

1. Can you tell me a little about where you think the future of vocational psychology should be headed?

I believe that vocational psychology remain to exist an important area of scientific research. However, instead of focusing on specific occupations, research will examine broad personality and interest categories that together constitute people's occupational motives (see Mount et al., 2005). These broad motives distinguish between being motivated to work with things or people on the one hand and abstract ideas or concrete accomplishments on the other hand. These motives will be the guidelines for making specific, mostly short-term, vocational or professional choices. Vocational psychology will lean much more on fundamental knowledge about brain and cognition that, for instance, shows that young people are simply not equipped to make career choices and to plan ahead. Therefore, I remain to believe in 'diagnostic' instruments that could support younger people for making their initial career choices. These instruments, however, should not be used in a fixed way but should rather be seen as providing options for a possible first step on a non-fixed career path. Schools (and parents) in particular should teach students that career choices are not to be made for the long-term. In stead, the focus should be on teaching them how to integrate their own experiences and related emotions into a temporary career identity.

2. What do you see as the most exciting areas of future growth for vocational psychology?

To examine the opportunities and limits of human adaptability. People have a fundamental propensity to fit their environment. To what extent are people adaptable then? Precisely how do they adapt to (again) fit their environment? Of the many characteristics that can be used to describe unique individuals, some of these are more adaptable than others. Which characteristics (personality, values, goals) are really fundamental and fixed and thus cannot be changed and which ones are more flexible? Which strategies are most successful to overcome non-fitting environments? Are these strategies concerned with changing the self or changing the environment? Are they cognitive, affective or behavioral?

Since narratives (the stories that people construct about themselves) are essential for career choices, it will be important to study how these narratives arise and direct people's behaviors. Individuals use implicit theories about their abilities and personality. These theories may restrict their career adaptability. Furthermore, how are narratives linked to the profiles that emerge from diagnostic instruments?

3. What do you see as our biggest challenges?

To develop intervention programs that can help people to make adaptable choices. Moreover, we need a more holistic understanding of life (rather than career) development. Hence, personal and career counseling will become more intertwined, which asks for new requirements and guidelines of professionalism. The profession of career counseling will change; particularly, this profession needs to develop a more pro-active attitude towards counseling activities. Counseling techniques and intervention programs should be based on new scientific insights into subjects such as self-regulation and decision-making. We need researchers who apply these fundamental insights to the realm of vocational and career counseling.

4. What do you see as the key to successful leadership in promoting cross-national collaboration?

To define concrete and attainable goals, and products, that motivate researchers/practitioners to collaborate. Cross-national collaborations are successful if nationalities foresee win-win outcomes of their collaboration.

5. What advice would you give early career professionals?

To read more about scientific research (such as about people's motivational orientations, regulatory focus, unconscious decision making) and translate this knowledge into the development of new intervention programs. Most of these interventions are not theoretically and scientifically rooted. Unfortunately, most researchers do not have enough time and/or capacities to develop intervention programs. They are particularly good in providing the necessary scientific input. Therefore, much more practitioners are needed who fill the gap between science and practice by developing and testing scientifically based intervention programs. All in all, practitioners should take up much more challenges in their field.