



# Their stories: Children, exemplary models and career narratives



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**Background:** Despite the consensus on the significance of early career development, we still know little about the best-or-evidence-based practices for this demographic. Searching the keywords *career development and marginalised populations and/or communities* within the PsychINFO, we found that 11% of articles were related to children, while only 1% of them were related to marginalised children. This indicates a strong need for scholarly attention on children of colour and their career development.

**Objective:** This manuscript outlines the construction of a curriculum developed to be used by counsellors in facilitating the career development of children, particularly those from minoritised communities. We hope that the curriculum will contribute to the scholarly discussion on best practices for career intervention in childhood.

**Methods:** Rooted in the narrative, social construction perspectives, the curriculum was prepared by assembling career and life narratives of culturally diverse exemplary models. These narratives of persistence provided children with various strategies exemplary models implemented to overcome barriers that challenged their sense of agency. Collaborating school counselling staff used three stories within the curriculum with the hope of increasing children's sense of agency and adaptability. Students were third graders from a high-need elementary school. About one-fourth of the student body represented diverse cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous, Latino/a and black communities.

**Results:** Initial feedback from the counselling staff indicated that the curriculum lessons were well-received by the children. They were able to engage in age-appropriate narrative analysis via questions asked by the counselling staff.

**Conclusion:** Although the effectiveness of the curriculum is yet to be determined, the curriculum shows promise for assisting children in increasing their own sense of agency and in crafting their own career narratives.

**Contribution:** This manuscript provides a unique and promising approach to facilitating the early career development of children.

**Keywords:** children; career narratives; curriculum; resilience; exemplary models.

## Introduction

The 21st century, often called the digital age, has been characterised by globalization and a significant reliance on ever-changing technology. These changes have transformed the world of work (Hughes & Kashefpakdel, 2019), and infused uncertainty into the future. The outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) sharply demonstrated the transformative impact of unpredictability on our lives. In the spring of 2020, the world we knew then changed drastically. Within two weeks in the United States of America (U.S), teachers and students, both in Kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12) and higher education, were forced to leave their brick-and-mortar schools for cyber-classrooms. Transitioning to online platforms was fast, and the adaptability of children and teachers was admirable across numerous settings. However, a significant number of underprivileged children were left behind during the transition, furthering the existing academic and opportunity gaps between them and their more privileged peers. Once again, the fears that the playing field is not level were confirmed. Although we eventually transitioned back to our traditional educational environments, we were not surprised to see that the new learning spaces, practices and tools had become permanent features of 21st century schools. While students have sat next to each other in their classrooms, the learning has taken place in Google classrooms and other virtual configurations. All of these unpredictable changes have elicited a certain level of existential anxiety about the future. Preparing children for their adult lives has become more of a formidable task (Kirschner & Stoyanov, 2018; Peila-Shuster, 2018).

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The lack of predictability surrounding the future has increased the importance of scholarly work related to children's career development. Sadly, despite the consensus on the significance of early career development (Gottfredson, 1981; Hartung, 2013; Howard & Walsh, 2010, 2011; Maree, 2021; McMahon & Watson, 2017; Patton, 2017; Super, 1957; Tiedeman & O'Hara, 1963; Vondracek et al., 1986; Watson & McMahon, 2005, 2018), we still know little about the best-or-evidence-based practices for this demographic (Hartung et al., 2005; Vondracek, 2001; Watson et al., 2015). Searching the keywords *career development*, we found that between the years 2000 and 2022, there were a total of 16 522 published articles within PsychINFO. Of those, only 11% of the publications were related to *children*. When we further screened them by adding the keyword *marginalised population and/or communities*, the number of articles fell to 209, only 1% of publications. The results reveal that a strong need for scholarly attention focused on children in general, and on children of colour, particularly. Without a substantial body of literature, effective interventions to facilitate children's career development are lamentably compromised.

Marginalised children face additional challenges in dealing with powerful structures of exclusion, preventing them from first imagining and then pursuing fulfilling career paths (Sensoy-Briddick & Briddick, 2022). Thus, developing skills, such as familiarising themselves with the dominant culture's worldview, developing navigation skills to find and secure scarce resources (Cooper, 2018; Ivers et al., 2012), and nullifying oppressive messages that constitute a threat to their identity, are essential competencies for these children (Peila-Shuster et al., 2019). Cathy Park Hong (2020) in her recent book vividly described how as a first-generation child in a Korean family, she was forced to 'split myself into the first and third person'. To recognise myself, as Sartre writes, "as the Other sees me" (p. 77). Similarly, Du Bois (1903/1969) discussed the *double consciousness* with which African Americans can see themselves through the eyes of the dominant group. Necessary for survival in an antipathic environment, the balancing act of managing this split or double consciousness is significant to the psyche of children. To be successful, any career intervention needs to include strategies to free the impacted child from the internalised gaze of the privileged.

This article hopes to address the concerning gap in the literature on promising practices in children's career development, with a special focus on children from minoritised communities. We will describe the development of our culturally responsive, psychoeducational curriculum along with its initial introduction to third graders in a high need elementary school. The curriculum was created to prevent immature and often unconscious circumscription and compromising processes that take place early in childhood (Gottfredson, 2004). When uncontrolled these processes can lead to the elimination of possible future careers, since children can come to believe that particular

careers are 'socially unacceptable for someone like themselves' (Gottfredson, 2004, p. 12). Such beliefs can entrap children in a prescribed story, often referred to as a Master Narrative, primarily drafted for their cultural group. We used the concept of exemplary models (Sensoy-Briddick & Briddick, 2022) to impact these elimination processes. Temple Grandin, Sonia Sotomayor and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. are among the models included in the curriculum, as their personal narratives demonstrate how they successfully dismantled widely held Master Narratives imposed on them, owing to their social identities. Toni Morrison defined a Master Narrative as an 'ideological script that the people in authority are imposing on everyone else' (Moyers, 1990). We believed that studying the narratives of exemplary models, which can be described as counter-narratives, would strengthen students' sense of agency while freeing them from internalised enfeebling messages about themselves and their potential. Three lessons from the curriculum were delivered in a high-need elementary school located in the Northcentral region of the United States of America. Feedback from the school counselling staff indicated that the curriculum was well-received by the children.

## Foundation of the curriculum

In designing the curriculum, we attempted to capture the epistemological changes that have been transforming the field of psychological and career counselling. Situated in a narrative perspective, the curriculum emphasises narrative formation. We examined the career counselling literature on children with a particular focus on its evolving conceptualization of the construct of 'self'. Although we borrowed from the traditional theories of the 20th century modernist era, self-construction and authorship in narrative development are what is emphasised in the curriculum.

Since elementary school children have not yet fully developed the abstract thinking skills necessary to conceptualise their 'self' as an evolving construct, we simplified or materialised this process by introducing narratives of culturally diverse exemplary models to children. Class discussions about the exemplary models included questions centred around authorship, agency and persistence. The concept of role models, thus, constituted the second foundational construct upon which the curriculum rested.

## Epistemological changes and new perspectives in career counselling with children

Kuhn (1962) in his landmark publication, entitled *The Structures of Scientific Revolutions*, claimed that paradigm shifts happen when existing theories fail to explain observed phenomena. This leads to scientific revolutions that revamp our existing epistemologies leading to the emergence of new theories. Savickas (2007) masterfully identified the epistemological changes that have occurred in psychology since the modernist era and the subsequent rippling impact on vocational psychology, particularly

regarding to the concept of 'self', one of the main constructs of psychological inquiry.

### Career choice and self as an object

Savickas argued that the positivist approach during the modernist era conceptualised the self as an 'object', exposed to scientific inquiry via various types of testing (Savickas, 2007). Trait factor theory (Parsons, 1909) and Holland's theory of vocational personalities and work environments (Holland, 1997) reflected this view of the self. Both approaches have relied significantly on assessment to measure various traits or characteristics of the self, including values, interests and aptitudes. During this era, limited attention was given to children, perhaps because the focus of career interventions centred around *career choice* and *career fit* rather than career development.

### Career development and self as a subject

The emergence of the humanistic approach with its emphasis on human development and self-actualization drew career counsellors' attention to the developmental processes through which individuals achieved competencies critical to make informed educational and career decisions. While developmental theories established self-actualization as the final outcome, career maturity became the final destination for career counselling clients. The humanistic approach impelled us to see the self as a 'subject' capable of optimal growth (Savickas, 2007) while placing children in a new position of interest for career intervention.

Similar to Erikson's psychosocial theory (1964, 1968), Super's lifespan, life-space approach (Super, 1990; Super et al., 1996) proposed a career development model with five stages and corresponding developmental tasks, successful completion of which led to career maturity in individuals. Gottfredson (2004) offered a developmental approach using cognitive development as one of the foundations of her theory. She highlighted specific ways children and adolescents eliminated career options, often unconsciously, because of social factors such as poverty and social identities such as gender. Gottfredson identified self-agency as an important goal in career development and charged career counsellors with the responsibility of providing 'experiential lessons in recognizing and beneficially exploiting self-agency' (Gottfredson, 2004, p. 35). During this time period, various comprehensive career counselling models for school-age children emerged (e.g. Gottfredson, 2004; Super, 1990) to prepare them for the world of work.

In addition to considerable progress made in understanding the career development process, accumulated evidence confirmed the significance of career interventions with children. Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey (2017, p. 276) rightfully claimed that 'ignoring the process of career development in childhood is similar to a gardener disregarding the quality of the soil in which a garden will be planted' (as cited in Maree, 2021, p. 433). Similarly, Hartung et al. (2008) considered childhood as 'the dawn of vocational

development' that required for the attention of researchers and practitioners (p. 64).

### Career narrative and self as a project

The insecurities and uncertainties impacting the world of work and our lives (Taber, 2019) decreased the relevance of some of the traditional theories of the 20th century. Predictability, singularity, homogeneity and objectivity, core principles of modernism, were challenged by postmodernist epistemology (Gergen, 1990). What is perceived as universal facts are degraded to 'locally shared realities of human experiences' (Gergen, 1990, p. 32). The neutrality of science has been questioned by feminist scholars who pointed out the androcentric biases that saturated scientific reports (Gergen, 1990, p. 27). Qualitative research has emerged as an alternative method of inquiry for unexplored realities of marginalised communities (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The construct of self, known in a singular form for decades, transformed into possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

David Tiedeman has been identified as the first social constructionist scholar in our field due to his emphasis on the process of self-construction (Savickas, 2008). Tiedeman's concept of self-reconceptualization emphasised that the active role a person plays in continuously revamping one's self in response to new experiences and anticipated future expectations (Savickas, 2008, p. 220). Within the postmodernist era, the self was transformed into an ever-evolving *project*.

The process of self-construction and its critical elements of reflexivity, autobiographical agency and adaptability have become the focus of new career approaches, such as life design (Hartung, 2019; Savickas, 2012; Savickas et al., 2009) and narrative career counselling (Cochran, 1997). Although their significance for children is repeatedly emphasised by scholars, such as Hartung et al. (2005) and Maree (2021), programmes or models that include these theoretical concepts are still scarce in the literature. While Briddick et al. (2018) and Sensoy-Briddick and Briddick (2019) developed a widely used curriculum for elementary school children in Turkey, other publications have described programmes developed mainly for adolescents (see, e.g. Nota et al., 2016). Our new curriculum differs significantly from the first one, as it focuses on fostering authorship in children.

### The role models and their importance in children's development

The concept of exemplary models derives from the extensive literature, highlighting the importance of role models in children's growth and development. Defined by Gibson (2004, p. 136) as 'cognitive constructions based on an individual's needs, wants, and ambitions,' role models are found to have a considerable impact on young people's development (Bandura, 1977, 1986; Erikson, 1968; Gibson, 2004; Krumboltz, 1996), their career choices, motivation (Fagenson, 1989; Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008; Valero et al., 2019), sense of agency (Taylor et al., 1994), work and academic engagement and academic

identity (Buunk et al., 2007; Zirkel, 2002). Identification and social learning theories have used the construct often, each emphasizing its different functions (Gibson, 2004).

### Role models in identification theories

Identification of theories focuses on the aspirational influence of role models and their critical impact on identity development and construction (Erikson, 1968; Savickas, 2019). Savickas (2019) noted that our role models provide us with meaning and thus a means of making sense of our lives. Savickas explained:

Role models inspire young people because they show a way forward. So, the choice of role models is indeed a decision about self-construction and the role one prefers to play as a social actor in life's drama. (2019:92)

The relatability of role models has been found to be critical in the identification process. In other words, people often choose their role models based on their similarities to them with regard to their racial, gender and other social identities (Basow & Howe, 1980; Gibson, 2004; Giuliano et al., 2007; Lockwood, 2006). For example, Kivel and Kleiber (2000) found that gay, lesbian and bisexual (LGB) youth relied on media role models to learn about GLB identities. These models, despite their distance from the youth, were particularly instrumental in decreasing the youth's sense of isolation while increasing their hope for a successful future (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011).

### Role models in social learning theories

Social learning theories, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of role models with regard to the acquisition of critical skills. Bandura and Wood (1989) claimed that individuals learn various skills and competencies while watching others to perform them. The famous Bobo Doll experiment demonstrated that even children as young as 37 months learn new behaviours by observing others (Bandura et al., 1961). Role models, in other words, are critical to what Bourdieu referred to as habitus formation, the embodiment of cultural capital in the form of habits, dispositions and behaviours (Wainwright & Turner, 2003, p. 4). What we embody creates certain vulnerabilities or invincibilities. This is particularly true for marginalised children, whose scarce resources and limited access to various capitals diminish their chances for social and class mobility (Yosso & Garcia, 2007). Thus, it is not surprising that role models of colour have been found to be particularly impactful in helping marginalised youth learn about effective ways to address various stereotypes and discrimination that interfere with their success (Cheryan et al., 2013; Marx & Roman, 2002; Wang & Degol, 2017). Studies conducted in STEM fields, for example, have repeatedly highlighted the impact of relatable role models in increasing minoritised women's persistence in these fields (Cheryan et al., 2013; Marx & Ko, 2012; Marx & Roman, 2002; Stout et al., 2011; Wang & Degol, 2017). Within Bourdieu's concept of capital, there resides the possibility that role models can be a form of critical *social capital* for

minoritised children in assisting them to embody essential skills to thrive despite oppressive systems and institutions.

### Exemplary role models: Role models as social capital

In a previous article, we discussed the impact role models can have on 'self-building, identity shaping, and overall career construction' (Briddick & Sensoy-Briddick, 2012, p. 329). Different from role models who are critical building blocks of one's identity, exemplary models are individuals whose life narratives are saturated with perseverance, persistence and resilience (Sensoy-Briddick & Briddick, 2022). In other words, exemplary models are the individuals who have successfully dismantled the Master Narrative and created a counter-story that is more in alignment with their own desires and interests.

We join others (e.g. Zirkel, 2002) in their concern about the lack of a sufficient number of diverse models who can provide minoritised children with ways to deal, not only with life challenges but also particularly with oppressive, systemic issues. As we indicated previously, we consider role models as critical *social capital*. We regard facilitating children's access to these exemplary models' inspiring narratives as an important social justice intervention. As Solórzano and Yosso (2002) declared, sharing the counter-stories 'can help strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance' (p. 32).

In a seminal article, Yosso (2005) expanded Bourdieu's cultural capital theory and offered a new concept, Community Cultural Wealth (CCW). Community Cultural Wealth consists of various assets, often unacknowledged by scholars in social sciences, in the form of six capitals that communities of colour use in their resistance to oppressive systems. Yosso and Burciaga (2016, p. 2) identified the overlapping capitals as aspirational (maintaining hopefulness in the face of adversities), familial (having a sense of community and history), linguistic (skills associated with using multiple languages and/or language styles), social (social network), navigational (skills and knowledge necessary to successfully navigate institutions) and resistant (actions to challenge inequity). Our curriculum included counter-narratives that highlighted various capitals associated with the CCW. We hoped that analysing the narratives of exemplary models would foster confidence within children that they, too, are capable of and may well already have some of the necessary capitals to start constructing their own counter-narratives.

## Curriculum

The purpose of the curriculum was to invite students to examine the lives of accomplished individuals from diverse backgrounds, referred to as exemplary models (Sensoy-Briddick & Briddick, 2022). We chose children's books that clearly demonstrated the challenges each character encountered, along with coping strategies and various capitals that were instrumental in helping them to create a narrative of persistence. Although persistence and resilience were our focus, we ensured that what is presented in books

was age-appropriate and avoided introducing information that could possibly be upsetting to children.

Although we provided information about narratives of persistence and resilience elsewhere in the article, perhaps, it is important to briefly revisit their significance in this era. Characterised by uncertainty and insecurities (Taber, 2019), this century requires individuals to demonstrate a high level of flexibility and adaptability to changing environments. Thus, it is critical for children to develop strong sense of agency, characterised by a firm belief in their capacity to respond to the pressing economic conditions and challenging social demands while maintaining strong confidence for their ability to pursue their own passion for making a significant contribution in the world around them. We hoped that the stories of persistence included in the curriculum presented how exemplary models responded to barriers and challenges, they encountered in their own lives without giving up their passion in life. Brad Meltzer, author of the *Ordinary People Change the World* series, concisely articulated a definition of resilience similar to our own. In addition, his words described how we hoped that these selected stories could impact our young audience of the curriculum lessons. In an interview with *A mighty Girl*, Meltzer noted:

Jane Goodall's story is not just about animals, it's not just about that she was a woman, it's not just about that she was bold or daring, but it was about that she really, in her own way, had this amazing impact that we can all apply to our lives when someone says no to you. I mean it is to push forward and to blaze your own trail and that thing you love and to find what you love and keep pushing forward and what you do ... my daughter may want to start reading Jane Goodall because she loves animals, she loves our dog, but when she finishes, she is charged up to change the world because she's thinking, she would never take a no for an answer. (*A Mighty Girl* staff, 2018)

The curriculum included a total of 15 lessons based on the various books, most of which were written by authors Brad Meltzer (*Ordinary People Change the World* series) or Maria Isabelle Sánchez Vagara (*Little People Big Dreams* series). Each book highlighted a theme or two associated with the main character of the book. For instance, the book on Amelia Earhart (Meltzer, 2014) emphasised her courage, self-reliance and ability to collaborate with others. These were critical in Earhart's success in dealing with various social barriers that discouraged women from assuming non-traditional roles, such as becoming a pilot, during the era in which she lived. Our lesson emphasised these three themes while also addressing associated standards drafted by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2021). Given the age and attention span of the children participating, each lesson was completed with an engaging colouring activity. Children were asked to colour the picture of the main character while responding to a question as to how they were similar to and different from the exemplary model. We borrowed this question from Savickas, who uses it in processing role models with his clients during the career construction interview (Savickas, 2015, 2019). We believed that the time devoted to self-reflection would positively

impact children's self-perception and their skill for reflexivity, both of which are important competencies in self-authorship.

## Diversity and inclusiveness

We wanted to ensure that we had children's books about various influential persons with diverse backgrounds. In alignment with the current literature, we broadened the definition of diversity to include women, LGBTQ+ individuals, race, ethnicity, disabilities, poverty and various other backgrounds. The intersectional identities of some of the exemplary models were a strength of the curriculum. For instance, we included the story of Sonia Sotomayor, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States of America (Meltzer, 2018). Her intersectional identities of first-generation college graduate + Latina + woman identities presented her with unique barriers that required different coping mechanisms. Providing a contextual perspective could be important to capture the attention and the interest of the students. Judge Sotomayor is the only Latina judge who has achieved this most distinguished honor. Although about 18% of the U.S. population consists of Latino, or Latina, individuals, only 3% of sitting judges on federal courts are Latina. Sonia Sotomayor has overcome barriers associated with her gender, as well as her ethnic background. Her story contains and demonstrates a successful use of linguistic, navigational and familial capitals (Yosso, 2005) in achieving her career success.

Another book was about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by Brad Meltzer (2016). The iconic American civil rights leader, Dr. King, had an intersectional identity of being a male and African American. The book clearly demonstrates how his early experiences with racial inequity shaped his future career narrative. From a career construction perspective, his early preoccupation with injustice became his occupation later in life (Savickas, 2005, 2011, 2019). His love for 'big words' along with his strong value to 'love everyone' led to a predictable initial career in ministry. Later, he became a community organiser, then a political activist so he could work with larger groups of similarly minded individuals to bring peace and equity to the U.S. His life story demonstrates a successful use of aspirational, resistant and navigational capitals (Yosso, 2005). Children who experience similar types of discrimination can learn about the powerful skills that Dr. King used to address such injustices. His narrative of persistence clearly shows children how to continue to dream even when they encounter discouraging situations that challenge their sense of hope.

## Considerations related to facilitators

Being able to successfully lead classroom discussions requires facilitators to have an understanding of elementary school students, skills to manage group dynamics and preparation in career development and planning, as it relates to children. The skills of the facilitator are critical to the delivery of the curriculum. The lessons selected were delivered by a certified school counsellor and their intern. Both of them

had backgrounds in classroom management, curriculum development and delivery, as well as coursework in career development and counselling.

During each 30 min lesson, the school counselling staff read the book aloud and then defined the themes of persistence and resiliency associated with the model in the book. The staff used a number of the following questions to facilitate class discussions. Although at first glance, these questions might appear rather abstract for third graders, the response from the school counselling staff indicated that children were able to understand and respond to the questions without any difficulty. The following were the questions utilised by the counselling staff:

- What characteristics of the main character in the book inspired you the most?
- What were some of the challenges the main character in the book faced along the way in their life?
- What did they do in order to deal with these challenges? In other words, how did they persist in the face of difficulties?
- How are you similar to and/or different from the main character in the book?

In addition to these questions, facilitators can generate their own questions they feel are appropriate and useful for the children they are working with at the time.

Although both series are accessible in English via YouTube, where the books are read aloud by the authors, the counselling staff who delivered the three lessons indicated that the best way to process these books in the classroom is to read them aloud to the students. This approach allows the facilitator the freedom to screen any material that might be deemed age inappropriate.

### Initial trial

Three sample lessons from the curriculum were implemented by a certified school counsellor and their intern during the spring of 2022 to approximately 40 third-grade students. These lessons were incorporated into the pre-existing social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum that the school counsellor had been using. Different from the existing curriculum, these new lessons introduced children to exemplary models, their narratives of persistence and future possibilities for them. The initial feedback we received from the school counselling staff was positive. They indicated that the children were excited about the lessons. Children were able to not only recognise but also articulate the various strategies used by exemplary models in navigating the challenges they faced while writing their career narratives. The counselling staff also revealed that the teaching staff, who had some of these books within their classroom collection, noticed increased excitement among their students toward these books.

It is not appropriate to make any claims with regard to the effectiveness of the curriculum at this time. More carefully designed studies will provide better insight into the potential

of the curriculum for empowering children in shaping their own narratives. Based on the initial results, we believe that this kind of curriculum can be a possible blueprint for practitioners in many places regardless of where they might be in the world. In our earlier work on role models, we noted:

Every society has its own model examples, stories and cultural scripts readily available to its members. Whether these examples are human or nonhuman, factual or fictional does not matter. The aforementioned are generalizable enough for individuals to apply to their own life, constructing and designing who they want to be via these sources of self. (Briddick & Sensoy-Briddick, 2012, p. 331)

What is true for role models is true for exemplary models, with both offering unique possibilities for us and for those we serve in the work that we do.

## Conclusion

As we conclude, the United Nations cites 1.2 billion youth ages 15–24 comprising 16% of the world's population. In 2030, this population will reach 1.3 billion (United Nations, n.d.). The World Economic Forum's website provided a cautionary piece of writing entitled, *Pandemics: Youth in an Age of Lost Opportunities* (World Economic Forum, 2021). Citing two major crises of the first two decades of this century they note:

The outlook for this generation had already been diminished by environmental degradation, rising inequality (of many types – gender, intergenerational, economic and ethnic), varying degrees of violence, and social disruption from the tech-enabled industrial transformation. While the digital leap forward unlocked opportunities for some youth, many are now entering the workforce in an employment ice age. (para. 2)

The youth of our present is also our world's tomorrow. Some elementary school students of today will join the previously mentioned demographic, ages 15–24 by 2030. There is an open window of opportunity for intervention that suggests urgency. There is likewise the realization that behind the present youth are generations of youth to follow.

Where we go from here is critical in meeting the existing challenges, as well as those awaiting us ahead. Innovative and thoughtful responses, embedded in relevant theoretical models (e.g. social constructionism) and best practices that address the barriers to progress, combined with existing foundations can make a world of difference in the current era of global uncertainty. Our most recent contribution and suggestions for a curriculum-based intervention are by no means the answer but rather one possibility among others that address the unique needs of younger generations, as they look to their futures and plan the work they hope to do in our world. It is also an invitation for colleagues across disciplines and many landscapes to join us in meeting the challenges we face and those that have yet to appear.

Maree (2020) offered insightful recommendations to our field in his response to an appeal to members of the International

Association of Applied Psychology by, then Chair, Paul Hartung. Hartung asked members to provide up to three ideas or challenges deemed relevant to the field of Career Psychology. Maree's response was sage advice in the present, with implications for the future. His reply included certain words placed in bold print. These words are shown in quotation marks here for the reader. Maree noted that our field should 'join hands internationally' also reminding us that it is key to 'think innovatively; differently than before'. He called us to 'help vulnerable people' and finally he encouraged us to 'be innovative and continue to centre on challenging accepted "truths"' (p. 282). As boldly go these words, so too may we all go in the work ahead of us.

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The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

### Authors' contributions

H.S.B. and W.C.B. meet the criteria and have written and published previously on the topics of curriculum, role models, exemplary models, career construction and life-design.

### Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

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### Data availability

There is a small amount of data, but it is not publicly available data. These data are not used in the writing of this manuscript.

### Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the authors.

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