CAREER EDUCATION:
PREPARING NON-WORKING CHILDREN TO BECOME PRODUCTIVE ADULTS

David A. Jepsen
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa, USA

I. **INTRODUCTION.** My purposes in this lecture are:

A. To explain a contemporary interpretation of career that will stimulate your thinking about career education policy statements.

B. To describe a metaphor for careers that will stimulate your thinking about constructing goals for career education.

II. A CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION OF CAREER.

A. A broad definition of career is:
> **"Career is the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time."**

B. The emphasis is on
  1. The work experiences of one person,
  2. Sequence of experiences over time,
  3. Person's work experience, not just employment/

III. CAREER EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENTS.

A. New social and economic conditions present challenges for career education:
  1. Job security has been reduced.
  2. Career pathways are not clearly marked.
  3. Workers are on their own.
  4. Job descriptions are more inclusive and service-oriented.

B. These new conditions suggest a new Career education policy statement:

Career education prepares students to construct their own careers as workers and learners.

IV. CAREER AS STORY.

A. I propose that we think about careers as if they are stories, a metaphor that is understood across cultures.

B. A career is a non-fiction **work-experience story** and, like other stories, it contains several common and essential elements.
1. Career is authored.
2. Career takes place over time.
3. Career is enacted in settings.
4. Career involves people (other than the main character) as supporting characters.
5. Career has a plot. The career plot includes three essential elements:
    5a. Career contains Problems that must be solved.
    5b. Career includes Resources to solve problems.
    5c. Career requires the Actions of the main character.
6. Careers include powerful forces.

C. Each story element suggests what students <u>need to learn</u> in career education programs.

1. Students need to learn a sense of **personal control** over their actions.
2. Students need to learn about **time** in careers.
3. Students need to differentiate among **workplaces** in terms of power structures and the distribution of tasks by gender, age, abilities and interests.
4. Students need to learn **"people skills",** that is, how to nurture personal relationships and loyalties with significant people in their lives.
5. Students need to learn how to shape their career plots by
    a. Anticipating typical career **problems**,
    b. Identifying and seeking out **resources** to use in solving problems and
    c. Initiating **action**, following through on that action and understanding feedback.
6. Students need to learn how to cope with **powerful forces** beyond their control.

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION