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About the Presenter:

Dr. Yvette Piha Lehman is a Professor at the University of São Paulo (São Paulo/Brazil). Dr. Lehman is the Director of the university's Applied Psychology and Vocational Counseling Center. Lehman is involved in studies of career changes and the university dropout phenomenon. Lehman is a member of the Brazilian Society of Psychoanalysis.

Title of Paper: Professional Identity in a Society in Crisis– A Study of Two Moments of the Liberal Arts Profession

Abstract:

This study was conducted in the Brazilian city of Sao Paulo, a world class production, commercial, banking and technological center that accounts for one fifth of the country's industrial output. We studied the transformations in liberal art careers resulting from globalization and from the introduction of new organizational structures. We investigated a new social phenomenon - the growing number of youths who choose the profession of their parents as a result of the several changes that are occurring in the social context – changes in the professional's reality, career development, the growing trend toward the institutionalization of his services, the introduction of new technology and methods of insertion in the labor market.

The research approached parents and children with the same profession (doctors, dentists, psychologists and engineers) to understand how youths developed their professional identity. It is part a longitudinal research that compares data collected in 1988 with data gathered between 2008 and 2010. We detected substantially profound modifications in the careers of doctors, dentists and engineers, resulting from technological developments that have had a sharp impact on the work done by these professionals.

Although the number of specializations has increased in psychology, it is the career that has undergone the least number of changes in the last 20 years basically because the psychologist's knowledge is not directly related to technology but to his studies and self development. By choosing the



same career as their parents, the youths studied for this survey seek not only financial security, but mainly a more stable identity base so they can later mold their own space in the labor market, building a more flexible professional identity through specializations.

Thus, the choice of the same career can be seen as a reaction to the multiple changes taking place in the labor market that cause transformations in career models. It's a way to use the parents as a pillar of support for the development of their own careers, protecting them from identity diffusion.