS

Although the term 'developmental' covers a range of models, these approaches have two basic features in common. First, all assert that choosing an occupation and adjusting to the world of work is a continuous process which carries on through life. Second, the language of developmental psychology is used to describe and explain the process of career development. Key variables in the various models are the notions of developmental stages, developmental tasks, and career maturity.

The process of career counselling can be broadly described as attempting to form an accurate and comprehensive picture of the client's career development, and encouraging the client to 'move on' in his or her development towards greater awareness of self and situation and competence in decision-making. It has been suggested (e.g. Healey, 1982) that all career counselling interventions need to be related to the client's developmental stage. For example, during the exploratory stage of career development (around ages 15-24) the focus of the interview will be on educational and occupational decision-making and placement, while in the

establishment stage (ages 25-44) the emphasis will be broader, taking account of other life-roles in the client's career planning.

The writer most clearly associated with the developmental approach is Super (1957), though other writers have also used developmental theories to elaborate the process of career counselling (see e.g. Blocher and Seigal, 1981; Schlossberg, 1984). Perhaps in response to criticisms of the implicit values within the notion of career maturity, Super (1983) has suggested that developmental career counselling needs to attend to the relative importance of work to the individual (work *salience*) and the satisfactions sought from work (work *values*) as well as the client's career maturity.

Jepsen (1990) describes two general principles which are illustrative of developmental approaches: that 'descriptions and interpretations of a client's career help them construct fresh meanings and prepare to take action'; and that 'counselling techniques and methods are more effective when adapted to the client level of development' (p. 136). One tool which might be used in implementing the former principle is Super's (1980) life-career rainbow. The bands in the rainbow represent the different roles a person assumes during the course of a lifetime. This gives a graphic portrayal of the number and nature of roles that adults are likely to have to assume at any one time and the impact of internal and external forces on these roles.

The second principle finds expression in Bedford's (1982a) framework for describing and evaluating careers officers' interviews. This will be described in some detail, as those who have encountered it vouch frequently for its usefulness. Central to this framework is an initial diagnosis of the stage reached by the client at the start of the interview. This is assessed along five dimensions, using the mnemonic FIRST (Table 3). Progress made during the interview is assessed along the same dimensions, and each dimension is viewed as contributing cumulatively towards the goal of 'vocational awareness', which in the case of school leavers is defined as being fully prepared for the transition from school to work. This suggests that Bedford's framework provides more than just an evaluative framework for the external observer. Rather, it can be seen as a fairly sophisticated framework for the assessment of career development.

Table 3 The FIRST framework

Dimension	*Question*
Focus	How far has the young person narrowed down options?
Information	How well-informed is the young person about the career options s/he has in mind?
Realism	How realistic is the young person (both in relation to own abilities and the constraints of the market)?
Scope	How aware is the young person of the range of options available?
Tactics	To what extent has the young person worked out the practical steps necessary to achieve his/her career objective?

Source: Bedford (1982a)

The fundamental interviewer skills and techniques, which Bedford refers to as the 'process' aspect of the model, are seen as comprising seven distinct though related qualities (Bedford, 1982b):

1. Establishing the broad purpose of the interview.
2. Creating a friendly, encouraging atmosphere.
3. Gathering information.
4. Identifying the young person's needs.
5. Giving information.
6. Summarising progress made during the interview.
7. Clarifying the next steps to be taken.

Although Bedford does not describe these as stages, a temporal sequence is implied.

One strength of the FIRST framework is its simplicity and its potential for use in training situations. Behaviourally anchored rating scales derived from the framework can be applied in the evaluation of guidance interventions, although this requires observers to rate interviews individually and the reliability of the assessments depends on their skill in using the scales.

4. PERSON-CENTRED ORIENTATIONS

Although the client-centred approach in personal counselling was first introduced by Rogers (1942), he himself had little interest in applying his approach to career counselling. Patterson (1964) was one of the first writers to elaborate how client-centred principles could be applied in careers guidance. The essence of the client-centred approach is that the most important influence on the progress made in the interview is the relationship between the interviewer and the client. Interview techniques are played down; the attitudes of the practitioner are the main focus. These are normally described as:

1. *Genuineness* - being integrated and real within the relationship.
2. *Unconditional positive regard* - respecting the client in a non-judgemental way.
3. *Empathic understanding* - understanding the client from his or her own internal frame of reference, and endeavouring to communicate this to the client.

The phrase 'person-centred counselling' appears to be the preferred term nowadays. Bozarth and Fisher (1990) suggest two reasons why this is a more appropriate term to describe how this approach informs the careers guidance interview. First, the term emphasises more clearly the importance of the interactive and egalitarian relationship between the practitioner and the client. Second, it highlights the importance of what they call the 'person to person' encounter of the two parties.

Bozarth and Fisher go on to describe four 'axioms' of person-centred career counselling (some of these are derived from Patterson's writings):

1. 'The person-centered career counselor has attitudes and behaviors that focus on promoting the inherent process of client self-actualization.'
2. 'There is an initial emphasis on a certain area of client concern, that of work.'
3. 'There are opportunities for the client to test his or her emerging concept of personal identity and vocational choice with real or simulated work activities.'

4. 'The person-centered career counselor has certain information and skills available to the client through which a career goal can be implemented.'

(Bozarth and Fisher, 1990, p. 53)

Axiom 1 suggests that the locus of control within the interview is with the client. In discussing Axiom 2, Bozarth and Fisher make the point that the choice of emphasis is made by the client and that the focus will normally be on occupational issues, although various other areas may be explored later. Axiom 3 points to the need to consider the interview within the broader framework of careers education and guidance; few other models acknowledge this need explicitly. In Axiom 4, we see a recognition of the importance of considering how information about opportunities should be made available. Information should only be introduced when there is a recognised need for it by the client; it should be introduced in a way that maximises client responsibility; and clients should be allowed to express their attitudes and feelings about the information.

In summary, then, the person-centred approach emphasises attitudes and beliefs rather than techniques and goals. It can be characterised as a phenomenological approach which implies a key role for the self-concept: indeed, Super's (1963) propositions concerning the role of self-concepts in career development are frequently referred to.

It is curious that so few links have been made between the person-centred approach and personal construct psychology (PCP) (Kelly, 1955). PCP is fundamentally a theory of personality which stresses the unique ways in which people make sense of the world. The lack of attention generally to the implications of PCP for careers guidance is surprising because it is essentially concerned with individual choice and change. The central building block of the theory is the construct, which is a bipolar discrimination made between objects of the individual's experience, and thus has choice built into it. Individuals are viewed as constantly testing out and elaborating their systems of constructs.

In Britain, following early work by Edmonds (1979), the person who has probably done most to elucidate how PCP might be applied to careers guidance is Offer (1989; 1990). A number of careers officers have become familiar with the guidance applications of PCP, largely through Offer's distance-learning materials and training courses.

At the heart of the PCP approach to guidance is the assumption that the effective guidance practitioner 'construes the construction processes of another' (Kelly, 1955, p. 104). Offer (1993) argues that the theory can encompass all of the four DOTS learning outcomes of guidance. Self awareness involves becoming aware of one's constructs; opportunity awareness is concerned with developing viable constructs about the world of work; decision learning involves framing a decision within the relevant constructs and preventing these becoming a 'cage'; and one of the tasks of transition learning is 'spreading one's dependencies', or gaining feedback from a wide range of other people.

In more theoretical terms, the guidance process is conceived as identifying the client's position in the 'experience cycle' and the 'CPC' (circumspection, pre-emption and control) cycle, and using certain techniques to help the client to move to the next stage in these cycles. The experience cycle starts with anticipation (a state of preparedness),

followed by commitment (willingness to get involved with an issue or event), encounter (construing an issue or event), confirmation or disconfirmation (making sense of an event), and constructive revision (facing the implications of what has occurred). Overlapping with the experience cycle, the CPC cycle describes the process of decision-making. In the first phase, *circumspection,* constructs are floated which may be relevant to decisions. This equates to developing self awareness and opportunity awareness in careers guidance: the aim is to ensure that all the pieces of information that may affect the decision are available. In the next phase, *pre-emption,* one or more key issues concerning the decision are identified. The choice has not yet been made, but it becomes clear what the choice is to be between. The third phase, *control,* describes the actual choice (the term 'control' is preferred to 'choice' because the individual refers back to the 'control centre' of the construct system to assess the implications of a particular choice).

Techniques that the interviewer might use to enable the client to progress through these cycles include:

1. Eliciting constructs by asking the client to describe ways in which certain 'elements' (which might be jobs) are similar or different.
2. 'Laddering' up the hierarchy of constructs from concrete subordinate constructs to super-ordinate constructs which have a wider application (one way of doing this is to probe *why* certain things are important to the individual).
3. 'Pyramiding' down the hierarchy of constructs from super-ordinate constructs to subordinate ones (perhaps by asking *how* things differ).
4. Asking the client to complete a 'grid' using certain constructs on a small range of elements (possibly jobs).
5. Employing self-characterisation: for example, asking clients to describe how they see themselves in a year's time, or in a particular position at work.
6. Encouraging the client to develop action plans by moving towards tighter constructs.

Perhaps the main criticism that might be made of PCP as applied to guidance is its lack of attention to objective reality - specifically, hard data about the world of work. It is not clear, for example, how occupational information is to be incorporated into the interview.

5. GOAL-DIRECTED ORIENTATIONS

Contained under the heading of goal-directed orientations is a somewhat diverse range of models. Egan's (1990) prescriptive model of helping is placed alongside the descriptive framework offered by Millar et al. (1992), and these generic approaches to interviewing are linked with Krumboltz's exposition of the principles of learning that govern decision-making about careers specifically. What these approaches have in common is a recognition that career counselling is about, among other things, goal-setting and action planning. It is for this reason that they are considered together here.

We shall begin with Krumboltz's (1983) social learning approach. Krumboltz argues that individuals acquire beliefs about themselves and about the world of work through two kinds of learning experiences: instrumental and associative. The term *instrumental learning experiences* refers to the way individuals develop preferences

through participating in a range of activities, and the development of preferences for those in which they succeed or are rewarded. *Associative learning experiences* refer to the exposure of individuals to the ways in which occupations are associated with complex combinations of values. Two consequences of these learning experiences are *self-observation generalisations* (beliefs about one's own abilities, interests, values, etc.) and *task-approach skills* (relationships between self-observation generalisations and the external environment - for example, decision-making orientations, work habits, and emotional responses). Over a period of time, sequences of experiences enable individuals to generate self-observation generalisations and task-approach skills that form the basis for career development. These beliefs and skills are constantly changing as each new experience builds on previous ones.

One task of the career counsellor is to assess the 'accuracy, completeness and coherence' of clients' beliefs about themselves and about the outside world (Krumboltz, 1983). The problems that inaccurate beliefs can produce include:

1. Making inaccurate generalisations about the world of work from a single experience.
2. Making social comparisons with an idealised role model.
3. Over-reacting emotionally to negative events.
4. Making erroneous attributions of the causes of particular career outcomes.
5. Self-deception.

These types of inaccurate beliefs need to be countered and challenged by the career counsellor, using such strategies as: examining assumptions underlying expressed beliefs; looking for inconsistencies between words and behaviour; and confronting illogical frameworks of beliefs (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1990). Also, more rational behaviour needs to be reinforced by expressions of approval and appreciation. The goal of more accurate self and occupational knowledge is also likely to be pursued by encouraging the client to learn by experience in the real world - for example, by participating in work-simulation and work-experience schemes.

The Career Beliefs Inventory (Krumboltz, 1988) may be used as a tool to identify attitudes that interfere with the client's ability to achieve his or her goals. Setting goals for career counselling is central. According to Krumboltz (1966), these should satisfy three criteria: They should (1) be capable of being set differentially for each client; (2) be compatible with the counsellor's values; and (3) be observable. The literature on rational-emotive therapy (RET) also suggests useful methods and techniques for challenging clients' irrational thinking (see, for example, Dryden, 1990). In an earlier article discussing some of the applications of RET to career counselling, Dryden (1979) argues that RET may be appropriate 'when the client is experiencing anxiety, depression, anger, guilt or boredom related to indecisiveness' (p. 185). In line with Krumboltz's views, the goal of counselling will then be to identify irrational and self-defeating assumptions, to challenge these, and to help the client work to change them.

As we have seen, then, central features of the social learning approach are cognitive restructuring and teaching decision-making skills. The three-stage model of helping set out by Egan (1990) has similarities with this approach since, like Krumboltz, Egan emphasises the importance of helping clients to identify their goals and make progress towards achieving them. A summary of Egan's model is provided in Table 4. Different communication skills are given emphasis at each stage. For example, within

Table 4 Egan's model of helping

Stage	Steps
1 Identifying and clarifying problem	1a Help clients to tell their stories. situations and unused opportunities
	1b Help clients to become aware of and overcome their blind spots and develop new perspectives on themselves and their problem situations.
	1c Help clients to identify and work on problems, issues, concerns or opportunities that will make a difference.
2 Developing a preferred scenario	2a Help clients to develop a range of possibilities for a better future.
	2b Help clients to translate preferred-scenario possibilities into viable agendas.
	2c Help clients to identify the kinds of incentives that will enable them to commit themselves to the agendas they fashion.
3 Formulating strategies and plans	3a Help clients to brainstorm a range of strategies for implementing their plans.
	3b Help clients to choose a set of strategies that best fit their environment.
	3c Help clients to formulate a plan: that is, a step-by-step procedure for accomplishing each goal of the preferred scenario.
All stages	Help clients to act on what they learn throughout the helping process.

Source: Egan (1990).

Step la, attending, listening, empathy and probing are most relevant, while in Step lb, challenging is likely to predominate. Egan also emphasises the importance of the 'client-helper contract', which enables both parties to understand what their responsibilities are and helps them to develop realistic mutual expectations. The contract might include:

1. An explanation of the helping process.
2. The nature of the client-helper relationship.
3. The helper's responsibilities.
4. The client's responsibilities.
5. The limits of the relationship (for example, whether the client can contact the helper between sessions).
6. The kind of influence exerted by the helper.
7. An explanation of the flexibility of the process.

An important additional feature of the contract may be an explanation to the client about the model of helping: various materials such as pamphlets and videotapes may be used to give clients a flavour of the process. Nathan and Hill (1992) call this

'screening' and point out that it usually occurs before the counsellor and client contract to meet. Screening may be in writing, by telephone or in person (though the Institute of Personnel Management [l9911 recommended that counsellors in such settings should not accept clients without having a preliminary meeting with them to discuss their needs).

Many practitioners see Egan's clear definition of the stages of the helping process as an invaluable aid to strategy. It is covered on many of the initial training courses for careers officers, and a recent survey (Kidd et al., 1994) showed that it is rated highly on practical relevance. This study also suggested, however, that Egan's work is not as well-known to practising guidance workers as are Rogers's client-centred approach or Rodger's seven-point plan. Given its perceived usefulness, more needs to be done to expose guidance workers to this model, particularly those who trained some time ago.

Our final model within the goal-directed category is the framework of interpersonal interaction described by Millar et al. (1992). They argue that this model is appropriate for the analysis of any type of interview, across a number of situations - for example, medical, research, selection, appraisal, counselling and careers guidance. Originally developed by Hargie and Marshall (1986), the model incorporates five processes concerning the behaviour of both the interviewer and the client: goal/motivation; mediating factors; responses; feedback; and perception. The model & outlined in Figure 1.

Space precludes a detailed account of the processes, so we shall focus primarily on two aspects of the model which, arguably, differentiate it most clearly from our other orientations. These are the attention paid to goals and goalsetting, and the use of social psychology (specifically attribution theory and social influence theory) to achieve a greater understanding of interviewing.

Figure 1 Model of interpersonal interaction
Source: Millar et al. (1992)

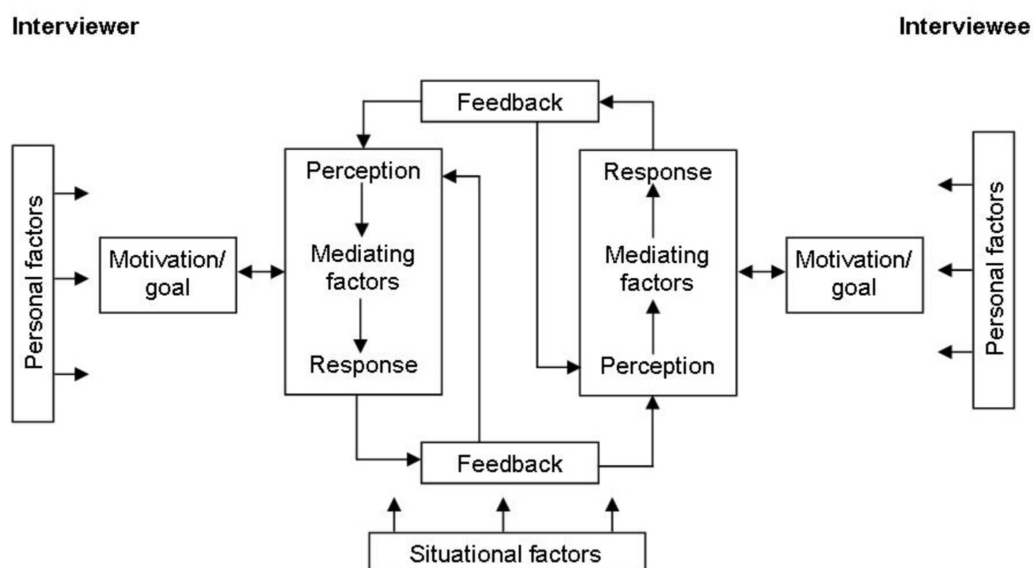

Table 5 The range of possible goals and sub-goals for vocational guidance interviews

Goals	*Sub-goals*
Enable the client to make realistic self-assessments	Develop self-awareness Develop informed self-discovery Encourage an exploration of aims, goals, attitudes and values Provide accurate and current information relating to the client's individualism (e.g. testing)
Enable the client to make realistic occupational/further education/ higher education/training assessments	Provide relevant information Encourage critical evaluation of all available information Increase the client's awareness of all potential opportunities Promote a thorough exploration of opportunities Organise any activities deemed of assistance to the client (e.g. work visits, work experience)
Assist the client to make realistic decisions	Develop an awareness of the decision-making process including goal-setting Enable the client to explore the costs and benefits of all possible options (i.e. the implications) Facilitate reality testing of any tentative decisions made Note any interim or final decisions made by the client and act as agreed
Stimulate the client to act upon decisions reached	Provide necessary information (e.g. addresses, names, telephone numbers) Set goals for completion of sub-goals Help to increase the likelihood of action being taken by strengthening the facilitators and reducing the inhibitors Undertake any action promised as part of the agreement

Source: Millar et al. (1992)

Drawing on the goal-setting literature, Millar et al. (1992) argue that effective goals need to be:

1. Clear, specific, and stated in behavioural units.
2. Measurable or verifiable.
3. Realistic or achievable.
4. Internal rather than external.
5. In keeping with the client's values.
6. Appropriately time-scaled.

From these criteria, one can derive certain lessons for career counselling. These might include: the desirability of taking time to share and clarify expectations about the interview and its purposes; the need to monitor client progress and set goals for the

interview which are in the control of the two parties; the need to ensure the client's commitment to the guidance process and avoid imposing one's own values on the client; and endeavouring to make the most effective use of the interview time. Some of these are issues which are frequently aired by guidance workers, and practice in various contexts has evolved to incorporate these features: for example, introducing 'contracting' and action planning, and discontinuing blanket interviewing within the Careers Service. What is instructive here is the exposition of how these practices are supported by well-established psychological theory.

Millar et al. identify two possible goals for careers guidance interviews: ultimate (e.g. helping the client make realistic decisions) and mediational (e.g. helping the client become aware of the decision-making process). A range of possible goals, based on an amalgam of previous work, is set out in Table 5. A number of 'mediating factors' (internal states or processes within the individual which mediate between goals, feedback and action) are incorporated into the model, including cognitions, emotions, beliefs, values and attitudes. Aspects of attribution theory are drawn on to explain these processes and to draw attention to various errors which may occur in the interview.

Perhaps the most important bias in the way we infer the causes of behaviour is the tendency to attribute the cause of our own action to the demands of the situation and the cause of others' behaviour to stable personal characteristics. This is the 'fundamental attributional error' (Ross, 1977). A careers officer, for example, may be too ready to explain the uncooperative behaviour of a client as a reflection of his or her disposition, rather than to what might be an unfamiliar or stressful interview situation.

The literature on counselling as a social influence process (e.g. Strong, 1968; Cormier and Cormier, 1985) is reviewed by Millar et al. to examine possible power bases within the interviewer's role. The potential for client change appears to be greatly increased when the client perceives the interviewer as expert, attractive interpersonally, and trustworthy.

The contribution of social influence theory to career counselling has been taken further by Dorn (1990), who identifies five social power bases: expert; referent; legitimate; informational; and ecological. *Expert* power is established as a result of the perceived expertness of the career counsellor. A *referent* power base results from the perception of the interviewer as socially attractive (defined as compatibility with the client and having a positive regard for him or her). A *legitimate* power base emerges from the interviewer's standing in the community as a helper. An *ecological* power base results from the counsellor's suggestions about how the client can control his or her environment. Lastly, the *informational* power base develops as a result of the interviewer's awareness of information resources.

Although providing a useful language to describe the potential for social influence within the interview, these reviews pay little attention to how career counsellors might *recognise* and *realise* their power bases. As Bacharach and Lawler (1980) have pointed out, power is not an attribute, but a property of a relationship, and we have to take account of the characteristics of the party over whom the power is being exerted. Furthermore, power can only be exerted effectively when a degree of dependency

exists, where one party is reliant on the other for an outcome. Dependency rests on the value of the outcome which is at stake, and the exertion of power is more likely to be effective when the outcome is highly desired than when the value attached to it is low.

One might deduce from this that in order to mobilise their power, career counsellors need first to be aware that certain power bases are possible, and second, to be able to identify the 'sources of dependency' within the client. Many clients see careers guidance as primarily an information-giving service (Cherry and Gear, 1984), and attempting to establish a relationship where clients can gain insight into their interests and abilities (that is, using a referent power base rather than an expert one) could explain why some clients who might benefit from further help fail to return for a second interview. This incongruence between the counsellor's influence attempts and the client's expectations is likely to be minimised by the 'screening' process discussed earlier.

A further practical feature of this framework lies in its implications for analysing the counselling process over a number of sessions. It is possible, for example, that legitimate power will be more important in first meetings, that expert and referent power will be important throughout the process, and that ecological power will play a key role in later stages.

6. WAYS TO LEARN FROM THEORY

As we have seen, the approaches described differ in a number of ways. But what difference does it make in practice which model is used? And how might practitioners begin to choose one or the other? These questions imply that career counsellors have some freedom to select a preferred approach, perhaps on the basis of how far a theory is in line with their own views about human nature, how far it seems to meet their clients' needs or the practical constraints of the context in which they interview, or the extent to which it meets various criteria of academic integrity. Yet for most practitioners, there is very little freedom of choice in relation to any of these criteria. How far particular theories are translated into practice depends not only on the nature of the theory itself, but also, and perhaps more significantly, on the 'gateways' through which they must pass in order to reach the practitioner (Tizard, 1990). Training courses are the most obvious of these gateways, and research suggests, in the case of careers officers at least, that students in their initial training are introduced to a narrow range of theories (Kidd et al., 1994). There are of course good reasons for this. Many careers officer trainers would take the view, for instance, that teaching any one approach requires an in-depth programme integrating theory and practical skills development, and it would be impossible to do justice to more than one or two models in a one-year college-based training course which has to cover all aspects of a careers officer's work.

But to what extent do the models have different and unique implications for practice? Some have argued (e.g. Krumboltz and Nichols, 1990) that the major theories are not in fundamental disagreement, and that their main differences are in emphasis and vocabulary. For example, Krumboltz's distinction between self-observation generalisations and task approach skills has a parallel in the 'psychtalk' and 'occtalk'

described by Starishevsky and Matlin (1963) in their operationalisation of Super's theory.

A similar argument has been proposed with regard to theories of psychotherapy. Strupp (1973), for instance, takes the view that the commonalities in different forms of therapy are far greater than their differences. One way of identifying what the common therapeutic principles are, as Norcross and Grencavage (1989) observe, is to focus on an intermediate level of abstraction, lying between theory and techniques. They call this 'clinical strategy'.

Other attempts to integrate psychotherapy theories have been described as 'technical eclecticism' and 'theoretical integration' (Norcross and Grencavage, 1989). Put simply, advocates of technical eclecticism use methods and techniques drawn from different sources without necessarily subscribing to their parent theories, while theoretical integrationists attempt to synthesise conceptually diverse theoretical frameworks.

It may be that practitioners will want to develop their approach beyond the one or two models they may have become familiar with in their initial training. Furthermore, those in a training role may want to encourage trainees to use theory more consciously in their work. Given the plethora of models, how might they proceed? There is a range of options:

1. Stay with one or two models (if so, which and why?).
2. Identify the common features from various models that seem to produce client gains - the common factors approach.
3. Tease out the specific methods and techniques from the various models that produce client gains - technical eclecticism.
4. Try to come up with their own, unique, integrative model - theoretical integration.

It may be less important which option is chosen than that guidance workers appreciate that it is possible to learn from the models that exist in a number of different ways, so that tacit relationships between theories and interview styles become more explicit. An examination of the last two options - technical eclecticism and theoretical integration - illustrates some of these.

7. TECHNICAL ECLECTICISM

As was noted earlier, a number of schemata have been used to compare and contrast the main features of the various orientations. Walsh and Osipow (1990), for example, have used a framework originally developed by Crites (1981). This uses two main categories: model and methods. The 'model' category defines the theoretical framework of each approach, and this encompasses three chronological stages of the counselling process: diagnosis, process, and outcomes. The 'methods' category is more pragmatic, including interview techniques, test-interpretation procedures, and the use of occupational information.

It would be a relatively straightforward task to follow Walsh and Osipow's framework to classify the orientations described here, perhaps emphasising how the British methods and techniques flesh out their summaries of the techniques implied by each approach. But, consistent with the aim expressed at the outset of this chapter - to

attempt to reconcile theory and practice - a schema is proposed which relates the methods and techniques suggested by the various approaches to specific and concrete criteria of effective interviewing. It is hoped that this will be more in tune with the needs of practitioners for guidelines on interviewing.

The rationale behind technical eclecticism is that it is not necessary to synthesise divergent models in order to use the various techniques they suggest. As was shown earlier, the different approaches emphasise a range of different activities and techniques, and each of these is seen to contribute in some way to effective career counselling. Choosing appropriate techniques is difficult, however, without reference to any specific criteria of effective interviewing. An attempt is made here, therefore, to identify some of these criteria.

The criteria have been gleaned from a number of sources. Exploratory research into careers officers' perceptions of effective interviewing (Kidd et al., 1993) suggests that interviews are seen to be most effective when the careers officer is able to *clarify clients' expectations* at the start of the interview (this may include drawing up a 'contract'), *establish rapport* with the client, effectively challenge clients to test their ideas against reality, and *structure* the interview clearly. Added to this list are two criteria derived from the key issues identified by Taylor (1985) and by Nathan and Hill (1992): namely, the most appropriate *provision of information about opportunities*, and the recognition of the *interdependence of personal and occupational concerns*. The final criterion is suggested by Holland et al.'s (1981) recognition that one of the main purposes of guidance is to *provide cognitive structures* for clients to help them to organise their thinking about self and situation.

Some of the activities suggested by each of these criteria are as follows:

1. *Clarifying expectations (or negotiating a 'contract')* - agreeing the objectives for the interview and the nature of the guidance process. The latter includes making explicit the responsibilities of the guidance worker and the client.
2. *Developing rapport* - using generic relationship skills, together with more specific skills such as listening and reflecting.
3. *Effective challenging* - helping clients to 'reality-test' their ideas about themselves and opportunities. This may include challenging uninformed ideas or plans, inconsistent beliefs, gender stereotyping, mismatches of job ideas with local opportunities or abilities, and strategically unsound plans.
4. *Structuring the interview* - having a clear sense of structure and being prepared to progress back and forth through interview stages in an iterative manner. This includes setting aside time at the end for action planning.
5. *Providing information appropriately* - helping clients to relate information to their self-assessments, express their feelings about information, and evaluate the information. This includes encouraging clients to research sources of information for themselves.
6. *Recognising the interdependence of personal and occupational concerns* - accepting that discussing career issues may involve sensitive personal issues, and helping clients to deal with these where appropriate. This includes recognising the boundaries between career counselling and personal counselling, and clarifying these for clients.
7. *Providing cognitive structures* - helping clients to develop a framework within which to organise their ideas, so as to increase the scope of their thinking

about self and situation. This may be achieved through the use of self-report instruments, such as checklists or standardised psychometric tools, or through job classification schemes.

Table 6 indicates how far each orientation and approach identified in this chapter offers the clearest guidelines to the practitioner with respect to each of the criteria.

Table 6. A classification scheme to inform practice

CRITERIA	*ORIENTATIONS*			
	Person-environment fit	*Developmental*	*Person-centred*	*Goal Directed*
Clarifying expectations				Egan Millar et al.
Developing rapport			Rogers	
Effective challenging			Kelly	Krumboltz Egan Dryden
Structuring the interview	Rodger	Bedford		Egan Millar et al.
Providing information appropriately	Holland		Bozarth and Fisher	
Recognising the interdependence of personal and occupational concerns		Super	Bozarth and Fisher	
Providing cognitive structures	Holland	Super	Kelly	

It shows that it is unlikely that any one approach, in itself, will provide sufficient guidelines for effective career counselling. Offering training in just one approach, therefore, is likely to be inadequate. It can also be seen from the table that the more recent models of interviewing emphasise the role of the career counsellor as an active communicator and organiser of interview strategy. A core activity is managing the interview process, through contracting, structuring and challenging. This is in contrast with earlier models which, respectively, emphasised *content* (information-gathering and information-giving), and then non-interventionist interviewer *attitudes* (for example, facilitating the client-counsellor relationship).

Although technical eclecticism is helpful, then, in suggesting a range of practical methods, a word of caution is necessary. There may be a danger that career counselling comes to be seen solely as a pragmatic activity, and that practitioners lose sight of its overall purpose, or long-term direction. This may be a pitfall also in the emerging competence-based approach to skills development, since this seems likely to have the effect of encouraging practitioners to see interviewing simply as a cluster of techniques.

8. THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

Historically, guidance has proceeded through a series of stages which reflect different views of careers (Watts and Kidd, 1978; Kidd and Killeen, 1992). In the first stage, guidance was seen as making recommendations about initial job choices; in the second, it was viewed as a facilitative activity, promoting learning about self and situation; and most recently, it has become more concerned with helping individuals to develop the 'executive' skills for lifelong career management, so that they are able to shape their own careers within a changing labour market.

Different approaches to the interview reflect these various purposes for guidance. Holland's model, for example, focuses on occupational choice, while person-centred approaches see the interview as more facilitative of lifelong career development. Super's later writing is more in line with the career management view of guidance.

Practitioners should be aware of these differences in ideologies, so that they can judge how far each approach suits their own purposes in offering guidance to meet the needs of different clients in various contexts. They need to be helped to develop their own style, over and above a technical blend of methods, through the process of theoretical integration. This argues for an in-depth coverage of a range of theoretical models in training, helping trainees to develop the intellectual skills of critical analysis and evaluation, and offering them opportunities to reflect on their own values and goals. There is already some evidence that familiarity with a range of guidance and counselling theories leads practitioners to think strategically about aims and purposes in their interviewing (Kidd et al., 1994).

As is the case with psychotherapy, a single-school approach to career counselling is becoming less common, and is likely to be undesirable. Making more explicit the various ways in which it is possible to learn from career counselling models should lead to a greater recognition of the value of theory in the delivery of guidance and to a more productive dialogue between theory and practice. Two ways in which models can be linked to methods have been suggested - technical eclecticism and theoretical integration. In some respects these are complementary. If career counsellors are to become both effective practitioners and reflective professionals, using theory to identify particular techniques and synthesising theory to develop a personal counselling style are of equal importance.

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