

Stu Conger Award in Career Counselling and Career Development, 2005

Recipient: Armelle Spain

Biography

Dr. Armelle Spain is a professor in the Faculty of Education Sciences at Université Laval at Québec and a researcher with the university's centre for research in education and life at work, called the *Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur l'éducation et la vie au travail*. She is one of the founding members of the research centre and has held the position of Director of Master's and Doctoral studies in career development sciences. For about thirty years, she has specialized in the training of career counsellors.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor's and Master's degree in psychology from Université Laval. She then obtained a Ph.D. in counselling psychology at the University of Southern California, at Los Angeles in the United States.

Recipient of many research grants from Canadian and Quebec organizations, Armelle Spain, with the support of a solid team which she helped to create, has devoted her work to the study of the career paths of women with a focus on the interactions between one's career and life roles. For her, the theme of work-family balance, now an important issue for government policy makers, unions and socially responsible businesses, was from the beginning an integral component of any career counselling practice. Through her rigorous research, she identified and delineated the concept of how life relationships are central in forming the professional identity of women. This concept is now being studied with a sample of professional men.

In connection with the pan-Canadian initiative called Creation and Mobilization of Counselling Resources for Youth (CAMCRY), which was sponsored by the Canadian Career Development Foundation and which had the purpose of better equipping counsellors for helping youth deal with the work world of the 21st century, Armelle Spain directed a large-scale research project which led to the development of *Devenir*, an innovative program for helping young women plan and embark upon their socio-professional careers. In 1995, this program earned two prestigious awards: the Award of the Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association for training and counselling materials and the *Prix de l'Ordre* of the *Ordre professionnel des conseillers et conseillères d'orientation du Québec*. The humanist and educational intervention principles that shape this program help young women determine the course of their career and, accordingly, calling upon counsellors to the demanding task of assisting their female clients in co-constructing meaningful work lives.

Always careful to make her research findings useful for theory, teaching and practice, Dr. Spain has developed career counselling tools in the form of metaphors that can be used in either an individual or group context. The best known one is, without question, the tree metaphor that shapes the *Devenir* program. She is currently working on developing a new reorientation assistance program for adults in career transition. It will be based on life stories.

Author and co-author of many articles in renowned scientific and professional journals, Dr. Armelle Spain has a national and international reputation. She is in demand as trainer and conference speaker in French-speaking Canada, Europe and the West Indies. In addition, the *Devenir* program has a solid footing in France, and her international collaborations are ongoing.