

Career Advising: A Developmental Approach

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Students, particularly those entering college for the first time, depend on the academic advisor for guidance and support. In the role of career counselor, the advisor helps advisees define the process necessary to obtain employment and life fulfillment. Helping advisees select the courses necessary to realize their career goals is only part of that guidance. This article proposes a model for career advising based upon Super's developmental theory of career counseling.

In most institutions of higher learning, faculty members serve as advisors to students throughout the students' years at the university. Faculty and other designated advisors possess the experience and knowledge necessary to help advisees make influential life choices (Fitzpatrick, 1968). Advising consists of complex tasks (Byrd, 1994) including devising programs of study, monitoring advisee's progress, and from time to time reinforcing advisee choices (Horowitz, 1968). The overall challenge to the advisor is to meet the advisee's developmental needs whether they are emotional, academic, or career oriented. To do so, the advisor must recognize "career helping" as a legitimate advising responsibility and be aware that some student groups may face unique problems in career development (Hoffman & Grand, 1979). In fulfilling this responsibility, the advisor must possess a thorough understanding of the institution's academic pathways to career decision making and be familiar with both the institution's academic programs and those that provide work experiences.

For advisors to meet the career advising needs of advisees, they must know the student population within their institution. Demographics can vary in many ways, including age, socioeconomic status, ethnic affiliation, motivation for attending college, lifestyle preference, and exceptionality. These diverse groups may have particular concerns that affect the way they make career decisions (Luzzo, 1992) and how they respond to academic advisors.

Herr and Cramer (1996) suggest that women and minorities present career concerns that may require special attention. For example, feelings of self-efficacy, "an individual's belief about his or her ability to successfully perform a given behavior" (Ancis & Phillips, 1996), has been shown to

be predictive of some career-related behaviors for women. Feelings of self-efficacy appear to influence the range of occupations considered, choice of traditional versus nontraditional majors, and persistence in a major (Betz & Hackett, 1983; Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984). These findings were supported by Farmer, Wardrop, Anderson and Resinger (1995) who found that for women self-efficacy has an effect on persistence toward technology-oriented careers. The researchers concluded that regardless of actual ability, self-doubt about performance in technology-related jobs may cause women to choose nontechnical careers.

Career maturity, a function of both knowledge and life experiences, can also vary by gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic level (Jackson & Healy, 1996; Leong, 1991; Luzzo, 1992). Career maturity includes an individual's readiness to make age-appropriate career decisions and cope with career development tasks. These decisions pertain to future work experiences and one's volunteer, recreation, family, and civic responsibilities (Super, 1980). In traditional-aged college students, career maturity has also been found to be routinely related to academic achievement (Luzzo, 1995). Models for career advising college students should incorporate the advisee's career maturity and stage of career decision making as well as her or his academic goals.

Developmental Approach to Career Development

In the past, suggested changes in student thinking, behavior, and career planning were not presented in a developmental context. According to Drum (1980), "changes that were encouraged in students were not integrated with a larger developmental context" (p. 21) or process. Instead these changes were based upon a variety of divergent and often unrelated theories. Frequently the emphasis was placed upon the end product of development rather than on the developmental context. Career decision making is a critical component of the developmental process. Super (1990) recommended a developmental approach to career decision making because it attends to age and task suitability but makes allowance for the individual who may need to recycle through a particular stage (Super & Thompson, 1981).

Table 1 Career advising model for college students

Year in School*	Developmental Stage	Advising Stage	Tasks for Advisors	Tasks for Students
1	Growth	Trust-building Assessment	Show genuine concern Interview student Discuss general education requirements	Establish comfortable advisor/advisee relationship Self-exploration Career exploration Selection of required courses
2	Exploration	Decision-making	Provide necessary resources	Choose academic major Develop program of study
3	Establishment & Maintenance	Support	Monitor student progress Provide necessary resources	Follow program of study Research jobs
4	Decline	Confirmation	Monitor student progress Provide necessary resources	Follow program of study Prepare for graduation and job placement

Developmental approaches to career planning address it as a process of age-appropriate decision making not as an isolated determination. Further, while engaged in this decision making procedure, both one's view of the world and self-image continue to evolve.

For purposes of this article, Super's life span approach to career development will be the model used to demonstrate age appropriate, stage, career decision making. Super's life span paradigm involves the integration of life roles into the process of career decision making and defines career as the sequence of positions one occupies throughout his or her preoccupational, occupational, and postoccupational life (Super, 1980, 1990). Super (1990) outlined the developmental career stages as growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline; but also noted that the tasks for each stage are recycled throughout the life span as the individual makes critical decisions that reflect career maturity. Career decision making occurs throughout life as people move through education, work, and other life experiences (Amundson, 1995).

A Career Advising Model

Advising students is a process that begins when the student makes a choice to attend a college or university (Lewallen, 1994). Many stu-

dents enter college undecided about educational and career choices. It is estimated that up to 60% of college students change their choices of major after entering college (Hoffman & Grand, 1979; Lewallen, 1993). The advisor may be the first career counselor with whom the advisee has had contact. Furthermore, the advisor becomes a link between the advisee and other resources on campus and in the community.

The following is a career advising model that is based upon Super's stages of development as illustrated by the use of developmental stage characteristics. The proposed model is designed to help the advisor more efficiently assist the advisee in making career-related decisions. The five-stage, 4-year model includes tasks that are academically progressive and developmentally appropriate. See Table 1. This model can be adjusted to accommodate those advisees who must extend their college attendance for 5 or more years. Because the developmental model is described in stages, the year in which each stage is completed can be customized to the career maturity of the student.

Year One

Characteristics: development of self-identity, social interaction, and goal setting.

Advising Stage 1—Trust-building. Building

trust is the first step in establishing a relationship with the advisee. Trust-building is accomplished by showing genuine concern about the advisee's needs, listening to the advisee's concerns, and offering assistance to the advisee. Lack of trust may result in discord or discontinuance in the advisee/advisor relationship (Satterfield & Lyddon, 1995).

Advising Stage 2—Assessment. A methodical interview can be used to assess advisee career maturity. The advisor determines from the interview whether the advisee has a career plan.

Undecided advisees require assistance ranging from referrals for counseling and assessment to course selection and follow-up (Habley, 1994). There have been many hypotheses about why college students are undecided. One such theory is presented by Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996). They determined that delayed development causes difficulty for some students making a career choice. They may have a career interest but are unsure which academic major would best prepare them for their careers of choice (Bogenschutz, 1994).

Lewallen (1994) discussed two aspects of student indecision: anxiety and self-identity. The advisor can help the advisee reduce anxiety and examine self-identity by systematically guiding him or her through the decision-making process. Specifically, advisors can assist with identifying goals, skills, interests, abilities, and personality type (Holland, 1985). The advisor can also provide career-seeking assignments, such as examining the campus course catalog and cross referencing entries associated with specific professional skills or referring the student to the campus counseling center or career services office for in-depth assessment.

The decided advisee, in most cases, is more academically sophisticated and career mature than the undecided advisee and may move easily through the first three stages (Lewallen, 1994). To integrate education and career planning for the decided advisee, advisors must be familiar with economic and employment trends (Isaacson & Brown, 1993). The advisor should also make the advisee aware of campus resources that furnish extensive counseling and assessment.

Year Two

Characteristics: self-examination, consideration of needs, interests, values, and capabilities.

Advising Stage 3—Decision-Making. During the sophomore year the student is ready to focus on academic and career goals, and self-awareness is generally high (Bogenschutz, 1994). After the

advisee has completed the first year and has enjoyed some success in completing required general education courses, the advisor should help him or her devise a 4-year program of study. This plan allows the advisee an opportunity to appreciate her or his progress and visualize an end to the undergraduate phase of her or his education. Advanced planning makes following the program of study, concentrating on achievement, developing new skills, and otherwise maintaining academic requirements organized processes.

Consideration of a career and an academic major must be an integral part of the course selection process. Choice of a major is perplexing for some advisees because they have difficulty seeing how a choice of major translates into work: "They lack the information about which majors prepare them for the identified career" (Bogenschutz, 1994, p. 49). The advisee must understand that course requirements are designed to contribute to the student's knowledge base and practical skills (Bogenschutz, 1994).

Beyond required courses, elective courses are offered to students. Often advisees do not take advantage of these courses to obtain knowledge that will inform their choice of academic major. For instance, a student who majors in English literature with the ambition of becoming a bookstore owner may want to take business administration courses to augment his or her skills and obtain valuable information about running a business.

Noncollege experiences are also important in making career decisions. Participation in hobbies, leisure activities, and volunteer projects can prove helpful in making career decisions (Super, 1993). Zunker (1994, p. 247) suggested that college students learn to relate their personal characteristics to occupational requirements: "College students should be assisted in systematically analyzing college and noncollege experiences and incorporating this information into career-related decisions."

Year Three

Characteristics: stabilization, security, and self-assurance.

Advising Stage 4—Support. During this stage the advisee has become familiar with the campus, is feeling self-assured, and is following a program of study. It is time for the advisee to give significant consideration to employment. The advisee should investigate jobs related to her or his academic major. Habley (1994) provided advisory interventions for the student at each year in

school. He suggested that if the student is focused, at the third year he or she may be introduced to more experiential opportunities, such as finding and shadowing a mentor, cooperative education, or internships.

Year Four

Characteristics: continuing established patterns, developing new skills, and preparing for disengagement.

Advising Stage 5—Confirmation. The advisee needs to work with the advisor on a pregraduation checklist. This should include reviewing courses taken and those yet required. All intent-to-graduate paperwork should be completed at this time.

In addition, the advisor can inform advisees of campus career center services and other appropriate resources that provide help with resume preparation and other pre-employment skills. The university may hold workshops or seminars for job-seeking seniors. Finally, the advisee should be encouraged to seek out the campus job placement office, secure information on interviewing skills, and arrange an interview schedule.

Summary

Advising a heterogeneous group of advisees, who may be undecided about an academic major or have no career goals, is a monumental task. Unfortunately, in some instances, academic advising has consisted only of course scheduling. To maximize the benefits of academic advising, a career counseling component must be included. A developmental approach to career advising is recommended as it provides a systematic method for helping advisees achieve educational, career, and life goals. By following a developmental, task-oriented approach to advising, the process becomes an orderly, efficient, and satisfying one for both the advisee and the advisor.

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