

Innovative and integrative career construction counseling for enhancing the existential experience of gifted and talented learners

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Once gifted and talented learners have gained a distinct sense of their life's direction, comprehend how they can derive personal meaning. Hope, and fulfilment within the professional work sphere, understand how they can contribute socially through their work, and gauge the extent to which their potential workplace nurtures experiential and existential fulfilment, their work-life adjustment improves. Gifted education is at a pivotal juncture, where the focus must shift from merely identifying and nurturing innate talents to understanding and fostering the application of these talents in meaningful ways. The essence of this shift is captured across a series of insightful studies and analyses, each offering a unique perspective on how career choices and guidance can profoundly impact the lives of gifted individuals.

What readers can expect in this issue

As always, this issue includes diverse contributions in terms of gender and race but also transinstitutional, transnational, national, international, transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary.

Wrong suffix: Gifted education for career choice should focus on “gifting” rather than on being “gifted”

In the leading article in this section, Robert Sternberg, in his seminal work, advocates for a paradigm shift in gifted education from the traditional focus on innate abilities to a more dynamic approach centred on what individuals can contribute through their gifts. Sternberg argues that career choices for gifted individuals should align with their passions and motivations, rather than external pressures or superficial measures of success. This approach encourages a meaningful integration of personal fulfilment and societal contribution, highlighting the importance of flexibility and adaptability in career paths.

A latent profile analysis in Italian workers: Crucial ingredients of career construction counseling for enhancing gifted and talented learners?

In the second contribution, Annamaria Di Fabio, Enrico Imbimbo, and Andrea Svicher's study employs latent profile analysis to uncover profiles of gifted adults based on job performance and work engagement. Identifying an “eminence” profile characterized by elevated levels of emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, and acceptance of change underscores the complex interplay of personal and professional factors that define successful career trajectories for gifted individuals. This profile serves as a blueprint for career counseling, emphasizing the holistic development of gifted learners.

Cultivating purpose and internalized motivation through workplace learning

Our third article, written by Maureen Kenny, Mary Medvide, and Pamela Gordon, examines the impact of workplace learning (WPL) on youth purpose and motivation. Their findings highlight that quality WPL, characterized by strong mentor support and autonomy, significantly enhances youth purpose and motivation. This suggests that practical, real-world experiences are crucial in bridging the gap between academic achievements and career aspirations for gifted students, particularly those from diverse and underprivileged backgrounds.

Who owns their story: Career construction with gifted and talented students

In our fourth article, Chris and Hande Briddick explores the narratives of gifted youth, emphasizing the need for tailored career counseling interventions. They identify three problem-saturated plots that can emerge in the lives of gifted students, requiring targeted strategies to develop positive career narratives. Utilizing career construction theory, they advocate for interventions like “My Career Story” to empower gifted youth in authoring their career trajectories, ensuring alignment with their dreams and aspirations.

Impacts of a residential STEM program on increasing interest in computer science careers for gifted female students

Clark Tyler, Hasan Akdeniz, Julia Roberts, and Lynette Breedlove examine the transformative impact of specialized STEM programs on gifted females’ career choices in computer science in our fifth article. The nuanced insights from participants’ experiences highlight the importance of exposure, mentorship, and supportive environments in shaping career intentions and breaking gender stereotypes in traditionally male-dominated fields. This research underscores the need for targeted interventions to support gifted females in STEM.

Agentic and communal motivations in the highly talented: A narrative analysis of two gifted political leaders

In our sixth article, Kevin Kelly’s narrative analysis of gifted political leaders illuminates the value conflicts inherent in career choices. The study of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Jacinda Ardern reveals how gifted individuals navigate agentic and communal motives in their professional lives. Understanding these conflicts can provide valuable insights for career counseling, helping gifted students reconcile their personal values with professional aspirations.

Thematic analysis of vocational identity among gifted young people using turning point narratives

Gulendam Akgul’s research identifies critical turning points that influence the career decisions of gifted young people in our seventh article. Using a Narrative Identity Approach, the study highlights individual, social, and exploratory factors that shape vocational identity. This retrospective analysis offers valuable guidance for career counsellors, emphasizing the importance of personalized interventions that account for the unique experiences and aspirations of gifted individuals.

Deconstructing discourse to reconstruct career possibilities for gifted learners deconstructing and reconstructing career narratives

In our penultimate article, Jaqueline Peila-Shuster and Nicholas Vespia focus on deconstructing and reconstructing career narratives for gifted learners. By leveraging career construction theory, the study advocates for holistic approaches to career development that encompass identity formation and adaptability. This perspective encourages gifted individuals to construct authentic and fulfilling career paths, redefining success beyond conventional metrics.

In search of career-life meaning: Enhancing the existential experience of a gifted learner

Kobus Maree's concluding article on intervention research demonstrates the profound impact of integrative career counseling on a gifted learner's existential experience. By employing qualitative and quantitative methods, the study illustrates how tailored interventions can help gifted individuals find meaning, purpose, and hope in their career-life. This research calls for longitudinal studies to explore the long-term benefits of such interventions.

Conclusion

These diverse studies collectively underscore the necessity of a multifaceted approach to career guidance for gifted individuals. By emphasizing personal fulfilment, societal contribution, and adaptive strategies, we can better support gifted learners in realizing their full potential and crafting meaningful careers that resonate with their passions and values. The future of gifted education lies in fostering not just talent, but the impactful application of that talent in ways that enrich both the individual and society.

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Biographies

Professor Jacobus Maree, a professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria, specialises in educational psychology. Holding doctoral degrees in Education (Career Counselling), Mathematics Education, and Psychology, Maree is recognized for his extensive contributions. He is a fellow of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) and the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP), serving on the Board of Directors of the IAAP (Division 16). As the sole African representative on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Chair on Lifelong Guidance and Counseling and the UNESCO University Network and Twinning Chair, Maree's influence extends globally. He has delivered keynote speeches at 30 international conferences. He

holds honorary scholarly appointments at various universities worldwide, further solidifying his impact in the field. Prof Maree received a B1 rating from the NRF.