Career Self-Assessment and Exploration Paper

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COUC 522: Career Development and Counseling

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September 24, 2023

Abstract

This career self-assessment and exploration paper examines my personality type, my interests and values along with my spiritual discernment, for the purposes of guiding me through a career decision-making process. Results from the career instruments administered are that my three Holland vocational personality types are investigative, social, and artistic. The result of my value sort activity is that I value meaningful work the most. My most important spiritual discernments are to use common sense, consider the circumstances, and consider personal strengths, talents, gifts, and abilities when making important decisions. Providing career counseling to clients requires that the counselor be free from bias and judgement and be well-versed in a variety of career assessments and counseling techniques.

PART I: CAREER SELF-ASSESSMENT

Career Instrument Results

*O*NET Instrument Profiler*

According to O*NET (2023) my results were: Realistic – 2, Investigative – 30, Artistic – 17, Social – 27, Enterprising 5, Conventional – 10.

My top three vocational personality types are investigative, social, and artistic. Given that investigative was my top personality type, I was curious to see if I matched the traits so strongly. (Holland, 1973, as cited in Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey, 2021) believes an investigative person's personality can be precise, critical, independent, pessimistic, and rational. These specific traits spoke to me the most as being my more dominant traits. I have always thought of myself to have more of an optimistic realist worldview rather than a pessimistic one, but it must be the drive to solve problems and learn the facts that make an investigative personality seem more pessimistic.

Investigative types also have an aversion to social activities which is interesting since social is my second highest vocational personality type. (Holland, 1973, as cited in Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey, 2021) describes social types as being social, responsible, helpful, friendly, patient, and cooperative. Social types like jobs such as teachers, and counselors for which I am both! This is not at all surprising to me except for the fact that these types have an aversion to explicit and orderly activities (my dominant personality – investigative).

My third vocational personality type is artistic which I find surprising. I do not think of myself as artistic at all, and according to (Holland, 1973, as cited in Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey, 2021) artistic personality types prefer ambiguous free activities to create art forms. This is not

me. I love structure and order to my activities. I do find some of the traits to make sense, however. I am very introspective. I look inside to my own thoughts and feelings obsessively so. I am also independent. I am definitely not disorderly or idealistic though.

The two top occupations that resulted from my primary interest search were a career/technical middle school teacher and elementary school teacher. I found this to be so interesting! I have been an elementary school teacher for over 10 years and while I am in this school counseling program, I have been substitute teaching at the various age levels and have loved teaching family and consumer science at the middle school level!

Value Sort Activity

I found this activity challenging because I really do value each of the ten that I chose very much. But the top three values that I was able to eliminate to were wealth, close relationships, and meaningful work.

My third choice was wealth. It is important to me to feel abundant in my relationships, not the quantity but the quality. I have experienced financial stress in my life where it affected my quality of life so much so that it physically and mentally disabled me. So financial wealth (security) to me is very important.

My second choice was having close relationships. I have experienced times in my life where my relationships were not of good quality, or I was without at significant other and family. These were lonely times. I have also experienced workplace toxicity where the relationships were so unkind it affected my well-being. As I get older, I know how important having close relationships is to my well-being and so this is something I value and cherish very much.

My first choice ended up being meaningful work. I guess I value this the most! It's hard to say that because like I said, I value all ten of my choices. But there is nothing more rewarding than being involved in meaningful work - raising my children and teaching students. The joy I get from helping my children develop and grow into good citizens is unparalleled. The joy I also get from making a difference in the lives of the children I teach is significant. I always tell my husband that I will never make a lot of money teaching but the rewards I feel are worth a million bucks. This meaningful work does not come without its stressful days however, but that is all part of the growth and personal/professional development that drives me the most.

The two occupations that appeared on my search were Epidemiologist which is investigative in nature, my number one personality type and Social Work Teacher which is social in nature, my number two personality type.

Spiritual Discernment Decision-Making Factors Survey

The decision-making factors described by Horton (2009) that are very important to me when making decisions are using my common sense, considering the circumstances, and considering personal strengths, talents, gifts and abilities.

The approach I am most likely to use is using common sense. My adult self can say this with confidence as I have the knowledge and wisdom to rely on myself now. But, as Horton (2009) mentions, high school students often have an inflated view of themselves and their decisions and don't yet have the knowledge or wisdom they need to use common sense for decision-making. But for the purpose of this paper, I would use common sense at this point in my life. I strongly believe we need to leave room for discretion. Every circumstance is different, every person is different with different abilities and strengths. I believe it is responsible and

ethical to treat every situation and every person differently and meet them where they are - culturally, spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually.

Personal Reactions

My personal reactions to the O*NET Interest Profiler are, as I have mentioned, surprising. I am not mathematical, or scientific in any way so for my top personality to be investigative is surprising. I enjoyed the value sort activity. I do value all ten of my choices, but it was interesting to me to pinpoint what I value most in life and right now it is meaningful work which I feel proud of. The spiritual discernment survey was eye-opening for me. I do not consider myself religious and this became apparent in my results. I feel badly for not being more reliant on God's will to help me make decisions but in my opinion, it would be irresponsible to rely on a higher power that has no control over my everyday decisions to make them for me. I think this is where I am very practical, independent, and pessimistic in nature. I need things to be proven to me which is what investigative type personalities are. But my Holland (2009) survey results show that the thing I value most is using common sense and using my discretion to make decisions, which contrasts with investigative where you value facts and precision!

My upbringing has influenced my spiritual discernment. I am confirmed in the Catholic Church, but my parents had a very bad experience with the institution we attended so we stopped going as children and as a family became quite pessimistic of the influences that the community had on us. As an adult I have joined the Methodist community and feel very much differently about the institution than my parents felt when we were growing up. I believe in the Methodist teachings, and am able as an adult, to benefit from the spiritual growth gained from going to church.

Evaluation of Instruments

I completed all three instruments twice, once in Module 2 and then once again now just before writing this paper to see if the results were reliable or if there were external or internal factors that may have influenced my results because of discrepancies. But, to my surprise the results I reached for each of the three instruments were so closely accurate to each other that I did not feel I needed to do the assessments again. I think doing all three gives me a greater picture of who I am and what I value, than if I had just done the O*NET, value sort, or spiritual discernment alone. I think I get a more valid picture of who I am with all three instruments.

Conceptualization

According to Holland's Hexagonal Model (Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey, 2021, p. 64) the degree of congruency between my top personality type and my work environment is medium consistent. Investigative personality is directly across from my current job environment which is a teacher (social) on the Hexagonal Model. I love teaching (social), but I am a very structured organized teacher (investigative) who thrives on running structured, systemic activities. Even though it is not balanced, I do love letting go and allowing the students and myself the freedom to explore and express ourselves in unique ways (artistic). In this way, real authentic learning takes place. My spiritual discernment approach of using common sense, considering the circumstances, and considering personal strengths and weaknesses is in congruence with my current job environment. I think to be a good teacher we need to treat every student uniquely and allow for flexibility because each student has different needs.

I can say with confidence that I am satisfied with my current job environment and trajectory of getting my masters in school counseling. I knew I felt job fulfillment, but these assessments have solidified my beliefs and validated my professional decisions.

Recommendations I have as a Career Counselor to myself as a client? Continue to believe in yourself and the integrity and wisdom you have gained from all your life experiences. It has clearly led you to a career path that you are in congruence with and will no doubt find personal and professional satisfaction with. Based on the nature of school counseling today, make it a priority to prioritize self-care.

PART II: OCCUPATIONAL EXPLORATION

Unless otherwise cited, the career information presented in this paper was obtained from O*NET On-Line (National Center for O*NET Development, 2023).

Career Field and Occupation of Choice Introduction

The occupation I have chosen to explore based on my top three Holland types is a Rehabilitation Counselor. The O*NET SOC code is 21-1015.00

The Nature of the Work

As a Rehabilitation Counselor you would counsel individuals to maximize the independence and employability by helping them cope with personal, social, and vocational difficulties that result from birth defects, illness, disease, accidents, aging, or the daily stress of life.

Duties would include maintaining client records, conferring with clients to discuss treatment plans or progress, developing treatment plans for clients, assisting clients in handling details of daily life, and evaluating potential problems in home or work environments of clients.

On a typical day, a Rehab Counselor would be communicating with supervisors and peers. They would be establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, solving problems,

making decisions and then documenting/recording information. They would be communicating with people outside the organization.

Working Conditions

According to (Careeronestop, 2023) the work environment could be a variety of settings such as community rehabilitation centers, senior citizen centers, and youth guidance organizations. One would work with all socio-economic statuses but could find themselves mostly working with lower socio-economic groups, youth, seniors and anywhere in-between. Stress levels of their clients would probably be medium to higher based on their need for career and rehab counseling.

Preparations and Qualifications

Rehabilitation Counselors are considered a zone 4 preparation vocation, which means you need high educational qualification. You need a bachelor's degree and a master's degree is usually needed. You will need to have business, health, course design, and psychology knowledge and training. You will need to have a variety of skills, social and technical. Being a good listener and talking to others without interrupting, is important. You need to look for ways to help people and be able to understand people's reactions. Being skilled in software such as PowerPoint and Outlook is advantageous. People in this line of work like activities that include helping people, teaching, and talking. You will do well if you have concern for others, integrity, and initiative. If you are dependable, persistent and can cooperate with various stakeholders then you will do well.

Opportunities and Future Outlook

The future is bright for a Rehabilitation Counselor. Nationwide new opportunities are very likely in the future. Virginia specifically though is showing average opportunities. According to the Bureau of Statistics (2023) Employment of rehabilitation counselors was projected to grow 2 percent from 2022 to 2032, about as fast as the average for all occupations. About 6,700 openings for rehabilitation counselors are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

The Bureau of Statistics (2023) states that the demand for rehabilitation counselors is expected to grow because of the increase in the elderly population and groups such as veterans and people with disabilities. There will also be a need to work with other groups, such as people who have learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or substance abuse problems.

Economic and Non-Economic Benefits

The median wages in 2022 were $19.23 hourly, $39,990 annually. Local wages in the Northern Virginia region on average earn $46, 250. According to the Bureau of Statistics (2023) if you work for the state government excluding education and hospitals, you will earn $54,790 and on the other end, if you work in nursing and residential care facilities you are only making $35,730. Depending on where you work, some Rehabilitation Counselors will even work some nights and weekends.

I could not find data on personal satisfaction and psychological rewards, but I would like to express my opinion now that I have completed research on this occupation. Given the nature of this work I think there could be high job fulfillment. The personal satisfaction one receives

from helping people is very rewarding. I like the blend of data collecting, record keeping, and solving problems for clients (investigative) with meeting with community stakeholders and clients (social) which would satisfy my personality very much.

Disadvantages and/or Special Situations

There could be some disadvantages or special considerations to think about. Night and weekend work is not ideal when you have small children like I do. I also believe it is essential that master's programs include more robust mental health programs as there is a strong need for mental health counseling with veterans and the aging population. Their regular functions start to deteriorate, and diseases become more prevalent. This is difficult to manage physically, emotionally, and financially, which can cause psychological stress. As a result, more focused schooling on mental health should be a special consideration when picking your educational institution.

Reflection

What appeals to me most about being a Rehabilitation Counselor is that there are different work environments to choose from. I like that you can work for government agencies and have the opportunity to make more money, but I also love that you could work in senior care facilities or with veterans. It is appealing to me that there is a variety of settings and clients to choose from. Unlike a school counselor where you are only ever working in schools with students.

I am surprised at how little the pay is considering clinical and school counseling jobs are paid much better. I would not consider this occupation because of the low pay as I have a family to support. The actual work would be purposeful and meaningful to me, which is what I value most. Rehab Counselors are investigative and social, two of my highest personality types, but the

fulfillment would only go so far. If I am not valued for the effort and time I put into helping my clients increase their quality of life, I would have to search elsewhere.

I think there are numerous advantages to using career information and resources. I gained a deeper understanding of my strengths, weaknesses, values, and interests which are crucial in making informed career choices. I gained more clarity about my goals and what I valued. I liked how my skills and interests were then matched with the best career options for me to explore. With such a deep understanding of myself overall, I was able to alleviate some of my anxiety about my career choices and actually help boost my confidence. I am on a career path journey that is completely in alignment with my personality and values.

PART III: Practical Application

As a career counselor to my client, I would need to be very aware and regularly self-reflect on my own personal beliefs and how they may impact my interactions with her. I think my awareness and regular self-reflection will be key to remaining objective. I will need to keep an open-mind and avoid judgements based on my own personal opinions.

In order to ensure I do not impose my own personal position or spiritual discernment on my client I believe it would be helpful is to revisit the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) ethical guidelines. The specific ethical code that addresses this principal is under Section A: Responsibility to Students, Standard A. 1.h, which states, "Respect students' and families' values, beliefs and cultural background, as well as students' sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, and exercise great care to avoid imposing personal biases, beliefs or values rooted in one's religion, culture or ethnicity". (ASCA, Section A. 1.h. 2022). I think in all honesty I would have a simplified version of this somewhere up visually for me to see all the

time in my office while I am counseling my students. It is imperative that I understand how important this practice is to follow.

I would use three counseling strategies to help my client. I would use the person-centered technique to build a trusting relationship with her. I would give her additional assessments, and I would use cognitive behavioral therapy with her to address her anxiety, fears, sleep problems and headaches.

First and foremost, I would offer empathetic listening and reflection, so she feels she is in a non-judgmental space to express and explore her thoughts freely. I would want to empower her and remind her that she has the capacity to make informed decisions for herself.

I would give her additional assessments along with the O*NET interest profiler, I would give her the Horton (2009) spiritual discernment assessment and the Value Card Sort elimination activity. This way she will have a deeper understanding of who she is and what she values most without the influence of her parents.

Another strategy I would use is cognitive-behavioral therapy to address her anxiety and fears which is causing her sleep problems and headaches. I would help her recognize and reframe any negative beliefs she has about herself. I could help her make a pros and cons list which could help bring clarity to her thought processes. I could teach relaxation techniques and coping strategies to help her manage the anxiety she is experiencing with her decision-making. I would encourage her to take a calculated risk and discuss her assessment findings with her parents.

Being flexible, empathetic, and collaborating with my client in a non-biased, non-judgmental environment where she feels safe and heard would be key to providing effective career counseling support to my client.

Conclusion

Although this was a very cumbersome assignment, I gained invaluable knowledge and clarity about myself personally and professionally and how this could transfer to effectively offer career guidance to students in the future. I think each instrument is effective and useful, but all three instruments completed together are very impactful and could bring great clarity to my client's career decision-making.

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Benchmark Career Development Program Proposal Assignment –

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INTRODUCTION

THE FOLLOWING PRESENTATION IS A PROPOSAL FOR A COMPREHENSIVE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

WHERE: BRIAR WOODS PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL TOTAL POPULATION 1,500 STUDENTS

TARGET POPULATION: AT-RISK 10TH GRADE (SOPHOMORE) BOYS. UNDERPERFORMING ACADEMICALLY, HAVE BEHAVIORAL ISSUES AND LACK CAREER READINESS AWARENESS - 10 PARTICIPANTS

AT-RISK FOR VARIOUS REASONS: LOW SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, IMMIGRANT FAMILIES, YOUTH OF COLOR – FACE BARRIERS

RATIONALE FOR THIS PROGRAM

- **A thorough needs assessment was conducted:** teacher input, individual and group counseling sessions, analyzed test scores, attendance rating, family history
- **Data was gathered:** teacher input results, individual and group counseling observations, test results, attendance records, family history data
- **Risk Factors were Identified:** low grades, behavioral issues, absenteeism, lack of engagement, low test scores

Implications

Research by Lindstrom et al. (2022) shows that these boys are at-risk for dropping out and losing interest in college and career readiness because they feel their options are limited.

Research by Oyserman & Fryberg (2006) state that because of systemic barriers these at-risk boys have limited vision for the future unlike their peers who do not sustain the same barriers.

PROGRAM STANDARDS

ASCA Mindsets and Behavior standards important for this program:

M 4 - Self-confidence in ability to succeed
B-SMS 6 - Ability to identify and overcome barriers
B-LS 3 - Time-management, organizational and study skills

NCDG Standards important for this program:

PS1.K2 - Identify your abilities, strengths, skills, and talents.
PS1.R6 - Evaluate the affect of your behaviors and experiences on building and maintaining a positive self-concept.
CM4.K3/CM4.A3 - Understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, training, and the world of work
ED1.A3 Demonstrate acquisition of study skills and learning habits that promote educational achievement and performance

3 CLEAR LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of 11th grade student participants will:

- Foster confidence, resilience, and a growth mindset
- Have increased awareness of career options and pathways based on their strengths and abilities
- Acquire strong study and learning habits

CAREER DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

1. **Individual Person-Centered and Solutions-Focused Counseling :** discuss barriers, set goals, build confidence, shift mindset - https://www.mindsetworks.com/

2. **Group Counseling and Workshops:** psychoeducational groups that offer study skills, time management, goal-setting and a growth mindset (Kapasi & Pei, 2022)

3. **Experiential Learning:** offer career exploration through guest speakers, field trips and workshops. (Flum & Blustein, 2000); (Parsons, 1909 as cited in Niles & Harris – Bowlsbey, 2022)

4. **Mentoring Programs:** Pair at-risk students with a senior student who is culturally similar who can provide guidance and support in academic, social and emotional areas (DuBois & Karcher, 2014)

DELIVERY

- Meet with each student participant once a month. (10 participants) Conduct various career and interest inventory assessments (O*NET, Value Card Sort).
- Create and meet with group to teach positive and growth mindset interventions (Kapasi and Pei, 2022). Psychoeducational group counseling, small focus group counseling
- Train and support mentors – study and learning habits, social and emotional support
- Experiential learning experiences once a month (guest speakers, field trips, career fairs, job shadowing experiences)

PROGRAM MARKETING

- Inform the selected students by setting up an information session for all participants.
- Inform parents and the community. Hold informational sessions on proposed career development program
- Hold Parent Workshops – Q &A's, coffee hours
- Fundraising for Brainology program – donation based. (GoFundMe) School Funded

RESOURCES NEEDED AND POTENTIAL COSTS OF THE PROGRAM

Mindsetworks and Brainology program – $499. per class set of 20 https://www.mindsetworks.com/Science/Default

Career Assessment instruments – Hollands Code O*NET interest inventory,Value Card Sort –National Center for O*NET Development (2023) FREE

Time: approx. 17hrs a month (one-on-one, and group counseling set days and times, others will vary)

- 5hrs/mth dedicated to one-on-one participant counseling (10 participants 30 min sessions)
- 4hrs/mth dedicated to group counseling/psychoeducational groups
- 2.5hrs/mth mentor check-ins. (15min sessions) Initial 1hr after-school session to train mentors
- 4hrs/mth - planning and monitoring program

- Mentors needed on a volunteer basis
- Experiential learning experiences – involvement of stakeholders on a volunteer basis

EVALUATION OF PROGRAM

Student Progress Tracking: Continuously monitor students' academic performance, attendance, and behavior. Document test scores before and after Brainology Program is implemented

Feedback and Surveys: Collect feedback from students, parents, teachers, and mentors throughout program to evaluate effectiveness of program and outcomes. Pre and Post program growth mindset survey

Data Gathering: Maintain detailed records of counseling sessions, career assessments, and program activities

Program and Mentor Tracking: Regularly assess and update the program on a needs basis.

Formative Evaluation: Continuously track progress and outcomes and make adjustments to program as needed during the program and for future program planning

Future Considerations: train classroom teachers in Brainology praise and feedback

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BENCHMARK CAREER SELF-ASSESSMENT AND EXPLORATION PAPER

- https://d.docs.live.net/826a2d4cf5be06f6/Documents/LIBERTY%20MED%20Counseling/Langberg_N_Career_Self_Assessment_Paper.docx