

Supporting Underrepresented Students in Their Career Trajectory through Life Design Self-Study



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Outline

1. Background
2. Theoretical components
3. Project components
4. Project evaluation
5. What's next?

Part 1

Background



Who are we? Why are we doing this?



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With a partner or in small groups...



Discuss:

1. Imagine your early career days. Share what you typically said in a job interviews when someone asked, “So tell me something about you.”
2. How did you organize what you said? (e.g., skills, chronological, etc.) What were the key topics or themes?
3. How long do you think your response was (in minutes)?
4. If you could go back in time, what feedback would you give to your former self about what you said?

Career narrative -

A career story, or career narrative, is a brief chronological account of your career. It summarises your previous roles, experiences, knowledge, passions and values.

[How to tell your career story \(Plus storytelling elements\)](#). Indeed Editorial Team, 2023.

Our project's guiding questions



- What kinds of interventions support students' career narratives?
- How do *our* students describe their career strengths and abilities?
- Could a end-of-program, life-design self-study positively impact *our* students' career narratives?

NEIU students by the numbers

- Spring 2023: 5320 students
- Demographics: Latinx (39%), White (27%), African American (11%), and Asian (8%).
- Average age: 28.6 (inclusive of grad and undergrad; average undergrad is 26.2)

While many of our students are adult learners, many are still in the developmental stages of their careers.



Interventions that support students from underrepresented groups, as they transition into the 1st or next stage of their careers are needed.



Part 2

Theoretical Constructs



Life Design & Career Construction Theory



Mark Savickas

Life design is a career intervention approach that views individuals as *authors* with autobiographical *stories* who may be helped to reflect on life themes with which to *construct their careers* (Savickas, 2012).

Career construction theory sees people as *self-organizing, self-regulating, and self-defining* beings who can derive *meaning, purpose, and life direction* (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is an approach to fostering achievement, life satisfaction, and well-being via enduring psychological traits.

Such traits may include talents, interests, and character strengths, and positive relationships, experiences, and institutions (Peterson, 2008; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).



Martin Seligman



Abraham Maslow

Optimizing the life and wellbeing of a healthy person is just as important as normalizing the life of a person who is sick (Maslow, 1961).



Christopher Peterson.

Career Adaptability

- ❖ Human development is driven by an adaptation to a social environment with the goal of person-environment integration.
- ❖ Adaptability is a quality associated with long-term career success.
- ❖ Career adaptability is comprised of 4Cs: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence-related behaviors.

(Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

The 4 C's Up close

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Attitudes & Beliefs</i>	<i>Competence</i>	<i>Coping Behaviours</i>
1. Concern	Planful	Planning	Aware Involved Preparatory
2. Control	Decisive	Decision making	Assertive Disciplined Willful
3. Curiosity	Inquisitive	Exploring	Experimenting Risk-taking Inquiring
4. Confidence	Efficacious	Problem solving	Persistent Striving Industrious

Adapted from Savickas (2005, p. 53)

Part 3

Project Components



But first, a little about our programs...

MPH

PH 400: Introduction to Public Health	PH 415: Biostatistics	PH 440: Health Disparities & Health Advocacy
PH 405: Social & Behavioral Health Theory & Practice	PH 420: Environmental Health	PH 410: Epidemiology
PH 430: Health Communications	PH 450: Health Care Program & Services Administration	PH 460: Design & Development of Health Programs
PH 470: Research Methods in Public Health	PH 480: Internship	PH 490 Capstone

BA - Human Resource Development

HRD 300: Principles & Practices of HRD	HRD 301: Adult Teaching/ Learning Process	HRD 310: Instructional Techniques & Technology
HRD 320: Dynamics of Working with Groups & Individuals	HRD 325: WIP - Communication in HRD	HRD 315: Computer Utilization in HRD
HRD 321: Designing in Instruction	HRD 328: Organizational Project Mgt	HRD 202: Career & Life Planning I
HRD 313: Political Savvy in the Workplace	HRD 329: Internship in HRD	

When working with various groups of people, *positive psychology* is promising in that practitioners consider how race, ethnicity, and culture impact one's conception of strength. - Chang, Downey, Hirsch, & Lin, 2016



Project Components

Part 1 - Public Health Career Trajectory Narrative - Draft

Part 2 - Assess, Reflect, & Set Short-Term Goals

Part 3 - Re-Assess, Reflect, & Set Long-Term Goals

Part 4 - Revise Your Narrative & Reflect

Part 1: Public Health Career Trajectory Narrative - Draft

Directions:

We are the authors of our careers! When facing a career transition (e.g., graduation!), there's value in examining our life-career story.

As if introducing yourself in an interview, write a ~750 word narrative describing your career trajectory.

Explain what makes you an ideal candidate. Reveal key experiences, transitions, interests, and values.



Part 2 - Assess, Reflect, & Set Short-Term Goals

Directions:

Assess your adaptability, set short-term adaptability goals, and maintain weekly progress notes toward those goals.

**Let's look at these
components on the
next slides!**



Assess

Why career adaptability?
Adaptability is a quality associated with long-term career success.

Per career construction theory, adaptability is a composite of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence-related behaviors (Savickas, 2012),.

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale - Short Form (CAAS-SF)

Rate how strongly you have developed each of the following abilities.

5 = Strongest; 4 = Very Strong; 3 = Strong; 2 = Somewhat strong; 1 = Not strong

Concern

1. Thinking about what my future will be like.
2. Preparing for the future.
3. Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make.

Control

1. Making decisions by myself.
2. Taking responsibility for my actions.
3. Counting on myself.

Curiosity

1. Looking for opportunities to grow as a person.
2. Investigating options before making a choice.
3. Observing different ways of doing things.

Confidence

1. Taking care to do things well.
2. Learning new skills.
3. Working up to my ability.

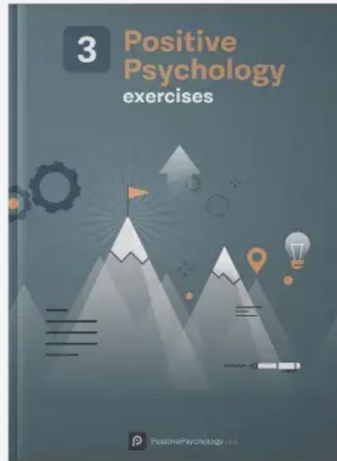
Reflect, Set Short-Term Goals, Track Progress.

Activities were inspired by [PositivePsychology's](#) handbook for strategic goal achievement.

Directions:

The best way to advance your adaptability and attain success is to set and work towards carefully crafted goals.

Review your career adaptability results. Select 2 of the 4 adaptability areas (concern, control, curiosity, confidence) you'd like to develop further. For each, set short-term SMART goal(s). Track your progress. Maintain a log.



Week	Goal 1	Goal 2
1		
2		
3		
4		

Part 3 - Re-Assess, Reflect, & Set Long-Term Goals



Re-evaluate your adaptability, reflect on progress log, and set long-term goals.

Reflect

1. Were your results different from the first time? If yes, what was different?
2. What were the barriers and facilitators to achieving your goals?
3. What have you learned from this exercise?

Set Long-Term Goals

Goals - These are what I want to change for good:

Actions - These actions, if performed regularly, will help me realize this goal:

Plans - This is how I am going to create these new habits and realize my goals:

Part 4 - Revise Your Narrative & Reflect

Revise Your Narrative

Same as in Part 1. Highlights key experiences, transitions, interests, values, and skills. Clear introduction and conclusion. 750 words max.

Reflect on Your Revisions

- In what ways is your final narrative different from your first draft? Describe.
- What contributed to these changes?



With a partner or in small groups...



Share similar or different activities you, your program, or your institution has done with students or clients to support their career trajectory.

Part 4

Project Evaluation



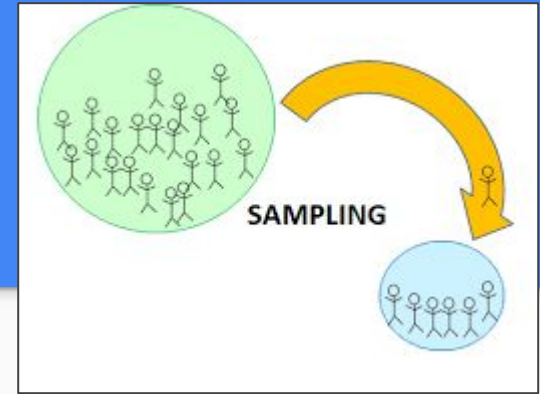
Research questions, sources, & analysis

Question	Source
RQ1: How do our students initially describe why they are an ideal job candidate?	Pre-narrative; thematic analysis
RQ2: What is the impact of the project on students' career narratives? (Students' point of view)	Post-narrative reflections; thematic analysis

Methodology

1. IRB approval
2. Purposive sampling
3. Thematic coding (independently)
4. Discuss codes
5. Thematic re-coding (independently)
6. Summarize themes

Participants and Sampling



Participant criteria

- Granted consent
- Accurately completed all 4 parts

Sampling

- Random digit generation to select from those that met the criteria

MPH

- Time period: 2 semesters
- 10 Sampled

BA in HRD

- Time period: 5 semesters
- 10 Sampled

RQ1: How do our students initially describe why they are an ideal job candidate?

Final Thematic Codes

1. General awareness and exposure to the field
2. Short- OR long-term goals; weak connection between short and long
3. Lifelong learning is necessary for professional growth

RQ2: What is the impact of the project on students' career narratives? (Students' point of view)

Final Thematic Codes

1. Confidence in one's self
2. Openness to different perspectives
3. Goal setting is imperative to success
4. Improved vision for the future

What it looks like: Confidence in one's self

- ❖ “I’m now comfortable asking questions.” (MPH)
- ❖ “I can see where my skill sets add value to an organization.” (HRD)
- ❖ Sees personal strifes and experiences as a source of strength (MPH)
- ❖ “I’m more confident about looking for a new job.” (MPH)
- ❖ “I now know how to present my skills and knowledge to a recruiter.” (HRD)
- ❖ “The world is my oyster!”(MPH)
- ❖ “My career is not my entire identity; my values, personality, and character represent me.” (MPH)

What it looks like: Openness to different perspectives

- ❖ “It’s ok for people to have different opinions.” (MPH)
- ❖ “There is so much there is to learn!” (MPH)
- ❖ “Different perspectives allow me to grow in my professional development” (HRD)
- ❖ “My network has expanded and... has exposed [me] to new ways of thinking.” [Indicating the impact the internship *and* project impacted her] (MPH)

What it looks like: Goal-setting is imperative to success

- ❖ “I was able to think more about the choices I was making along with the trainings I was completing to get to where I am at.” (MPH)
- ❖ “Setting goals has helped me make better time management decisions.” (HRD)
- ❖ When setting my short term goals, [I needed] some idea of what my long term goal would look like.” (MPH)
- ❖ “Being promoted to supervisor during this time helped me out with making short-term and long-term goals and set up a road made for me!” (MPH)

What it looks like: Improved vision for the future

- ❖ “Writing this second narrative is different than the first because I have a clear view of where I see myself as I move forward” (MPH)
- ❖ “It’s important to celebrate small milestones and continue forward.” (HRD)
- ❖ “I understand the differences in accountability of my past, my present, and visual image of my future career trajectory.” (MPH)
- ❖ “I can now visualize better and explore public health careers that align with my personal and professional values.” (MPH)
- ❖ “I can now see a clear path for my career.” (HRD)

Testimonials: How the project impacted students

- ❖ "... allowed me to see that I have what it takes to rise out of the box that I have been put in, and I am excited to see what is next for my career in public health." (MPH)
- ❖ "My daughter and I started setting goals together!" (MPH)
- ❖ "I am far more self aware now about myself and job than I ever was before." (HRD)
- ❖ "I highlighted my growth in the Confidence and Curiosity categories... and my ability to make decisions by myself (i.e., Control). Also, I added language related to Adaptability." (MPH)
- ❖ "...provided reassurance of career path and aligned skills and knowledge needed to be successful in the field." (MPH)
- ❖ "As I think of my next career move when I obtain the Master of Public Health, I will also think of jobs that not only support my career values and the importance of preserving family values." (MPH)
- ❖ "I have identified a few skills that I'll need to acquire soon in order for me to reach my career goals." (HRD)
- ❖ "Improved time management!" (MPH)
- ❖ "I am much more connected to my career and can now strategize how to get the job I want." (HRD)

With a partner or in small groups...



Discuss ways to improve upon this project.

Discuss 1-2 ideas you'd like to investigate further based on our presentation.

Share back with the larger group.

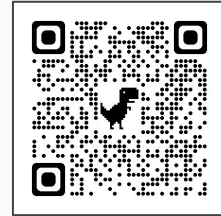
Part 5

What's Next?



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Thank you!