Contexts and Influences on the Need for Personal Flexibility for the 21st Century, Part I

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Abstract

The emerging global economy has implications for both individual psychology and the structure and choice of occupations. This paper examines the growing need for personal flexibility as a response to the influence of advanced technology, new economic and political alliances, and sweeping social revolutions. The paper also addresses the central role of the counsellor in facilitating personal flexibility and in assisting persons deal with the choice and adjustment problems associated with the dynamics of a global economy.

Résumé

L'économie globale émergeante a des implications sur le plan de la psychologie individuelle et la structure et le choix des occupations. Cet article examine le besoin croissant d'une flexibilité personnelle qui réponde à l'influence de la technologie avancée, aux nouvelles alliances économiques et politiques et au balayage des révolutions sociales. De plus, cet article adresse le rôle central du conseiller comme facilitateur au développement d'une flexibilité personnelle et d'assister les personnes face aux problèmes de choix et d'ajustements associés aux dynamiques d'une économie globale.

Neither the form and substance of counselling nor the influences on human development exist in a vacuum. Each is shaped by the characteristics of the larger society in which it is located. As the social and economic contexts change in which individual behaviour is shaped, so do the dilemmas people experience. The transactional nature of individual and environment is frequently experienced by counsellors as their clients share with them their personal anxieties, information deficits, and indecision. While these dilemmas and conflicts often are manifested in mental health problems such as depression or interpersonal dysfunctions within the school, family or work place, the *a priori* causes may have been the individual's feelings of powerlessness, their reactions to indignities that occurred in some life event, or their confused perceptions of current social or occupational expectations and their opportunities for personal choice, achievement, role differentiations, inclusion, usefulness, and autonomy. These problems become the content of counselling as well as the mirror of the status of the individual's interaction with his or her environments.

In such contexts, one of the major challenges for counsellors is to help their clients predict or interpret major shifts in their social and economic environments and develop strategies by which to make choices about and prepare for or relinquish technical, family and social roles within a dynamic possibility structure. This is no easy task since the world at large

is now engaged in economic and political transformations that are no longer confined within national boundaries. Rather, they spill into the systems which comprise international economic competition, the sets of knowledge and skills of importance for employment and mobility within such changing economic conditions, the structure, choice and planning for occupations, as well as the psychological dynamics associated with the multiplicity of stresses, transitions, and uncertainties often linked with the magnitude of global restructuring now taking place (Herr, Amundson & Borgen, 1990). However vague the implications of these transformations, they are likely to lead to new paradigms of counselling or, perhaps more specifically, career counselling, which are likely to accent the importance of the development of certain behavioural emphases as underpinning human competence in the 21st Century.

It is the purpose of this article to examine some of the dimensions of social and economic change that will affect the planning of opportunities for youths and adults in a world moving toward economic and social interdependence and the forms of individual knowledge, attitudes, and skills likely to be required.

PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN RESOURCE NEEDS IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

As individual nations become increasingly interdependent players in what is clearly becoming a global economy, they share concerns about: strategies to develop functionally literate and productive work forces; mechanisms to help youth make the transition from school to work and to distribute persons among available occupations; procedures by which to increase the quality of work life, to help persons make the adjustment to work effectively and obtain job satisfaction; plans to deal with high rates of youth unemployment and/or rapidly aging work forces; processes by which to assimilate guest workers and diverse groups of immigrants that are respectful of cultural differences in the knowledge of the expectations of the work culture in the host country; and mechanisms that facilitate the increased responsiveness of employers and work settings to the needs of employees to be seen in holistic ways, ways that respect their dignity and aspirations and that acknowledge their multiple roles beyond the work place, as parents, family members, citizens.

It is becoming increasingly clear in national development plans, strategic industrial goal-setting, and in various international forums, that the key factor in a nation's ability to compete in the growing global economy is the quality of its work force as defined by the literacy, numeracy, and flexibility which characterizes it. Many nations, in Europe and, particularly, in East Asia, have understood this challenge clearly for several decades. They have set new standards for the unparalleled development of human resources as national priorities and they have created technological and organizational systems necessary to support the maximiza-

tion of the productivity of these human resources (Schlosstein, 1989, p. xiv). These nations have also worked systematically to create the "social ecologies" which imbue their students, citizens, and workers with the knowledge, attitudes, habits, and skills that are necessary in the societies they hope to create for the 21st Century. Other nations throughout the world increasingly view their human resources as assets that need to be nurtured in ways that will equip them to cope with the economic challenges of the future. For our purpose, we will label the outcome such societies are seeking as "personal flexibility." Because this "personal flexibility" does not occur spontaneously, efforts must be made to ensure as even a development as possible of individual competence, purpose and productivity across populations in any nation.

Elements of Transformation in International Economics

The human spirit's drive for freedom and democracy has asserted itself in nation after nation across the globe during the past 25 years and this process is likely to continue into the 21st Century. Women, the disabled, persons of colour, and the elderly are increasing their numbers in the work forces of North America and policies, training and support mechanisms are being instituted to facilitate access and success. Increasing numbers of nations are manifesting in action, however uneven, that outlets must be found to use all human talent in a society, not treat it as expendable. We are now in a historical period in which individual desires for higher standards of living have gripped the political world. In the most recent quarter century this has culminated in the explosive economic growth of the nations of the Pacific—not just Japan, but Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea as well—but also in the economic expansion of the Western European nations, and in the beginnings of the drive for economic revitalization in the nations of Eastern Europe, in South America, and in Africa.

Some nations are leaping from underdeveloped to industrialized status in a generation. It is a rare nation, if it exists, that is not influenced by changing concerns about employment and unemployment, shifting characteristics of the work force, needs for training and retraining of a work force to implement new technological processes affecting both the content of work and the workplace. These changes are interdependent; they each affect the other.

The wide spread applications of advanced technology have pervasive effects upon manufacturing, transportation, distribution of goods and services, the provision of health care, commercial transactions, entertainment and other economic and occupational systems with resulting changes in the organization and location of work, in its content and process dimensions, in its workers, and in the skill requirements to engage in work. Thus, the successful introduction of advanced technol-

ogy is dependent upon a responsive educational system that prepares not just the elite of the society, but youth at all levels of the socioeconomic structure to implement, maintain, create and apply this advanced technology. The labour force must be prepared with the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning. As the shift of jobs from manufacturing to service continues, the new jobs will demand much higher skill levels than the jobs of today. Very few new jobs will be created for those who cannot read, follow directions, and use mathematics. Ironically, the demographic trends in the work force coupled with the higher skill requirements of the economy will lead to both higher and lower unemployment, more joblessness among the least-skilled and less among the most educationally advantaged (Hudson Institute, 1987, p. 1).

Skill Shifts

As jobs are relocated from one nation to another as a function of the dynamics of a global economy many new skill requirements will be required. Technological applications will replace many of the least skilled jobs in the occupational structure. As technologies become more complex, interactive and are applied to an ever widening cluster of jobs, they will transform the training and learning requirements throughout the economy. These events lend, in turn, to both content and process issues. For example, Hull and Pedrotti (1983, pp. 28-31) have identified six educational implications common to virtually all high technology occupations: 1) They require a broad knowledge of math, computers, physics, chemistry, electricity, electronics, electromechanical devices, and fluid flow; 2) They involve heavy and frequent computer use; 3) They change rapidly and require lifelong learning; 4) They are systems oriented; 5) They require a fundamental understanding of a system's principles, as well as practical skills in designing, developing, testing, installing, troubleshooting, maintaining, and repairing the system; and, 6) They require substantial employee flexibility and adaptability. Even though high technology occupations are a relatively small proportion of all occupations, they are so critical to a nation's competitive position in international competition that all young persons must be trained with these skills. This has become a central focus of educational reform debate in several nations.

In addition to content issues, there is also the continuing recognition that the new or emerging jobs in the work force require more basic academic skills than did those in the current occupational structure. For example, in one study in the United States, the rising requirements can be seen fairly dramatically, When these new or emerging jobs are compared across 6 skill categories, according to the math, language, and reasoning skills they require, only 27 per cent of all new jobs fall into the lowest skill categories compared to 40 per cent of current jobs which can

be performed with these limited skills. By contrast, 41 per cent of new jobs are in the three highest skill groups, compared to only 24 per cent of current jobs (Hudson Institute, 1987, pp. xxi-xxii). These data do not suggest that a large number of jobs which have medium to low skill requirements will cease to exist, but, in general, these will not be the jobs that will be well rewarded or offer maximum mobility.

As various forms of advanced technology have become central to international competition and international trade, economic realignments and economic growth, the diffusion of scientific, engineering, and technological capabilities throughout the world has accelerated. This global spread of technological capabilities has brought with it an unprecedented integration of the global economy, exposing new dimensions of the interdependence of nations. Trading blocks will be the economic way of life in the future and those nations outside of such economic alignments or without access to them will have their economic aspirations thwarted. National economies are rapidly eroding in favour of regional and global economies. Whether expressed in terms of the European Economic Community of 1992, the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement of 1989, now the North American Free Trade Agreement of 1993, or the Association of South Eastern Asian Nations, it has become clear that the economic growth of nations is no longer sustainable within their political boundaries. "Just as environmental sovereignty is a thing of the past, so is economic sovereignty. Just as pollutants flow from nation to nation, so capital and technological knowledge flow across national borders, altering economic sovereignty as they diffuse" (White, 1990, p. 10).

The creation of a global economy, however, is not simply an interesting structural artifact. It has implications for theory and practice that attempt to describe the likely context within which models of personal flexibility will be shaped and the content to which career counselling and other processes will need to be directed.

In contextual terms, there are many examples to be drawn about the interactive effects on individual behaviour of shifting economic and social "ecologies." One major factor is the effect of advanced technology upon the economic climate and the occupational structures of many nations of the world. The widespread application of advanced technology in work places and homes takes many forms—e.g., microengineering; self-replicating robots; genetic reconstruction and bioengineering; magnetic flight or levitation; computer science; fiber optics, lasers, and semiconductors; synthetic materials or material sciences; synthetic energy sources; aquaculture and ocean mining. There are industrial, medical, social, and military technologies. There are also *hard* technologies designed to alter matter or materials through automated processes and *soft* technologies that have to do with organizing and managing busi-

nesses, participatory management, customized production and quality assurance. Simply put, there is not *one* advanced technology but *many* technologies which arise from different settings, disciplines, applications or categories of problems.

As particular nations spin off their standardized manufacturing and assembly operations to other nations where wages are lower or resources better, while retaining control in their own nations of non-routine or innovative operations, the result is an elevation of formal qualifications or skill requirements in each nation (Nijkamp, Bouman & Verhoef, 1990). Studies in several nations have suggested that the availability of technical and skilled workers largely determines the location of production, and the presence of industries developing or using advanced technologies within and across national boudnaries. Thus, both in economic and technical terms, advanced technology stimulates a major process of urban-regional restructuring of job availability and population concentrations around the world. Regional differences across nations increase rather than decrease as high or advanced technologies are introduced into the manufacturing and distribution sectors of a society, with persons in these regions experiencing major differences in occupational opportunities, quality of life, education and training, or other such disparities. These conditions are among those which stimulate migration within and across national boundaries, urban congestion and stress, and potential widening of gaps between rich and poor. They may also create an erosion of family and community support systems, a dilution of feelings of personal responsibility for one's fate, and a blurring of behavioural sanctions which tend to control individual behaviours, changing family structures, and other risk factors which create a seedbed for mental health problems and for the content of counselling.

Time, Knowledge, and Technology in the World Economy

From a global perspective, technology becomes critical at every step of international trade, production, and communication as raw materials, labour forces, and ideas are integrated into world systems of commercial interaction. Toffler (1990) has recently analyzed the effects of advanced technology on these systems and concluded that in the next century the world will be split in new ways into fast and slow economies. In fast economies, advanced technology speeds production. The pace of these economies is determined by the speed of transactions, the time to make decisions (especially about investments), the speed with which new ideas are created in laboratories, the rate at which they are brought to market, the velocity of capital flows, and above all the speed with which data, information, and knowledge pulse through the economic system. In such contexts, time itself has become an increasingly critical factor of production. Knowledge is used to shrink time intervals. Thus, the more

valuable time becomes, the less valuable the traditional factors of production such as raw materials and cheap or uneducated labour. In the future, countries that wish to sell will have to operate at the pace of those who wish to buy. Countries will either advance their own technologies to meet the world speed standard or they will be essentially cut-off from world markets. In this newly emerging system of wealth creation, cheap or uneducated labour is increasingly expensive. As such, the pervasive implementation of advanced technology has altered the mix of jobs available and the content of work in a ripple effect across national economies. It has given superordinate importance to work forces which are literate, flexible, adaptable, teachable, and committed to and capable of life-long learning. Indeed, the support for the playing out and success of life-long learning throughout its work force in economies which are increasingly information-based will be the factor which gives individual nations the competitive edge in the future. However, it is unlikely that such goals can be achieved unless the work force of any nation is equipped with basic academic skills—literacy, numeracy, and communications. Without these skills, life-long learning, retraining, and teachability or adaptation to new management, production, and information-processing techniques are impossible.

Drucker (1989) has argued that the biggest shift—bigger by far than the changes in politics, government, or economics—is the shift to the knowledge society in all developed, non-Communist countries. [The social centre of gravity has shifted to the knowledge worker. All developed countries are becoming postbusiness, knowledge societies.] According to Drucker, this is the logical result of a long evolution in which we moved from working by the sweat of our brow to industrial work and finally to knowledge work. Until quite recently there were few jobs requiring knowledge. Knowledge was ornament rather than necessity. In the twentieth century knowledge has rapidly become the economy's foundation and its true capital. Knowledge has replaced experience as the primary requisite for employability.

As jobs are relocated and transformed from one nation to another as a function of the dynamics of a global economy, many unskilled and semi-skilled jobs are eliminated through technology. As a result, the average education or training required in the remaining jobs or in the emerging occupations is increased throughout the economy.

Such a reality puts those with minimal training or capability of learning at the risk of being permanently dislocated or unemployed or constantly on the move to find jobs. Such persons become increasingly and constantly vulnerable to being replaced in their current work, are likely to suffer a diminishing quality of work, or choose not to be involved in attempting to participate in a dynamically changing occupational structure at all. Frequently, racial or cultural or immigrant minority group

members tend to experience the most difficulties in dealing with the educational and psychological ripple effects of advanced technology—often because they have been under-served in receiving the sytematic information useful in planning for such ecological transitions or they have lived in inner cities or other locations where educational provisions are not as good as those received by majority culture members, thereby placing them at a competitive disadvantage.

The implementation of advanced technology, particularly computers, has also altered the social psychology of work. Computers have created a social revolution related to effectively integrating technology into the work place and helping persons interrelate with these technologies. For example, machines can now give us more information more quickly than people can possibly absorb it. The flow of such information has changed the flow of power and authority within the work place and created new stresses and demands. For some workers the installation of computers in the work place has engendered more autonomy, but for others it has created new forms of monitoring worker productivity, exerting social or organizational control, and altering employee and management relationships. As information must be transformed into knowledge and intelligence, which by its volume and rapid availability strains human factors of decision-making, information processing, and creativity, morale in the work place can plummet not only because job procedures and content change under the implementation of technology but because the gap between humans and machines seems to be widening. Technostress is becoming apparent in many situations and the rapidity of change is pushing persons to the limit of their resources to respond and to anticipate. "The relentless advance of technological development puts even highly educated people at risk of becoming to some extent functionally illiterate" (Weiner & Brown, 1989). In sum, computers can alter the flow and the amount of information as well as how it is presented and communicated. As such, the computer can redistribute power in an organization, change decision-making assumptions and processes, and modify specific individual and organizational communication patterns (Herr, 1989).

Structural Artifacts of Global Economy

To turn to some other more structural dimensions of the global economy: within any of the economic alliances where national boundaries are no longer operating as barriers to member states (e.g., European Economic Community, 1992), multinational companies which had branch plants in other nations within the alliance in order to position themselves behind national tariff walls no longer need to do so. Similarly, firms of different nations are likely to more frequently merge in order to lock in their mutual competitive advantages or to take advantage of "economies

of scale," to acquire the breadth and depth necessary to operate effectively under the new economic conditions. In contrast to increased size, some firms will likely "downsize" their work forces in order to purchase new technologies by which to increase their productivity and reduce labour costs. Other firms may reduce some parts of their organizations that have historically been required to manage the trade regulations, standards, or statutes that have affected commerce between specific countries. As such regulations or statutes are modified or eliminated, the need for certain types of workers may be reduced or eliminated. Beyond such points, the mergers, downsizing, joint ventures or other corporate transformations are likely to create worker dislocations of various kinds. Many of the workers displaced will not have the skills to participate in the emerging technologies implemented by the employment requirements of the merged or changed corporate environments. Counsellors likely will be heavily involved in working with outplacement counselling, with brokering of training and retraining opportunities, and with the psychological demands associated with unemployment and underemployment.

As trade restrictions are eliminated across nations involved with the European community or the North American Free Trade Agreement, or the emerging alliances among Pacific Rim countries, the freer movement of workers will escalate across nations. Mechanisms are being implemented now in Europe and in North America to allow workers employed by specific corporations in one nation to move easily with plants relocated to other nations, to merged facilities and within other economic realignments. Potential problems are that some nations will not gain enhanced employment opportunities in jobs requiring skilled, highly trained, better paid sectors because such persons will be brought into the country by corporations coming to do business under the new economic agreements. From a career counselling standpiont, free migration of workers from one nation to another creates a much larger potential opportunity structure from which individuals may choose. But, it also challenges counsellors to be sensitive to and help clients give attention to cultural differences, languages, and traditions which will mediate work adjustment in the country to which they are migrating. For example, the United States is now the third largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world. The implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement will essentially eliminate the border between the U.S. and Mexico, increasing the use of the Spanish language and transporting Spanish culture through Canada and the U.S. The ability to speak Spanish will likely be more prized for many workers in the future and counsellors will likely need to encourage such study. Counsellors will, in addition, need to facilitate and broker client preparation for cultural transitions among or to any of the trading block nations, including

procedures by which to access the social institutions of the host nation: e.g., financial services, church, schools, health, and legal care.

Psychological Issues

Many of the factors inherent in worker migration within a global economy are psychological issues, not simply economic or placement issues. Thus, it is likely that counsellors will, in the future, need to help workers and their families anticipate and process decisions about whether they should immigrate or transfer to another nation on a temporary or on a permanent basis; examine the issues of economic and psychological trade-offs in such transfers; consider the need to modify or lose a cultural identity; learn about the processes of cultural adaptation, accommodation, and assimilation; identify sources of specific information about policies and benefits and sources of social supports and implement ways to manage family disruption, separation, and the loss of family caregivers.

The psychological issues potentially experienced by workers engaged in cross-national mobility are not benign or isolated affects on behaviour. Rather, they must be understood within the reality that the psychological environment in which individuals negotiate their identities, find their sources of self-validation, prepare for and pursue a career are different from nation to nation. Each nation has its own mythology and systems of metaphors about work, achievement, social mobility and related phenomena which are absorbed into the national psyche and internalized by individuals (Herr, 1989). Such belief systems, operational as national credos, shape individual perceptions of who "we are" and who "they are," what is an appropriate achievement level, the importance of individual or group choice, whether individual goals of self-actualization or state goals of human capital distribution are the more important. Such beliefs create parameters or psychological boundaries which stimulate feelings of personal uniqueness and allow one to participate in some collective organization of group reality (Herr, Amundson & Borgen, 1990). Implicit in such notions are the activation of other psychological processes, one example of which is "social defenses" (Hirschhorn, 1988) that allow persons to identify who is in and out of the national group and how insiders and outsiders should be treated.

While reconciling language, cultural and monetary systems differences as part of boundary changing, individuals caught in such transformations are frequently prone to extraordinary stress because the cues on which they have based their identity and actions are under assault and rapidly shifting (Toffler, 1970). Just as refugees and immigrants experience feelings of loss and bereavement as they leave a culture of origin and enter the new and uncharterd terrain of an adopted homeland, the same sense of loss may be experienced by many workers in nations coming

together in free-trade or boundary changing economic agreements. "Some persons may view the changes in terminology, work organization, management styles and other artifacts of changing economic configurations as signalling a loss of personal control, a breaching of psychological order and certainty, a shifting of expectations and values to which they cannot adapt, about which they respond with demoralization, depression, or aggression." (Herr, Amundson & Borgen, 1990, p. 300).

Counsellors must acknowledge in their conceptions and practices that the career development of the citizens of every nation will be indirectly if not directly influenced by the content, status, and economic alliances undergirding a global economy. In such cases, workers who are bilingual or multilingual will be prized and their careers will be enhanced by such skills. Similarly, knowledge of cultural differences, world history, political, legal, and economic systems will be as important for many jobs as are accounting procedures, machine skills, and other technical competencies. Given the variety of physical and social ecologies in which a global economy must be played out, the need will increase for persons who have skills in the legal and regulatory systems of other nations and the abilities to examine and plan in accordance with the environmental impact of construction projects and industrial processes as they are integrated within different national environmental laws and circumstances. So, too, will the need for managerial and entrepreneurial skills related to new and decentralized organizations of work.

Counsellors will have a large role to play in helping persons sort out the implications of changes in their psychological environments as well as modifications in the structure, choice of and planning for occupation.

PERSONAL FLEXIBILITY IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Successful societies succeed because they have found ways to match individual self-interest to ethnocentric approaches to the collective good. Different societies find different ways to make individual behaviour serve their collective good (Fallows, 1989). Segall, et al. (1990) suggest that "more sophisticated cross-cultural research underscores the plausibility of expecting that people in different cultural settings would vary in the way they learn to solve problems and in the patterns of skills they acquire. Now it is understood that cultures vary in the salience attached to certain skills, in the combination of basic cognitive processes that are called upon in any given context, or in the order in which specific skills are acquired" (p. 94).

This suggests that counselling for personal flexibility is likely to have different nuances and content in different societies. It further suggests that counsellors, operating between or across cultures, must be trained in multicultural counselling techniques and be sensitive to the interpretations of personal flexibility, the behaviours that comprise it, and

applications of personal flexibility that are likely to arise in the world views of persons from different cultures. Examples of the ingredients of personal flexibility, particularly in Canada and the United States, would likely include the following skills.

Basic Academic Skills

Given the characteristics of the emerging technologies that are increasingly critical to international competition, basic academic skills — literacy, numeracy, and communications—are perhaps the ultimate employability skills. There will be very few *net* new jobs created for the unskilled (Hudson Institute, 1987). The future of the occupational structures in the industrialized world is to eliminate more and more unskilled jobs and to put an increasing premium on higher levels of reading, computation, communication, and problem-solving or reasoning skills.

Adaptive Skills

While academic skills in reading, mathematics, and science are important, there are other qualitative skills likely to be critical in employment environments. One set of such overarching skills has been defined by the U.S. Congress's Office of Technology Assessment (1988) as including:

1. Skills of Problem Recognition and Definition:
   - Recognizing a problem that is not clearly presented;
   - Defining the problem in a way that permits clear analysis and action;
   - Tolerating ambiguity.
2. Handling Evidence:
   - Collecting and evaluating evidence;
   - Working with insufficient information;
   - Working with excessive information.
3. Analytical Skills:
   - Brainstorming;
   - Hypothesizing counter arguments;
   - Using analogies.
4. Skills of implementations:
   - Recognizing the limitation of available resources;
   - Recognizing the feedback of proposed solution to the system;
   - The ability to recover from mistakes.
5. Human Relations:
   - Negotiation and conflict resolution;
   - Collaboration in problem solving.

6. Learning Skills:
   - The ability to identify the limits of your own knowledge;
   - The ability to ask pertinent questions;
   - The ability to penetrate poor documentation;
   - The ability to identify sources of information.

These skills are important not only to manufacturing but to service industries. They represent the survival skills necessary in an environment of rapid change and one which is information rich. They also overlap with what hundreds of employers have indicated as expections of young people when they enter the work force (Busse, 1992).

Today an increasing number of employers are extending their conception of basic skills to include self-discipline, reliability, perseverance, accepting responsibility, and respect for the rights of others (U.S. Department of Education/U.S. Department of Labor, 1988). Other observers are discussing the needs for adaptive skills and for transferable skills. Adaptive skills are also referred to as coping skills, occupational employability skills, work survival skills, or, sometimes, career development skills. They frequently involve skills necessary for positive worker-to-worker interaction or worker-work organization interaction. Thus, they frequently include work context skills, self and career management skills, and decision-making skills (Herr, 1982). Transfer skills "enable a person to draw upon prior learning and previous experience for application to new and different situations" (Pratzner & Ashley, 1985, p. 19). Such skills include those involving learning to learn, dealing with change, being a self-initiator, coping, and self-assessment skills. Mobility skills are those related to making a career or job change and include job-seeking and job-getting, interviewing skills, resume preparation, and carrying out alternative job search strategies. In Britain and some European countries, "general employability skills" are likely to be known as "industrial discipline" to reflect their attention to effective work attitudes and habits, personal responsibility in and commitment to work. Such general employability skills are important across the spectrum of work and are, in that sense, very elastic in their application and less likely to become quickly obsolescent than are technical or work performance skills.

In addition to the shift from manufacturing to service, the United States has also had a shift from the large Fortune 500 companies to companies which employ less than 100 workers as the sources of new jobs in this economy. In part because of the adaptation of advanced technologies to their work processes and in part because of the effects of international competition, the Fortune 500 companies have essentially created no new jobs since 1978. They have rearranged jobs and career ladders but they have not added significant numbers of new jobs for a decade. Thus, the United States is experiencing a major rise in self-employment and in small businesses which require sets of skills embodied in such terms

as entrepreneurial behaviour and innovation. It has also been contended that as the larger corporations require down-scaling in size and "deinstitutionalizing" there are needs for entrepreneurs within such organizations.

Whether manifested in self-employment, small venture industries or in transforming older industries into new economic structures, the skills associated with entrepreneurial behaviour involve acquiring understanding of systems, risks, and change. These skills are essential to systematic innovation whether in creating a new, small business or modifying an existing one to take advantage of new market forces and potentiality (Drucker, 1986, p. 35). Systematic innovation requires the entrepreneur to be able to monitor the unexpected; to be able to innovate based on process needs, filling missing links, to redesign old processes around new knowledge; and to react to changes in industry or market structure.

Given the world of uncertainty and complexity that characterizes the global economy, there are other competencies that need to be embodied in personal flexibility. One such model is that of Super (1977, 1985) in which he suggests that career maturity in adolescence and career adaptability in mid-career are comprised of five factors but tailored to the content of the decisions relevant at each of these ages: planfulness or time perspective, exploration, information, decision-making and reality orientation. Another important model is that of London and Stumpf (1986) that is directed to the ingredients of career motivation. These are three parts of career motivation that fit well within a concept of personal flexibility, as we have been shaping it. These include "being resilient in the face of change, having insight into one's self and the environment, and identifying with one's job, organization, and/or profession as career goals" (p. 25). Each of these dimensions includes sub-elements. For example, *career resilience* is comprised of belief in oneself, need for achievement, and willingness to take risks, *career insight* means having clear career goals and knowning one's strengths and weaknesses; and *career identity* is comprised of job, organization, and professional involvement, need for advancement and recognition and wanting to lead.

A further aspect of personal flexibility is that the acquisition of certain knowledge, skills, or behaviour may generalize to facilitate the development of competence in other aspects of one's life (Danish, Galambos & Laquatra, 1983). Thus, it is possible to suggest that personal flexibility represents not a substitute for culturally defined perceptions of necessary life development skills but another repertoire of skills, an alternative set of cultural competencies, that persons need to learn about and possess as these relate to their ability to master change, cross-cultural migration and other career dimensions influenced by the global economy.

In such a view, the targets of intervention for counselling for personal flexibility may be one or more of the following skills sets for particular individuals within particular cultures: *cognitive or physical skills*, that is to say, alternative models of conceiving problems, problem-solving, or reasoning about self or others or ways of performing or doing certain tasks; *interpersonal skills* such as initiating, developing, and maintaining in relationships, e.g., self-disclosing, communicating feelings accurately and unambiguously, being supportive, and being able to resolve conflicts and relationship probelms constructively; and *intrapersonal skills* such as development self-control, tension management and relaxation, setting goals, taking risks, etc. (Danish, Galambos & Laquatra, 1983).

Amundson (1989) has approached the concept of personal flexibility as it is described here from the perspective of competence. In his perspective, "competence refers to a state of being as well as to a state of doing. A competent person is one who has the capacity (or power) to adequately deal with emerging situations." Amundson suggests that there are eight components required to define his model of competence and that to be competent in almost any job demands some capability in each of these eight areas. They include: A sense of purpose, self/other and organizational understanding, communication and problem solving skills, theoretical knowledge and understanding of facts and procedures, practical experience, a supportive organizational context which at minimum has elements that allow people to achieve without wasting time and resources, a support network which allows competent people to give and to receive help as part of maintaining their competency, and self-confidence, including acceptance of oneself, the strength to learn from mistakes and persevere.

CONCLUSION

It is likely that as more understanding of the implications for human or for career development within global economies evolves, conceptions of the elements of life-coping skills, of competence, or of personal flexibility will gain a credibility as research unfolds about the importance of specific types of skills or the barriers to the particular kinds of social or occupational settings which can be overcome by specific types of skills. Such research will serve to demystify the problems of living for which various balances of personal flexibility will be required in interpersonal relations; coping with cultural identity confusion; work adjustment in a culturally different environment; geographic rootlessness, uprooting and re-establishing family and other social support systems; anticipating and handling change; managing anxiety and stress more consciously and with more control; assuming personal responsibility for one's life; gaining an internal locus of control; and increasing feelings of power or reducing feelings of powerlessness. Among others, these involve develop-

ing skills of interpersonal communication, anger management, assertiveness training, decision-making, values clarification, relaxation.

However the specific elements of personal flexibility are defined, the counsellor in the school or in the community will be a central figure in both interpreting the implications of and facilitating the acquisition by individuals of attitudes, knowledge and skills related to the forms of individual-environment transaction stimulated by an emerging global economy.

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