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**About the Presenter:**

Jolante Kavale is currently doing her PhD work as a part of the Human Development in Social and Cultural Research programme in Germany at the graduate school Education and Capabilities situated in Dortmund and Bielefeld universities. Since her Master studies she has been involved in the analysis of Career Designing and Life Designing paradigms and research. Recently she has been introduced to the contemporary philosophical aspects and approaches of human development, social justice as well as organizational development. She is now involved in the studies of the Capability approach by Amartya Sen and its practical application in the area of Educational and Career Designing. Her major interest has become "How to strategically think, plan and evaluate Career Designing for human development". In her dissertation she will be discussing the problem of needs identification in the area of Career Designing according to the needs assessment model of Prof. Kaufman.

**Title of Paper:** **Assessing Vocational Counseling: The Role of Needs Assessment in Vocational Counseling and the Problem of Aims, Results and Definitions**

**Abstract:**

Almost all modern societies agree that both learning and counselling should be offered based on the needs of those who apply. The policy makers and educational scientists are all aiming at providing education and guidance services which meet the needs of the applicants or at least are applicant' needs oriented. The problem of this concept is that even in their purely normative studies very rarely do the educational or social scientists and the policy makers provide the scientific justification to their understanding of "need" and how it should be assessed within the educational science and in particular in the area of vocational guidance. Therefore in vocational counselling assessments we tend to talk about means (e.g., online training programs, EPSS, CD-ROMs) and not ends (e.g., reduction in poverty, client value, product quality) (Kaufman and Watkins, 2000). In order to discover the needs the scientists should agree and define the most important philosophical and conceptual parameters of vocational guidance. To answer the question of what is vocational guidance, what does it aim at on levels: personal, organizational and societal.



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In the area of vocational counselling we must also acknowledge the dilemma of satisfying personal versus societal needs. For in addition to justifying what we use, do, accomplish and deliver, the new reality is that we must all now prove that there are useful results to both the client and to society (Kaufman and Watkins, 2000). Rivaz-Martinez (2007) also admits the existing relationship between individual needs for personal fulfilment and social needs for productive and economic coverage. The question remains whether we can maintain these two aims during the process of vocational counselling: efficiency of labour market and supporting of economic growth and meeting each person's personal needs and goals associated with their personal well-being? Also whether every country and every school is able to assist each person according to their needs and goals or is this kind of one-to-one counselling and assistance is a luxury no one can afford? Instead the countries and politics decide to offer the pupils numerous over-methodised programmes or projects often obligatory for all which rarely have scientific design and are almost never critically evaluated.

In my paper I will be concentrating on the concept of need and the needs assessment techniques used in the contemporary educational science. The intention is to theoretically conceptualize the term "need", to analyse the practices of needs assessments and to integrate the methodology of needs assessment into the area in the assessment of vocational counselling.

**References:**

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