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## Career education in the context of lifelong learning

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### Abstract

Nowadays, lifelong learning has a new connotation in the context of man-society networking. The continuous character of education has always been the essence of human expression in social context, but in recent decades this aspect of education has widened considerably in importance. The need for lifelong education is determined both by the necessity of general knowledge and experience of social integration, but especially by the necessity of continuing professional culture and professional integration competence. Starting from selecting the right man for a certain kind of professional activity (initiative generated by the employer), going through a process of educational and vocational guidance (sustained action by the formal education), we come to the need for career education, lifelong learning for a successful socio-professional integration, process in which the individual involves consciously. Career education, as educational content is an integral part of lifelong learning and is based on conceptual milestones of career pedagogy.

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### 1. Introduction

The importance of career education has new dimensions in the context of lifelong learning. Human integration into society is a socially active and lifelong process. This consideration outlines the major purpose of education that is preparation for life and is important not only during childhood and adolescence, but also in adulthood. Career education approach theoretically contributes to changing the vision of educational content and favors the development and influence of practical technical education.

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## 2. Strengthening the permanence of education as a result of increasing complexity of professional integration.

We believe that the increased concern for the permanent character of education comes from "visible changes in education policy influenced both by cultural and social as well as economic reasoning" (Dandara, 2007). Strengthening the concerns for educational performance is influenced by the trend and trying of the governments to take decisions according to the new requirements of the society.

There are essential changes in the relationship between social, economic and educational aspects of the society. The basic purpose of development is to improve the quality of life not only for special social categories, but for all of them (Coombs, 1989). Economists find that a balanced distribution of wealth is not only a moral obligation but an imperative to secure economic growth and political stability. This idea goes beyond the old theory that economic development is different/ separate from the social one and must precede it. On the contrary, it is ascertained / estimated their inseparability one from another (Coombs, 1989). The current context places, as G. Văideanu says, education in the position of being a priority of the contemporary society. The first cause of this positioning is that the progress of nations increasingly relies on educational outcomes: attitudes, abilities, skills, habits and knowledge as they have become the most solid and valuable treasure of peoples (Văideanu, 1988).

From the above mentioned the objective of developing the context of achievement and the educational process itself is derived and valued as a source of improvement of the quality of life. This fact is supported by the reflections of Văideanu "Education makes possible the development of all social sectors. There is no development without education. Actions of economic or social development cannot be launched, before reaching educational levels and training skills that are required by the desired and pursued progress"(Văideanu, 1988).

The fact that education cannot be reduced to formal learning, benefits of an increased recognition and it cannot survive in a social and economic vacuum. Formal education has relationship with other institutions that are concerned with education. There is even a need for a "compensatory" education. All education institutions generate the "configuration" of education.

Văideanu mentions that through the analysis of projects launched in different countries or regions and studies devoted to the future of education, we came to a bunch of principles or priorities that should be promoted and used in shaping the education of tomorrow. "Lifelong learning" is a principle capable of articulating the different levels and types of learning. It confers to the human being the autonomous status of intellectual and moral person. This person is capable of continuous learning, can anticipate and participate to the development and management of society" (Văideanu, 1988). This requirement is dictated by the socio-economic context (Lemasle & Tixier, 2000).

The authors establish a functional relationship between training and work, as an expression of the social essence of human. The contribution of labor is above all a structured intake and a manufacturer of identities, structured at a social and cultural level as social identity is a synonym of membership to a social/ professional group. In the field of cognitive faculties and personal development, work schedules time, helps structuring thinking, guarantees life in society, allows the individual to have aspirations/ dreams. Work provides a meaning to the individual. It gives sense to everyday life and existence. It is a means of individualization and contributes to the construction of personal identity, shapes self-image. It places the individual into a relational system (Lemasle & Tixier, 2000).

Văideanu discovers that establishing lifelong learning as a socio-educational reality requires as a starting point a basic education (initial) training; self-education cannot become continuous and efficient if general and professional education did not prepare the individual for a systematic fulfillment of such activities (Văideanu, 1988). We can deduct that initial training refers to initial, general or professional education, as a result of which the individual acquires knowledge and skills that are essential to getting a job.

Callo finds that initial training is the basis for a professional occupation. Specialists are ready for a career that, by virtue of its applied features that are continuous developing, implies the need for new training interventions (Callo, 2007).

We discover that initial training is only the starting point in the process of social integration. Today it tends towards a continuous education for permanent education.

Colin & Grand (2008) define the concept of lifelong learning as "learning activities undertaken in all the moments of life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences from a personal perspective: civic, social or work".

The authors noted that the definition focuses on two important issues. The first is the assertion maintaining employee engagement. The evolution of technological and economic needs involves concern for a training that would provide lifelong skills, the only ones guaranteeing continuous adaptability to the world of work and constantly evolving environment. In fact, continuous training has taken a definite idea of lifelong learning and has generalized and systematized it.

The second reason is to say that those who failed their initial training are entitled to receive a second chance. The notion of 'second chance' comes to remove determinism of traditional training (Colin & Le Grand, 2008).

The concept of lifelong education has invalidated the temporal and spatial framework of education and has given a new meaning to the concept of training and education, a new paradigm in which changes are significant: multiple environments of knowledge and learning, social practices perceived and valued as training space, valuing and accounting for experience, focusing on personal and cultural development based on cultural resources, on mobility; emphasizing informal and non-formal education. These metamorphoses are due to the intensity of changes that are particularly outlined in the last decades. Postmodernism marks the educational system: theory and practice as response, given also as prerequisite for diversity.

### **3. Increasing the role of career education as a result of strengthening lifelong learning.**

Even in the '80s profession was the subject and those who practiced were treated only as sources. Profession was studied by examining the characteristics of the people who practiced it or were successful in practicing it "(Davitz & Ball, 1978). Nowadays, socio-economic and cultural context moves the priority from professional occupation to the person who performs it. Therefore, we have the need to know the design of the career. The career design is taken into account through individual development and occupational mobility. Substituting the term vocational / professional development with career development is an argument to change the essence of the process. If professional model refers mainly to "matching" a profession with a person and once the perfect matching was done the happy "pair" will last forever, career design assumes career forecasting. Career is a sequence of occupations, jobs and positions that a person is probable to hold (Davitz & Ball, 1978).

The career design is necessary for progressive career guidance and the individual goes through the one of the multiple choices of the educational system and further pursues to labor market. His starting point is the socio-professional status of his parents but he evolves at a speed largely given by his own social and psychological features.

Herr, E. supports the theory of evolution/ development as a conceptual landmark of career guidance summarizing the causes and arguments of the transition from vocational/ occupational/professional psychology to career psychology and the change of the focusing point: from professional guidance to career guidance.

- Vocational/ professional goals, decisions, actions and purposes give results only if the forecasts of processes and events generate new processes and events.
- Goals, attitudes and decisions are determined by the social environment, family values, social expectations, economic environment, self-esteem and opportunities to discover and develop interests, skills, access to multiple educational and professional opportunities.
- The individual learns the experience to acquire new responsibilities and meet new obstacles and opportunities, review his values and decisions; adjusts his lifestyle to his final goal (Herr, 1971).

Career guidance has focused on the individual and the dynamics of his development. Career guidance emphasizes not only the professional aspects, but also the education one. We observe, thus, the consolidation of the educational concept of the phenomenon of career guidance. Moreover, focusing on the person, on the client, allows shaping the concept of career planning.

Career guidance which expresses the involvement of education, as well as designing career, which expresses the involvement of the one who is trained / educated are two essential processes of career education. The phrase "career education" is not new (appears in the U.S. in the '70s), but now it more commonly used in the Romanian environment and in our opinion it express the essence of the educational influence that achieved this goal.

Career education is an educational intervention developed in advance of the skills and abilities necessary for the development and management of starting careers (Lemeni & Mihalcea, 2005). Jigău uses the phrase career education trying to define the concept "career education often includes topics that are not directly related to practicing a profession, developing a family life, leisure time, raising and educating children, family economics, issues related to values and quality of life, how to cope with dramatic situations in life: death, divorce, natural disasters, unemployment, etc..."(Jigău, 2001). Although we agree that career education includes broad conceptual and acting career guidance broader than considered acceptable as given by Jigău. In our opinion, the author claims a too broad area of interest.

Career education is part of lifelong learning. It supports human being in his lifelong professional integration tending to social and self-recognition.

In over-symbolic economies, as Toffler says, the requirements related to the labor market are now so diverse and fast changing, that workers cannot be interchanged so easy and cheap as before. People have the need, but also the moral right to be provided with public assistance and primarily to receive career guidance. "Any effective strategy for employment, for the valorization of individual's potential in an over-symbolic economy depends, according to the author, less on wealth allocation and more on allocation of knowledge" (Toffler, 1995).

Within an era tech, knowledge generates capital and this process-phenomenon conducts to the change of the relationship between the employer and the employee. If at first career guidance as a process based methodology, arose from the need of the employer to streamline the manufacturing process by identifying the right person, nowadays career guidance expresses the support given to the individual in designing his own career in compliance with the requirements of the labor market. In these circumstances the emphasis on knowledge / training in terms of their functionality is inevitable.

The very concept of development is defined by Lesourd (2009) as updating a model for human life, given by/ external to/ or preformed in it-itself.

Human development is an essential social process of co-constitution of the history of life. The transformation of the moments take place in two steps: the time source, determined within the social subject and the reception time which is an opportunity (time / event) to retrospective timing source. So source-moment takes consistency by going through social reception (Lesourd, 2009).

The idea of human personality development as a result of interaction between the individual potential and the environmental impact are also captured in the philosophical reflections of the Erlangen school representatives according to which the practical life of human is particularly important. Any grounding of utterances, actions, goals and rules has its foundation in praxis (Hügli & Lübcke, 2009).

#### 4. Conclusions

Education as a social phenomenon changes its design and size, being responsive to socio-economic changes. As education is a process that prefigures/ builds the social profile of a human being, in the context of complex socio-economic relations, the relationship between education and society also changes: education becomes a priority and precedes economic dimension.

In terms of contemporary society, social integration is continuous, which turn education into a continuous process. Because social integration in current conditions is essentially professional and labor has a formative / (transforms the individual) substantially increases the role of career education as an integral part of education and educational content. The essence of education for career is changing. The emphasis is placed on the individual and the dynamic of his evolution. In these circumstances the right person to benefit from a career education that aims at supporting the person in career planning increases.

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