Getting Students Involved Using Happenstance Learning Theory

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Happenstance Learning Theory: “HLT posits that human behavior is the product of countless numbers of learning experiences made available by both planned and unplanned situations in which individuals find themselves. The learning outcomes include skills, interests, knowledge, beliefs, preferences, sensitivities, emotions, and future actions” (Krumboltz, 2009).

- Factors over which individuals have no control VS. Factors individuals initiate
- Since planning doesn’t necessarily lead to careers, we don’t want to require students to make plans if they are not ready

4 Propositions of HLT in Career Counseling

1. “Proposition 1: The goal of career counseling is to help clients learn to take actions to achieve more satisfying career and personal lives—not to make a single career decision.”
2. “Proposition 2: Career assessments are used to stimulate learning, not to match personal characteristics with occupational characteristics.”
3. “Proposition 3: Clients learn to engage in exploratory actions as a way of generating beneficial unplanned events.”
4. “Proposition 4: The success of counseling is assessed by what the client accomplishes in the real world outside the counseling session.”


- Future is completely unpredictable, including future of careers
- Undecidedness = open mindedness
- Students need to take ACTION to achieve
- Advisors help students learn to achieve more satisfying educational and personal lives
- Making a single decision as to a goal can be counter to development

Proposition 2: Career Assessments are Used to Stimulate Learning, Not to Match Personal Characteristics with Occupational Characteristics.

- Interest assessments
- Personality assessments
- Career values assessments
- Strengths assessments

Proposition 3: Clients Learn to Engage in Exploratory Actions as a Way of Generating Beneficial Unplanned Events.

- Unplanned events are normal and a fact of life
- Actions involve risk (physical, social, emotional, etc.) and require examining pros and cons
- Complex actions that could result in potential career/academic/life learning:
  - Taking up a new hobby
  - Applying for an internship
  - Getting involved in an organization or research
  - Meeting new people
Proposition 4: The Success of Counseling is Assessed by What the Client Accomplishes in the Real World Outside the Counseling Session.

- Important learning happens outside of our office in the “real world”
- Planning learning activities can be a huge piece of your interaction with students using this model
- Blame when actions do not take place is not productive
- Try reframing or reevaluating the actions
- Do not call it homework

APPLICATION TO ACADEMIC ADVISING

Encouraging Taking Action

- Going to lectures
- Joining student groups
- Attending events
- Going to office hours
- Participating in study groups
- Using resources (writing center, tutoring, etc.)

Emphasizing Remaining Alert & Open

- Open mindedness
- Sharing personal stories
- Sharing 5-7 careers in lifetime statistic
- Asking about parent/family members’ pathways
- Continuing to reinforce possibility

Assistance to Initiate Follow Up

- Providing context for what follow-up means
- Offering guidance if students have difficulties
- Asking student to follow up in some way and offering that as a possible learning opportunity

Reduce stress by helping students realize that they can’t plan their whole lives in advance.

References


Please let me know if you have any questions or would like to continue the conversation: Jessica.Baron@colorado.edu

Thank You!