

**SUPPORTING UNDECIDED STUDENTS IN A GUIDED PATHWAYS MODEL:
A FACULTY GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CLASSROOM**

by

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and

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ABSTRACT

Undecided students represent a unique challenge to community colleges in terms of student success. This dissertation analyzes research related to undecided students, the implementation of the Guided Pathways model, and faculty support in academic advising roles. The faculty guide was created to address gaps in the Guided Pathways model where faculty need training to provide support to students who are undecided. Upon use of the guide, faculty will be able to demonstrate the ability to understand the Guided Pathways movement and how it relates to individual institutions and academic programs; understand student development theories, the career decision-making process, and the soft skills needed to partner in advising undecided students; and integrate new knowledge into their academic practice. The faculty guide is intended for immediate use for an institution that is considering the adoption a Guided Pathways model.

Key Words: Guided Pathways, academic advising, faculty advising

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DEDICATION

To my mom, who taught me the value of education from a young age and to never settle for “good enough.” It was my mom’s encouragement that carried me through, even when she did not have the energy for herself.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“When they asked me what I wanted to be I said I didn’t know” (Plath, 1971).

Introduction

Undecided students are an important population for community colleges that are implementing a Guided Pathways model as now a student's college major, or program of study, will be front and center upon enrollment. Atkinson (2015) argues that orientation and the initial onboarding phase is just the beginning of the career decision-making process for many students stating, “rather than a quick ‘one and done’ experience, students may benefit from opportunities to establish trust and examine their reasons for enrolling.” McJamerson (1992) states that beyond the initial enrollment, choosing a major is perhaps the decision with the most economic impact that a college student will make; however, not all staff and faculty are prepared to support students through the major-decision process.

Colleges depend on successful marketing campaigns to attract students to specific programs, increase enrollment, and retain students. Research by Rațiu and Avram (2013) suggests that in order to optimize academic marketing, higher education needs well-prepared staff, including academic faculty and staff who can perform their jobs well. This research suggests that marketing strategies should also be developed in tandem with employees at the institution in order to best serve and advocate for students’ needs.

History of Community Colleges and Undecided Students

The concept of community colleges originated with William Rainey Harper, founding president of the University of Chicago, when he developed a plan to separate the first two years of college (Kane & Rouse, 1999) from the upper-level, remaining two years. The plan led to the creation of junior colleges, designed to teach students preparatory material with the goal of increasing access to higher education without compromising or burdening existing four-year colleges (Kane and Rouse, 1999). Cohen and Brawer (1982) defined these new institutions as “any institution accredited to award the associate’s in arts or science as its highest degree” (p. 5-6). This definition included both comprehensive two-year colleges and technical institutions, but excluded publicly funded vocational schools, adult education centers, and many proprietary schools (Kane and Rouse, 1999). Although a number of factors and influences led to the creation of the community college model, a primary factor was the need to educate and prepare members of society for the workforce. To support the movement, in 1920 the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) was founded, and it is now the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, Drury, 2003). In the early days of the AAJC, leaders Leonard Koos and Walter Eells began to think strategically about how to develop community colleges as impactful institutions. They lead with strategies that included the promotion of intelligence testing and guidance counseling as a means of channeling students into vocational training programs. Some of the first community colleges provided support to students who were initially undecided upon entry (Drury, 2003).

Today, community colleges are expected to be both principal providers of academic instruction and major providers of vocational preparation and workforce development through

stand-alone adult training programs (Kasper, 2002). In 2012, 45% of all undergraduates in the United States were enrolled at a community college (AACC, 2016). No longer focused solely on preparing students to transfer for a baccalaureate degree, community colleges now play an important role in preparing students to become working members of society and often within the community in which they reside. For example, many corporations, particularly in rural America, rely heavily on a locally trained workforce; alliances between local companies and community colleges not only serve local businesses but also ease the financial burdens that community colleges may bear (Kasper, 2002).

Community colleges are responsible for leading the charge in college completion rates; in April 2010 the AACC joined five other national organizations to sign a commitment agreement, Democracy's Colleges: Call to Action, with a completion goal of producing 50% more students with high-quality degrees and certificates by 2020 (McPhail, 2011). Coupled with the challenge of producing more student completers, community colleges must also meet the needs of their communities. Data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) reported that in 2011-12, 44% of students in the public two-year sector were 25 years or older (Ma & Baum, 2016). Recent research from the Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success estimated that from 2012 to 2022, nontraditional student enrollment is projected to grow more than twice as fast as the rate for traditional age students (CLASP, 2015). Community colleges are challenged to educate a wide range of students and also guide them, whether towards a major, career path, or transfer program. Undecided community college students have been classified as "experimenters" who are unsure of their educational and occupational goals (Manski, 1989). A 2018 study by Gallup and the Strada Education network found that "while

more than 80% of students cite the prospect of a job as a critical factor in their decision to enroll in college, few feel confident about their ability to participate in the job market and the workplace once enrolled” (Fadulu, 2018). In addition to supporting undecided students in general, community colleges face the task of serving the variety of undecided students: first time in college and traditional-aged, returning adults seeking a career change, and first-generation college students who need additional support in understanding the educational system prior to choosing a major or pathway.

Two studies by Grubb (1996, 2001) aimed to understand student motivation in selecting a career path. Traditionally, college students have chosen their career or major based on personal interests; some have their majors chosen for them by their parents; and others may follow the same career path their parents took (Grubb, 2001). Two students who reflected on their experiences are detailed below (Grubb, 1996):

When I first came here I had no idea what I wanted to study. I knew I wanted to go to college because I know the only way to have a good life is to get a degree. I didn't really have much idea of what I wanted to do. I knew I needed to go to school, though. (p. 68)

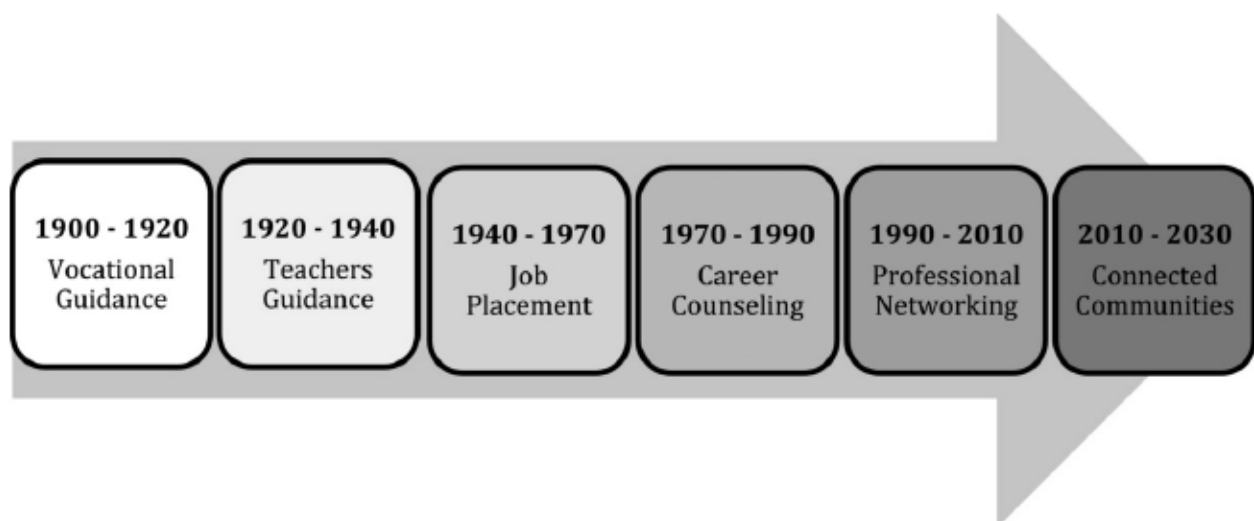
Well, it'll be nine years this August that I've been licensed [as a manicurist], which is the longest I've ever done anything, and I really do enjoy it. But I feel like there's...you can only go so far, and I would just like to have an opportunity someday to do something else. I just don't happen to know what it is right now. (p. 68-70)

Another student shared, “It is really the only way to get into the world. You can just be yourself and go to college, and then get out of college and do your own thing” (Grubb, 1996, p. 68). As students turn to community colleges, expecting the schools to support them in their uncertain educational and career paths, how prepared are colleges to help? One community college dean explained (Reed, 2016):

I don't think it's a coincidence that attrition rates at most community colleges are highest in the "undeclared" or "liberal arts transfer" majors. Those are where students who don't know what else to do are steered. And that makes sense; to the extent that those majors cover the gen ed classes likely to be found anywhere, they can allow undecided students to make headway even while still making up their minds about what they want. When it works, it's great. But it's almost perfectly designed not to. Students who don't know what they want are unlikely to discover it while checking off boxes. They're likelier to figure it out when they're immersed in the meat of a major. Until then, they're mostly guessing. Judging by attrition rates, many of them aren't guessing very well. (p. 1)

History of Career Services in Higher Education

Career services in higher education has evolved since its inception and adapted to include models which follow economic conditions, trends, demands of the labor market, and the needs of the university and society. Since the early 1900s, there has been an evolution in career services and support in higher education, often responding to the social, economic, or cultural needs of the time. Figure 1 illustrates the continuum of career services in higher education and the predictions for the future.



(Source: Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014)

Figure 1: Evolution of Career Services in Higher Education

In the early 1900s, Frank Parson's first career center, the Vocations Bureau, opened in the Civic Service House in Boston, MA. The goal of the Vocations Bureau was to provide vocational guidance to new immigrants (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2014). In the 1920s and 1930s, because of industrialization and the post-World War I baby boom, the need for educational and vocational guidance emerged. In the 1970s and 1980s, college campus began creating career services centers to support veteran's using GI Bill benefits and provided career counseling and planning (Dey & Cruzveraga, 2014). The dot-com era in the early 2000s re-engaged these centers in a new way and "facilitated the relationship between students and employers through various networking career events and activities" (Dey & Real, 2010, p. 31). Technology emerged to create new career service systems designed to integrate with social media and connect students with positions, employers, or industries, often based on the results of a specific career assessment (Contomanolis, Cruzvergara, Dey, & Steinfeld, 2015). Additionally, technology tools now support the collection and analysis of data, allowing for career services centers to make data-informed decisions about their future.

Today, Dey and Cruzveraga (2014) suggest "connected communities" as opportunities for career services to partner with other functional areas across campus to build a community dedicated to supporting students' career development. The connected communities offer opportunities for career services centers to collaborate with partners, on multiple levels, to jointly accomplish the shared goals of the institution (Contomanolis et al., 2015).

Research from the Community College Research Center (CCRC) encourages institutions not only to provide career services information to students, but to integrate career decision-making into more aspects of their college life, acknowledging the importance of faculty

mentoring. Karp (2013) suggests that there is significant evidence that simply providing information to students is not sufficient to improve their planning behavior. Career counselors and academic advisors, particularly those engaged in case management of undecided students, need faculty engagement and partnership to assist students in selecting their program of student and reaching their goals.

Guided Pathways at the Community College

Redesigning America's Community Colleges, by Bailey, Smith Jaggars, and Jenkins (2015), introduced community colleges to the idea of Guided Pathways, an umbrella term used to describe highly structured student experiences that guide students toward completion. The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) further defines it as:

a framework by which an institution applies strategic coherence to its policies, program pathways, technology, advising, and business processes. This is a critical distinction as we know that the demands our institutions face and the challenges of our students are inextricably linked, as are the successes of our institutions and the successes of our students. (VCCS Resource Center, 2018).

See Figure 2 for an illustration of this model.



Figure 2: Guided Pathways Model, adapted from the Virginia Community College System’s Resource Center.

The development of the Guided Pathways concept for community colleges stemmed from CCRC research focused on how to better support community college students upon entry, ultimately leading to a goal of completion. Bailey et al. (2015) proposed a Guided Pathways model that involved redesigning each part of the student experience, from the time when students choose programs and begin remedial or college-level work to the time of graduation, further education, or careers. Bailey (2017) believed that central to this approach are efforts to clarify pathways to program completion, career advancement, and further education. Equally essential are efforts to help students explore college and career options and choose a program

of study early on, help them make steady progress on their program plans, and ensure that they are building essential skills across their programs. Included in the Guided Pathways model are also four main practice areas:

1. Mapping pathways to student end goals. In the Guided Pathways model, colleges create clear maps for every program they offer. These maps are easily accessible on college websites, so students will understand what courses are necessary to complete a program or qualify for transfer, how long completion will take, and what opportunities for employment or further education they will have at the end of a program.
2. Helping students choose and enter a program pathway. Currently, many students choose programs and courses largely on their own. In the Guided Pathways model, colleges help new students explore programs, consider possible careers, and develop complete academic plans. Undecided students narrow their options by choosing from clusters of majors—such as business, social sciences, or health—that align with their interests. Developmental education reforms, such as co-requisite courses, enable students to enroll more quickly in college-level courses, including courses in their field that will keep them engaged in college.
3. Retention and persistence. Both students and advisors can see students' plans mapped out through graduation and keep track of students' progress. If students get off track or have trouble in a course, alert systems bring these issues to advisors' attention, so they can steer students toward academic or other supports. Colleges also try to remove institutional barriers by optimizing scheduling options and avoiding the need to cancel courses.
4. Ensuring that students are learning. Programs are designed around a coherent set of learning outcomes, rather than as a collection of courses. Program learning outcomes align with requirements for success in further education and employment in a related field. Colleges track student learning outcomes and work to improve teaching. (Bailey, 2017, p. 2)

Guided Pathways and Undecided Students

The premise of the Guided Pathways program is that giving students a clear path to follow improves their likelihood of degree completion. Guided Pathways are designed to help students enter and progress through a discrete program of study (Jenkins & Cho, 2012; Scott-Clayton, 2011). However, because a large number of students enter community college with

unclear goals or little awareness of how to link academic and career plans, a pathway may not be as easy for all students to follow (Karp, 2013). For example, when presented with a list of “meta-majors,” a cluster of groups of majors that fall within a career area (New Student Experience, 2018), a new student may be instructed to select between health sciences, technology, business, liberal arts, and education. At that time, students may only have a limited idea of what these choices entail. Students may not be aware of what the academic programs consist of, what their choice may mean for their future employment, and whether or not their selection represents a good fit with their personal goals and needs (Karp, 2013).

Therefore, in order to effectively implement Guided Pathways and meet students’ needs, colleges need to renew their focus on guidance and advising activities that help students identify and enter programs of study appropriate for their goals and interests (Karp, 2013). Some institutions have instituted activities supporting these processes; for example, at Guttman Community College, all first-time students are required to attend a summer bridge program, enroll full-time, and follow a first-year curriculum that is designed to help them explore majors and careers (O’Banion, 2017). Through bridge programs, which are designed to provide guidance and connection for students in the summer before starting college, new students are participating in a curriculum focused on allowing exploration of careers, majors, and themselves. In first-year seminar programs, college students are supported through coursework, intentional advising, and student success initiatives designed to encourage self-exploration. Through successful completion of these programs, students are often able to make an intentional decision on their next steps to a Guided Pathway or a career.

Similarly, the Public Policy Institute of California found that when implementing Guided Pathways at the California Community Colleges, an immersion experience for faculty was necessary to explain the student-centered support provided by academic advising and career partners on campus. For example, when students enroll in a foundational course within their broad field of interest, they are mentored by faculty, allowing them to research different careers, interview or shadow individuals in a particular field, and experience the different competencies within each major while honing their research skills (Dadgar & Rodriguez, 2017). Dadgar and Rodriguez further suggest that counseling and advising areas partner with academic faculty to create program maps for students and integrate academic and nonacademic support. Knowing that students may not participate in optional activities outside of the classroom highlights the opportunity for faculty to embed academic and career development support into the classroom. While all community colleges may not fully embrace the model that Guttman Community College has designed, there are opportunities for creative faculty to develop practical designs to help students make career choices. Colleges must make undecided students a priority (O'Banion, 2017).

Other colleges are exploring creative ways to better support undecided students through faculty involvement. At Norco College, faculty advising became a focal point of their Guided Pathways redesign after discovering that of a total of 2,474 first-time students, only 9.8% of the students had completed a degree or certificate in the course of four years (Completion Initiative, 2018). At Norco, college faculty took a lead role in advising students by helping them explore educational and career goals as well as identifying program pathways for their selected degree. Counselors at the institution led the faculty advising training, and each

pathway at Norco now has two counselors assigned as full-time advisors. Similarly, at Northampton Community College, each Guided Pathway, called an Area of Study, has a team of faculty advisors, as well as traditional professional advisors, providing opportunities for collaboration between the two groups (Rosenthal, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

With the successful implementation of the Guided Pathways Model at a number of community colleges, students are no longer receiving a “cafeteria-style” (Bailey et al., 2015) menu of options upon entry to the institution; rather, the options are streamlined and more accessible. However, little attention has been paid to students who continue to remain undecided and are unable to select a pathway. Similarly, more support is needed for students who want to reconsider their initial choice and for students who have selected a general pathway but are unsure of a more precise major within it. Further, academic faculty are being asked to develop and teach first-year student success courses within these pathways, having received little to no training on how to work with and support undecided students. It is clear from these early efforts, though, that although faculty may not have the necessary training at this time, upon receiving it, they may be well-equipped to work with students in their specific pathway and support academic and career planning. Rose (2016) shares that faculty training is needed to not only learn how to better support students, but because some faculty members have “different beliefs about concepts like improving students’ lives” (p. 4). Connecting faculty more deeply to the Guided Pathways movement and to student success efforts may support the integration of student academic and career services in the classroom.

Purpose of the Product

The culture of higher education is one that does not often welcome change; community colleges are breaking that mold and, with leaders, faculty, and staff who are among the most creative and innovative, experimenting with new methods to improve the effectiveness of their teaching and to make services to students more convenient (Boggs, 2011). Historically, it has been argued that the best support for undecided students comes from counseling. O'Banion (1994) stated that,

Effective counselors have had good programs of graduate preparation in which they have become skilled in listening to students and helping them in decision-making. They are also trained to interpret career and personality assessments, a traditionally important part of program and career planning. Community college instructors who come from traditional liberal arts or teacher education programs have not usually had such preparation. (p. 85)

Additionally, limited support has been provided to faculty about working with undecided students. Research conducted by Academic Impressions found that less than one-fifth of institutions surveyed devoted "sufficient resources" towards improving faculty advising and that less than one-fourth of academic deans indicated that assessment of academic advising is used effectively to inform future training and development of faculty advisors (Grites, 2012). Grites (2012) also stressed, "improving faculty advising is thus a critical and often neglected step toward improving student retention and supporting students' academic success" (p. 1).

For community colleges implementing a Guided Pathways model, the question is no longer how to create Guided Pathways; rather, it is how to support faculty with appropriate training and resources for the undecided student. Faculty are most knowledgeable about the kinds of work habits and personal attributes that are needed to be successful in their disciplines

and are often the main point of contact for community college students (Grites, 2012). While faculty may serve as informal advisors and counselors for these students, they often do not have the training to do it well, especially in the area of student development theory or knowledge of support services on campus.

The purpose of this product is to begin to bridge the gap between faculty understanding and expertise in supporting undecided students within a Guided Pathways model at community colleges. The faculty guide is a tangible resource designed to remedy the concern for supporting faculty as they engage with undecided students.

Guiding Principles

Three guiding principles have been formulated for the creation of this product. These principles will be used to ensure that the training meets the needs as outlined in the purpose.

- Guiding Principle One: How can faculty support the Guided Pathways model?
- Guiding Principle Two: How can faculty support undecided students?
- Guiding Principle Three: What do faculty need to integrate and included Guided Pathways principles to support students and increase their knowledge of career advising?

Conclusion

In the 1930s, community college leaders used strategies that included the promotion of intelligence testing and guidance counseling as a means of channeling students into vocational training programs (Drury, 2003). According to Drury, (2003) some of the first community colleges provided support to students who were initially undecided upon entry. Today, community colleges face the challenge of educating a wide range of students and guiding them towards a major, career path, or transfer program. Career counselors and academic advisors

need faculty engagement and partnership to assist students in selecting their program and reaching their goals. Equally essential are efforts to help students explore college and career options and choose a program of study early on, help them make steady progress on their program plans, and ensure that they are building essential skills across their programs.

While colleges are successfully implementing Guided Pathways models in their institutions, little attention is being paid to the students who are undecided or unable to select a pathway. With a student's college major or program of study front and center upon enrollment in the Guided Pathways model, undecided students need immediate support on entry and beyond. Community college faculty, while well-versed in their subject matter, may need training specific to working with undecided students to facilitate informed career and college major selection.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of the Faculty Guide is to provide a collection of research and resources for faculty to utilize when working with undecided students in a Guided Pathway. It is necessary to provide faculty with information not only on how to better support these students, but also to articulate why their guidance and support is necessary. The guide includes a comprehensive overview describing undecided students, what a Guided Pathway is, and tools for faculty to use to support undecided students. This literature review examines the current research that is foundational to the guide, and important for understanding the issues the guide addresses.

An Introduction to Undecided Students

Understanding who undecided students are is an important first step in faculty using this guide. Gordon (1984) defined undecided students as those “unwilling, able, or ready to make educational or vocational decisions” (p. 10). Early research on undecided students found that an undecided student was one who listed no major field upon initial enrollment (Anderson, Creamer, & Cross, 1989). Initially, research on undecided students often labeled them as a “challenge,” or sought to explore their levels of motivation, as found in articles by Gordon (1984) and Chase and Keene (1981). Chase and Keene (1981) found that the longer a student waited to declare a major, the lower the student motivation, and there was little to support

colleges in addressing these student needs. Research in the 1970s conducted by Holland and Holland (1977) aimed at answering four distinct questions about undecided students:

1. In what ways are decided and undecided students alike or different?
2. What are the most and least popular "explanations" of indecision given by students who say they are undecided about or dissatisfied with their vocational aspiration?
3. Is the number of explanations expressed by undecided students related to any competency, personality, or interest variables?
4. Is the number of explanations expressed by students who are unsure, dissatisfied, or undecided related to any competency, personality, or interest variables? (p. 404).

Holland and Holland (1977) discovered that undecided students do not greatly differ from their decided counterparts except in a lack of identity and vocational maturity, defined by Super (1977) as the ability to cope with the vocational or career development tasks with which one is confronted. Similar research by Harman (1973) found that undecided students were less vocationally oriented but were more intellectually oriented than students who had made a vocational choice. Additionally, research indicates that institutions were cautioned to avoid generalizing all undecided students as indecisive. Grites (1981) believed that students who wait to select a major are taking "the healthiest approach with which to enter the complex environment of the college campus" (p. 45). Creating individualized programming to suit the individualized needs of each student, such as academic success services, personal counseling, and academic advising, and career development services is essential (Napoli & Wortman, 1998). More recent research from Jenkins and Cho (2012) found that many, if not most, students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, may not have a clear idea of the opportunities that are available to them. They believe that those students may also be least likely to seek out support services from career counseling.

Career Decision Theory

In 1963, Tiedeman and O'Hara described the career decision-making process as comprising a series of tasks that need to be resolved. As students attempt to decide on a major or occupation, they move through the four planning stages: exploration, crystallization, choice, and clarification (Gordon, 2007). Gordon's research defined the stages in this way:

- **Exploration Stage:** In the exploration stage, students have a vague anxiety about the future and are often not aware that there is an orderly process for exploration and choice; rarely do these students have a plan of action.
- **Crystallization Stage:** In the crystallization stage, students are now progressing towards a choice and are beginning to identify some alternatives; they may also be able to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of certain alternatives.
- **Choice Stage:** In the choice stage, students have made a definite commitment to a particular goal and feel satisfied and relieved with their decision.
- **Clarification Stage:** In the clarification stage, a plan of action can be initiated and implemented since a definite commitment has been made. (p. 61-62)

Similar to Tiedeman and O'Hara's decision-making process, Pitz and Harren (1980), dissected the indecision problem, based on the normative decision theory, into four basic elements (Germeijs & De Boeck, 2001):

The first element of each decision problem is a set of alternatives. When deciding, a person should be aware of the available alternatives and be well acquainted with their characteristics. The second element of a decision problem is a set of objectives or goals that the decision maker wants to achieve. When deciding, it helps to have a clear goal in mind and to be able to link it to the alternatives. The third basic element of each decision problem is a set of outcomes that is associated with each choice. Finally, the attributes of the outcomes are the fourth element in a decision problem. (Germeijs and De Boeck, 2001, p. 12)

Pitz and Harren discovered that the goal setting element may be the most important component to the decision-making process so that the person deciding can keep that goal in mind and be able to link it to the alternatives.

Levels of Decidedness

Research by Jones and Chenery (1980) and later developed by Gordon (1998) found that there are distinctive levels of decidedness that differ between individuals. The initial three-dimensional model of vocational decision status created by Jones and Chenery sought to understand three unique dimensions of levels of decidedness: decidedness, comfort, and reasons. The Vocational Decision Scale (VDS) was created after Jones and Chenery found that there was no scale to measure the specific level of decidedness. The VDS includes thirty-eight items that assess the level of decidedness in two items and assess the reasons why in the remaining thirty-six (Jones and Chenery, 1980). Gordon (1998) later revised the VDS and proposed that students may fall into one of seven sublevels of decidedness: 1) very decided, 2) somewhat decided, 3) unstable decided, 4) tentatively undecided, 5) developmentally undecided, 6) seriously undecided, or 7) chronically indecisive.

Why Support Undecided Students

Tinto's (1987) Theory of Student Departure identified three major contributors to student departure from college: academic difficulties, the inability for students to decide on a college major or choose a career path, and the failure of the student to become or remain involved in the social and intellectual aspects of the institution. Tinto's research focused on how a lack of student engagement in all three of these aspects may lead to dropping out. He stressed that if the inability of students to decide on a college major is a barrier to student persistence, faculty need to be prepared to offer support. Tinto (1987) also discovered that successful admissions programs are connected to academic advising and career services offices, so that students can feel that they are making informed choices about their futures.

Building on his early research, Tinto (1987) examined the first-year experience at colleges and the fact that, while many colleges have programs to increase retention, they are not doing much to change the settings of their own institutions to make the environment for the student more retention-possible. Tinto addresses five expectations for students in their first year that have been proven, through research, to aid in retention. These five expectations are:

1. Setting high and clear academic expectations
2. Academic and social support systems that are contextualized to student's lives
3. Frequent feedback from faculty and staff
4. Higher levels of involvement with the school
5. Learning

Similar research conducted on undecided students by Cooney (2000) at Salt Lake Community College discovered that students who are indecisive about their major field of study and future career goals eventually experience problems in classes if they are not given enough support. In his study, Cooney (2000) surveyed first-year students comparing new, undecided students against their decided counterparts. Cooney discovered a correlation between undecided students and future success in college. Undecided students in their second semester find it more difficult to find meaning and enjoyment in their classes and campus experiences because they are unable to connect their classes and assignments with their future life goals (Cooney, 2000). According to Tom Grites (2012) of Richard Stockton College of New Jersey,

Faculty intervention is about helping students make the most of their choices. A faculty advisor can play a critical role in helping a student brainstorm the best opportunities for enhancing their plan of study through service learning, independent study, study abroad, internship, and other programs. The faculty advisor's role is to help the student articulate their curricular, co-curricular, and career goals, and then assist them in creating a campus experience that will facilitate reaching those goals. (p. 2)

Increasing the support given to all students, not just those in their first semester, is an opportunity to help students in making meaningful connections. Additionally, it may be that some of the best support for students will come from faculty in a partnership role with academic advisors and career counselors.

Career Theory/Framework

The first conceptual framework for career decision making was created by Parsons (1909) who believed that there are three broad factors necessary to choose a vocation:

1. A clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and knowledge of their causes
2. A knowledge of the requirements, conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work
3. True reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts. (Parsons, 1909, p. 5)

The conceptual framework by Parsons led to multiple career development theories that are widely used today when working with undecided students. John Holland's theory of person-environment fit is a combination of psychological and sociological theory in student success (Feldman, Smart, & Ethington, 2004). Holland's theory focused on dominant interest areas (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional) noting that people are inherently more satisfied when they are working in the career area or environment related to their interests. If a student finds a "fit" with his/her personality and the environment that he/she choose to study (college major), he/she is more likely to be satisfied and more likely to complete school. In Feldman, Ethington, and Smart's (2001) research applying Holland's theory, it was discovered that students "choose academic environments compatible with their personality types" and in turn "academic environments reward different patterns of student

abilities and interests” (p. 33). Their research later suggested that congruence between person and environment is critical to the success of college students.

Student Development Theory

Research conducted by Erikson (1950) before formulating his stages of psychosocial development sought to define the stages that an individual passes through from infancy to late adulthood. Erikson found that in each stage, the person confronts and, hopefully, masters, new challenges.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) sought to define student success and develop a greater understanding of how students reach success through various stages. They found that students could be categorized into one of seven vectors:

1. Developing competence
2. Managing emotions
3. Moving through autonomy towards interdependence
4. Developing mature interpersonal relationships
5. Establishing identity
6. Developing purpose
7. Developing integrity

Similar to Erikson’s research, Chickering’s vectors appear linear, suggesting that one must accomplish one vector before moving on to the next. Chickering also discovered that a student may have achieved all seven vectors in one aspect of their life but may still be in the beginning vectors in others. He found that where, in one place, there may be competence and confidence, in another, there might be lack of knowledge and self-esteem.

Research by Tinto (1987) outlined many of the conditions necessary for student success within these vectors or stages, specifically in the first year of college. While he found that many student attributes are beyond institutional control, there are six conditions that are within the institution's control that are supportive of student success. These conditions include commitment, expectations, support, feedback, involvement, and learning. Tinto concluded that collaborative partnerships across campus, not just in the periphery, are critical in order to be successful, especially because commuter students may only come to campus to attend class and then leave.

Instructional Design Theory

Instructional design theory is used to understand how the human mind absorbs, assimilates, and retains information. For the purpose of this guide, a greater understanding of how faculty learn best will support the creation of a meaningful product.

Instructional design is defined by Reigeluth (1993) as a "discipline that is concerned with understanding and improving one aspect of education: the process of instruction" (p. 5).

Reigeluth further refines his definition by stating that instructional design is a "professional activity done by teachers and instructional developers and is the process of deciding what methods of instruction are best for bringing about desired changes" (p. 7). Research by Merrill (2002) sought to understand the principles by which something is considered an instructional design theory, finding five in common:

1. Learning is promoted when learners are engaged in solving real-world problems.
2. Learning is promoted when existing knowledge is activated as a foundation for new knowledge.

3. Learning is promoted when new knowledge is demonstrated to the learner.
4. Learning is promoted when new knowledge is applied by the learner.
5. Learning is promoted when new knowledge is integrated into the learner's world. (p. 44-45)

The cognitive apprenticeship model is a component of instructional design theory and is described as learning through guided cognitive or metacognitive experiences, rather than physical skills and processes (Dennen & Burner, 2008). Palincsar and Brown (1989) sought to develop a method of teaching reading comprehension and highlighting many of the features of cognitive apprenticeship such as modeling and coaching. Collins (1989), as cited in Jarvela (1995) concluded that cognitive apprenticeship is an approach in which learning is embedded in activities and which makes deliberate use of the social and physical context. Research by Dennen and Burner (2008), discovered that an individual cannot engage in all learning alone; rather, success is dependent on expert demonstration (modeling) and guidance (coaching) in this initial phase of learning.

Conclusion

In this chapter, an introduction to undecided students was reviewed as well as the career-decision making process and how undecided students fit into that process. Theoretical frameworks of the career theory and instructional design methods were explored as a foundational basis for the guide to provide faculty with a meaningful product that is built on a theory of human understanding. Chapter 3 discusses the creation of the product, connecting the desired outcomes and the instructional design theory used to educate faculty on how to support undecided students within a Guided Pathways model.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Introduction

A product dissertation is unique in that it is research resulting in a product with immediate use or application. Although a review of literature is included with this product, the result is a creation from the researchers' collective observations and experiences, rather than traditional written research. The result from this research is a product in the form of a faculty guide. The purpose of the faculty guide is to provide both a collection of research and resources for faculty to utilize when working with undecided students in a Guided Pathways model.

Contributing Knowledge and Experience

Two community college researchers co-created the faculty guide based on their work experiences in higher education as academic advisors and adjunct faculty members. Jennifer Godish has a Master of Science in Education in Counseling with a concentration in career counseling and has previous work experience as a community college career counselor and adjunct faculty member for both career development and first-year seminar courses. Sara Piraino has several years' experience working in career and student services in addition to her role as adjunct faculty for first-year seminar. Both researchers currently serve as lead academic advisors and lead adjunct faculty at their institution. The co-researchers have been deeply involved in first-year student curriculum planning and academic advising within Guided

Pathways, to which their institution recently transitioned. These professional experiences greatly contributed to the researchers' knowledge base for creating the faculty guide.

The foundation of this product resulted from the researchers' knowledge of supporting undecided students; it is estimated that the researchers' have spent over 12,000 hours in direct contact with undecided students over the past five years. The strongest contribution came from the researchers' work with faculty in one-on-one, small group, and large group situations through the Guided Pathways initiative at their institution. That work inspired the faculty guide as a tool for supporting and encouraging faculty support of undecided students in their Pathway.

Creating the Guide

The researchers approached the concept on learning more about undecided students as a decision-making process. Rogers (1983) described the innovation-decision process as a "series of actions and choices over time through which an individual or an organization evaluates a new idea and decides whether or not to incorporate the new idea into ongoing practice" (p. 163). The individual goes through these five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation (Rogers, 1983). Similarly, Perry (1970) compares the teaching abilities of faculty to the learning abilities of their students as developing in stages (as cited in Kugel, 1993). Faculty begin with an emphasis on teaching, focusing on self, then subject, then student. From there, faculty begin to shift their emphasis focusing on students as receptive, then active, and finally independent (Kugel, 1993).

The researchers used three guiding principles as a foundation for creating the Faculty Guide. These principles were developed to ensure that the training meets the needs as outlined in the purpose statement:

- Guiding Principle One: How can faculty support the Guided Pathways Model?
- Guiding Principle Two: How can faculty support undecided students?
- Guiding Principle Three: What do faculty need to integrate and included Guided Pathways principles to support students and increase their knowledge of career advising?

The first guiding principle is focused on how faculty can support the Guided Pathways model. Before supporting the model, faculty must understand Guided Pathways at a very broad, general level as well as at their own, individual institutional level. To support their knowledge of this principle, the faculty guide includes required reading focused on the creation of the Guided Pathways model, as well as institution-specific worksheets to aid the individualized learning of each faculty member. The second guiding principle, educating faculty to support undecided students, begins with broad literature on who undecided students are and the decision-making process, as well as activities for faculty to understand the support services available to undecided students at the institution. Finally, understanding what faculty need to modify course materials is a principle supported by several customizable worksheets that allow for immediate implementation in the classroom.

The intended outcomes of the faculty guide mirror the guiding principles used in its creation. The first intended outcome is for participants to understand the Guided Pathways model by having an understanding of both the national Guided Pathways model as well as Guided Pathways examples at individual institutions and understanding the career exploration

component of the Guided Pathways model as it relates to strengths and preferences as well as understanding how individual programs fit into the Guided Pathways model. The second intended outcome is to understand the connection of the Guided Pathways model as it relates to student development by understanding student development theories, understanding the soft skills needed for advising students, understanding the onboarding and advising processes at individual institutions, and understanding the career exploration tools available to students. The third intended outcome is for faculty to integrate new knowledge into their course materials by understanding the importance of how and why to integrate new career development knowledge into course materials, then demonstrating the ability to update course materials with this new awareness.

Design and Implementation of the Guide

The guide was designed in response to a need the co-researchers recognized at their own institution and which was validated by research. The instructional design approach that was used was based on the cognitive apprenticeship model that is referenced in Chapter 2. This model was chosen because of its focus on practical teaching methods, whereby context learning is key. Within this model, there are a number of teaching strategies, such as modeling and reflection, both which are strategies that were used when creating the guide. Modeling involves an expert demonstrating a concept or task so that learners are able to gain an in-depth understanding of how something is done, something the researchers' recognized as an important consideration. In the faculty guide, there are many examples that demonstrate practical application in the classroom which faculty can replicate in their own classroom. Further, the faculty guide builds upon itself in that faculty are expected to participate in a

written, step-by-step tutorial of tasks before applying their knowledge. Another strategy used in the faculty guide is reflection, which enables learners to compare their problem-solving skills to those of an expert or peer. The faculty guide asks faculty to reflect often and encourages reflection with a peer at their institution or at another.

Depending on several factors such as the institution's history with the Guided Pathways model, the level of engagement of the faculty in the advising process, and the preferred delivery approach, the information in the faculty guide can be adapted for that institution's needs. While this is designed as a stand-alone guide, the worksheets in the appendix are flexible to allow for multiple modality offerings. Chapter 5 discusses implementation models in greater detail.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the creation of the faculty guide that follows in Chapter 4. With the use of the guide, instructors will understand the Guided Pathways model at the national level and as it relates to their own institution. Faculty will also have the tools and knowledge to support students who are undecided within the Guided Pathways model. Last, faculty will be able to contextualize what they have learned into their own course materials, making career exploration and research a much-needed and naturally occurring aspect of the curriculum.

CHAPTER 4: PATHWAYS PRODUCT

Supporting Undecided Students in a Guided Pathways Model: A Faculty Guide to Implementation in the Classroom

The following pages contain a print version of the full Faculty Guide.

Supporting Undecided Students
in a Guided Pathways Model:
A Faculty Guide to
Implementation in the Classroom



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WHY SHOULD YOU USE THIS GUIDE?

The purpose of this guide is to begin to bridge the gap of your understanding and expertise in the area of supporting undecided community college students within a Guided Pathways Model.

Upon use of this guide, you should be able to demonstrate the ability to

- ⇒ Understand the Guided Pathways movement and how it relates to your institution and academic programs.
- ⇒ Understand Student Development theories, the career decision-making process, and the soft skills you need to partner in advising undecided students.
- ⇒ Integrate new knowledge into your classroom and/or into your course materials.

WHAT AREAS DOES THIS GUIDE COVER?

Guided Pathways Movement

- ⇒ A deeper understanding of the Guided Pathways movement in general and how it applies to individual institutions.
- ⇒ A deeper understanding of the career exploration component of Guided Pathways.
- ⇒ A deeper understanding of how individual academic programs connect to the Guided Pathways movement.

Connection Between the Guided Pathways Movement and Student Development

- ⇒ A deeper understanding of Student Development theories.
- ⇒ A deeper understanding of the soft skills needed to partner in advising students.
- ⇒ A deeper understanding of the on boarding and advising processes at individual institutions.
- ⇒ A deeper understanding of the career decision-making process and tools available to students.

Integrate New Knowledge into Existing Course Materials

- ⇒ A deeper understanding of methods for integrating new knowledge into course materials.

HOW SHOULD THIS GUIDE BE USED?

The readings and activities included in this Guide are designed for a small group Learning Community of 6-12 faculty members. The activities are designed to be completed over one academic semester, using a weekly meeting for discussion and reflection. However, the activities could easily be adjusted for an intense 2-day workshop, or a week-long summer seminar.

REQUIRED READING LIST

Before using this guide, please read the following articles. Reading these pieces is essential to support your learning.

From the Community College Research Center (CCRC), read:

- ⇒ *What We Know About Guided Pathways* (April, 2015): Describes the reform model and summarizes evidence supporting its design principles.
- ⇒ *Implementing Guided Pathways at Miami Dade College: A Case Study* (April, 2015): Describes how one college implemented guided pathways reforms.
- ⇒ *Implementing Guided Pathways: Tips and Tools* (April, 2015): Offers practical advice on how to get started on reforms following the guided pathways model.
- ⇒ *What We Are Learning About Guided Pathways* (April, 2018): Builds on the initial research CCRC presented in 2015, now with evidence from early adopters, in three parts:
 - ⇒ *Part One: A Reform Moves from Theory to Practice*
 - ⇒ *Case Studies*
 - ⇒ *Timeline and Tips for Implementing Pathways Reforms*

From the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), read:

- ⇒ *Applying Theory to Advising Practice* by Sherri Williams (2007): This piece provides an introduction to Student Development theories and their impact on college students.

GETTING STARTED

Imagine that you are told you need to follow this path to reach your future.

When you arrive, no one is there to help you, and there is no equipment available to help you navigate. What would you do?

Many students enrolled at community colleges are unsure of their path towards the future, especially those who are undecided on a major or a program of study. The readings and activities included in this guide have been created to support YOU as a faculty member in better understanding student needs.



INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDED PATHWAYS MOVEMENT

According to Virginia Community College System (VCCS)'s Research Center (2018), Guided Pathways is an umbrella term used to describe highly structured student experiences that guide students on the pathway to completion. VCCS further states that it is not a specific program, college policy, or technology; rather, it is a movement.

In general, Guided Pathways is a proactive approach to education that integrates high-level student advising, student support services, clear degree/certificate information, and the integration of course content in order for a student to successfully complete a credential.

Guided Pathways in Practice (MODEL)

Queensborough Community College (NY), Macomb Community College (MI), and William Rainey Harper College (IL) are all examples of how Guided Pathways has been customized at individual institutions. In order to illustrate the unique ways in which the concept of Guided Pathways has been deployed in community colleges, we offer three distinct examples for your review.

Queensborough Community College

Queensborough Community College, a college within the City University New York system (CUNY) is located in Bayside, New York. Queensborough approached the Guided Pathways movement by creating *Academies*, designed to provide students with special learning opportunities, activities, and personalized guidance from their Academy Adviser. Within each Academy, students participate in at least two high-impact practices, including:

1. Academic Service-Learning
2. Learning Communities
3. Writing-Intensive Classes
4. Common Intellectual Experiences
5. Undergraduate Research
6. Collaborative Assignments and Projects
7. Diversity and Global Learning

Queensborough focuses on connecting students learning both inside and outside of the classroom through special events and activities that are meant to reinforce what was learned in the classroom and the goals students have set for their studies and career.

Macomb Community College

Macomb Community College, located in Warren, Michigan, aligned their programs of study to fit within one of the nine *Areas of Interest*:

1. Applied Technology & Skilled Trades
2. Arts, Humanities, Communication
3. Business, Hospitality, Culinary
4. Education & Human Services
5. Engineering, Technology & Design
6. Health
7. Information Technology
8. Public Safety
9. Science & Math

Each *Area of Interest* at Macomb includes at least one exploratory course, designed to give students a better understanding of what a field involves and to determine if it matches their interests and goals.

Students who are unable to select an *Area of Interest* on their own are directed to the Counseling and Academic Advising Department for help in career and academic exploration.

William Rainey Harper College

William Rainey Harper College, located in Palatine, Illinois, recently transitioned its programs of study to fit into ten *Areas of Interest*:

1. Art, Design and Performing Arts
2. Business, Entrepreneurship and Information Technology
3. Education
4. Engineering, Math and Computer Science
5. Health Science
6. Liberal Arts, Language and Communication
7. Manufacturing and Construction
8. Physical and Life Science
9. Public Service
10. Social Science

Harper College instructs applicants to select an *Area of Interest*, so they can begin college on the right path to complete their goals. Each *Area of Interest* at Harper includes a First-Year Seminar course designed to support students' exploration of their educational and career goals.

Students who are unsure of which *Area of Interest* to select are encouraged to take a free, online career assessment that renders results configured by Harper's *Areas of Interest*.

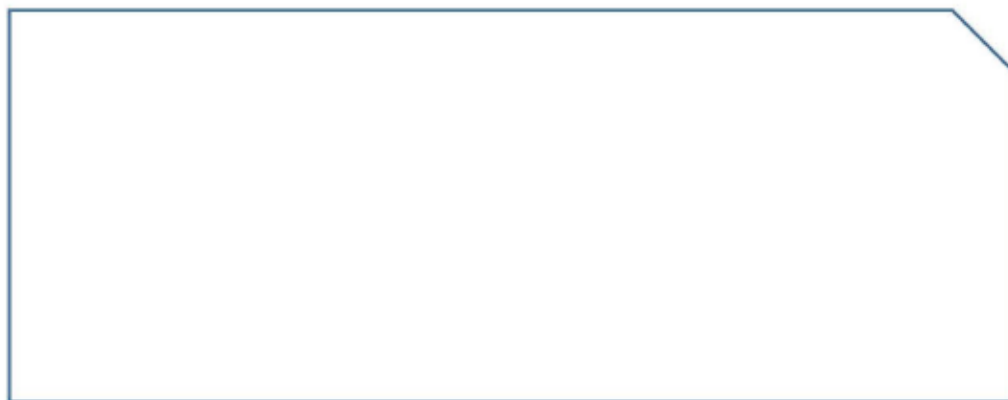
UNDERSTANDING GUIDED PATHWAYS IN PRACTICE

PART ONE: RESEARCH

Directions: Visit the websites for Macomb Community College, Queensborough Community College, and William Rainey Harper College. Find their Guided Pathways web pages (Area of Interest or Academies) and look through how the information is presented.

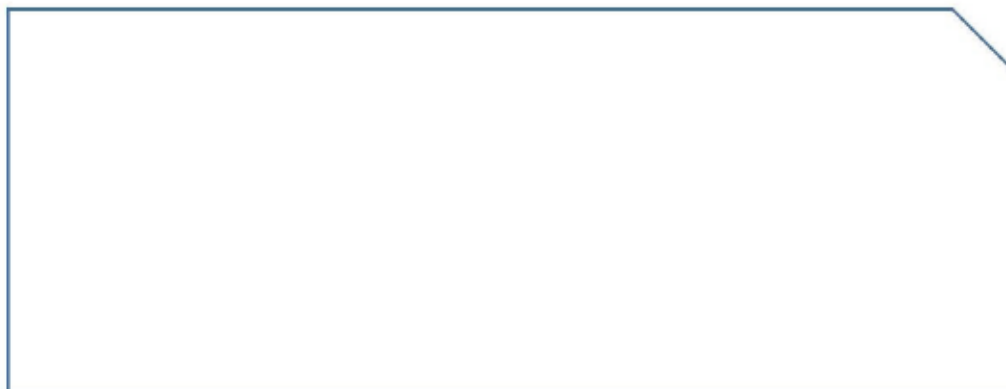
PART TWO: REFLECTION

What are your thoughts on how the information is presented to prospective and current students? What observations can you make? What, if anything, did you like? What, if anything, did you find unclear? Share your thoughts below:



PART THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

Imagine you were tasked with the redesign of your college's web pages to showcase a Guided Pathways Model. How would you categorize the information? How much or how little would you share? Below, explain your thoughts on how the web pages should be organized for the delivery of detailed academic information:



STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Introduction to Student Development Theories

Several developmental theorists have developed models that describe student progression and growth. Understanding these models can be helpful as you support undecided students with their career choices.

Chickering's Stages of Identity Development (1969)

Chickering and Reisser define student success by seven vectors:

1. Developing competence*
2. Managing emotions
3. Moving through autonomy towards interdependence
4. Developing mature interpersonal relationships*
5. Establishing identity*
6. Developing purpose*
7. Developing integrity

*All closely associated with the support for undecided students.

Similar to Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, Chickering's vectors appear linear, in the idea that one must accomplish one vector before moving on to the next. However, a student may have achieved all seven vectors of development in one aspect of their life, but may still be in the beginning vectors in other aspects. Where in one place there is competence and confidence, there may be lack of knowledge and low self-esteem in another. It is important for institutions to recognize this in students, without making any assumptions, in order to understand what their particular needs are.

Tinto's Theory of Student Departure (1993)

Tinto outlines many of the conditions necessary for student success, specifically in the first year of college. Many student attributes are beyond institutional control, but six conditions can be addressed to support student success. These conditions include:

1. Commitment
2. Expectations
3. Support
4. Feedback
5. Involvement
6. Learning

Tinto stresses that collaborative partnerships across campus, not just in the periphery, are critical in order for students to be successful. Students may only come to campus to attend class

and then leave. Many of the services that schools offer are valuable, but students do not take the time to learn about them or use them. Because of this, it is critical that faculty be partners in the development of undecided students by supporting co-curricular programs and services.

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THEORY IN PRACTICE

PART ONE: RESEARCH

Directions: Select one of the seven vectors in Chickering's Theory of Identity Development to research at greater length. You may consider connecting with the Academic Advising Office at your institution or searching online to gain additional insight.

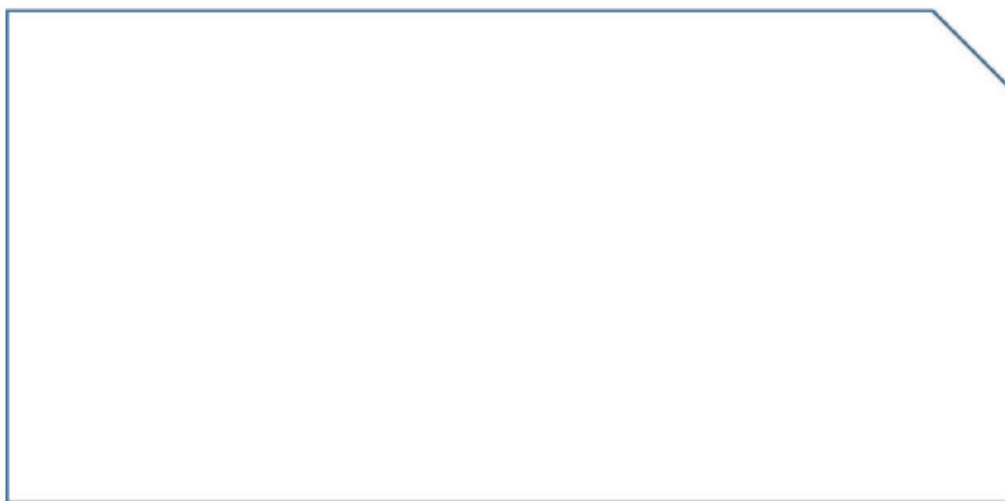
Which vector did you research?

Why did you select this vector?

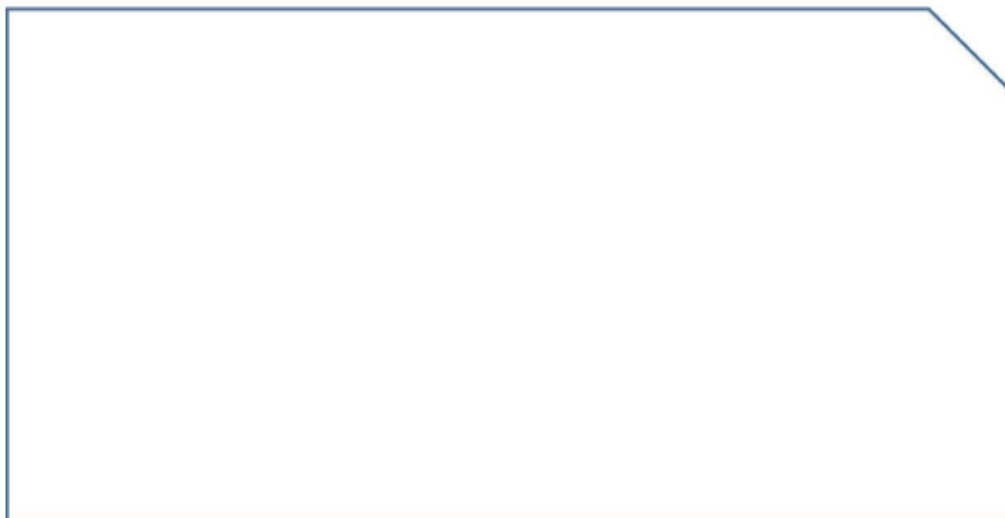
How would you explain this vector to a colleague?

PART TWO: REFLECTION

Reflect on the knowledge you acquired about this vector. In your experience, do you find students struggle moving through this vector in college? Why or why not?

**PART THREE: IMPLEMENTATION**

With increased knowledge of this vector, how can you apply it to your work as a faculty member and improve your support of student success?



ACADEMIC ADVISING AT YOUR INSTITUTION

PART ONE: RESEARCH

Directions: Where does academic advising occur at your institution? Who does it? Depending on your institutional structure, there may be one office for new student advising and another office for returning student advising. Learn more about that office, either through individual research (online or in-person) or by meeting with campus colleagues; then, respond to the questions below:

Does your institution utilize a case management approach to academic advising?

When and how do students declare their major or pathway?

How are students first advised after enrolling?

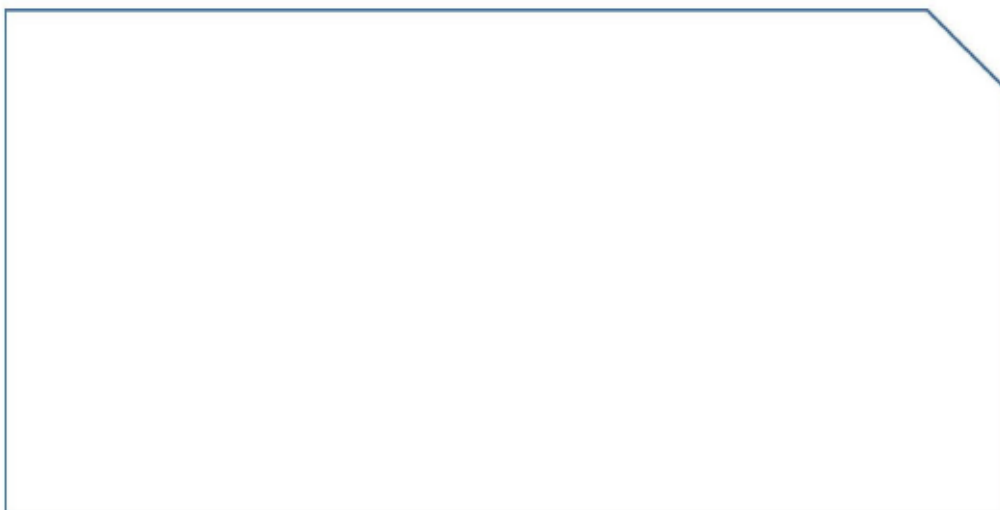
Is the process for advising returning or continuing students different? If so, how? Do different processes exist to support traditional (recent high school grads) vs. non-traditional (adults) students?

PART TWO: REFLECTION

Reflect on your findings about academic advising at your institution. Identify any new information that you learned as a result of this activity, below:

PART THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

With increased knowledge of academic advising at your institution, identify some ways that you can use this information in your classroom.



SKILLS NEEDED FOR HIGH IMPACT ACADEMIC ADVISING

High impact academic advising practices aim to create meaningful interactions between students and their advisors. According to Ohrablo (2016), two critical skill sets needed by academic advisors for high impact advising include interpersonal skills and operational skills. Examples of interpersonal skills include active listening, inquiring and validating, and providing support and encouragement. Examples of operational skills include learning institutional systems and identifying best practices as well as consistent follow through on action items like early alert notifications.

Interpersonal Skills

Carl Rogers, a renowned American psychologist, developed the humanistic approach to counseling and therapy. According to Rosenthal (2007), Rogers's person-centered theory is centered around three conditions for effective helping, including showing empathy, being genuine/congruent, and displaying unconditional positive regard. Hughey (2011) discusses foundations for effective interpersonal relations in advising and incorporates the use of Rogerian theory as a keystone in practice.

Additionally, according to Folsom, Joslyn, & Yoder (2015), communication skills are the most important skills needed by advisors in developing relationships with their advisees. Advising isn't only about being the "expert," but also about shared communication skills, which also involve

questioning and referrals (Folsom, Joslyn, & Yoder, 2015). According to Hughey (2011), advisors can enhance their skills by reflecting student responses with active listening and responding, asking insightful questions, challenging student thinking and behaviors without offending them, and encouraging problem-solving and critical thinking skills. According to Joe Cuseo, to develop a rapport with one's student is a precondition that provides the "social-emotional foundation for learning and growth" (Cuseo, 2017, p.1).

Incorporating the use of interpersonal skills in academic advising is important in building student relationships. The NACADA Academic Advising Core Competencies Model (2017) highlights three areas, specifically conceptual, informational, and relational. It is the relational competency that can be correlated with the interpersonal aspects of academic advising and these relational competencies include the ability for the advisor to:

- ⇒ Articulate a personal philosophy of academic advising
- ⇒ Create rapport and build academic advising relationships
- ⇒ Communicate in an inclusive and respectful manner
- ⇒ Plan and conduct successful advising interactions
- ⇒ Promote student understanding of the logic and purpose of the curriculum
- ⇒ Facilitate problem solving, decision-making, meaning-making, planning, and goal setting
- ⇒ Engage in on-going assessment and development of the advising practice (NACADA, 2017)

Operational Skills

Operational skills allow advisors to use institutional tools and other resources to carry out advising tasks (Orabhlo, 2016). Three essential components of advising in higher education include:

1. Degree evaluation system
2. Student portal
3. Early Alert System

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: ROLE PLAYS

Directions: These activities are best done in pairs or triads with one person playing the role of the faculty member, the second person playing the role of the student, and the third person playing the role of observer. Switch roles at least twice to view the scenario from all three vantage points.

PART ONE: ACTIVE LISTENING AND REFLECTING

Take turns playing the role of student, faculty member, and observer. In this activity, the student will do all the talking, and the faculty member will do all the listening. The observer should watch the exchange and make notes of good and weak aspects.

Step 1: For five minutes, only the student will talk, and the faculty member will remain silent, with the exception of acknowledging the student by nodding, smiling, or providing other short encouraging remarks. The student should talk about course concerns related to balancing multiple priorities (work, school, family).

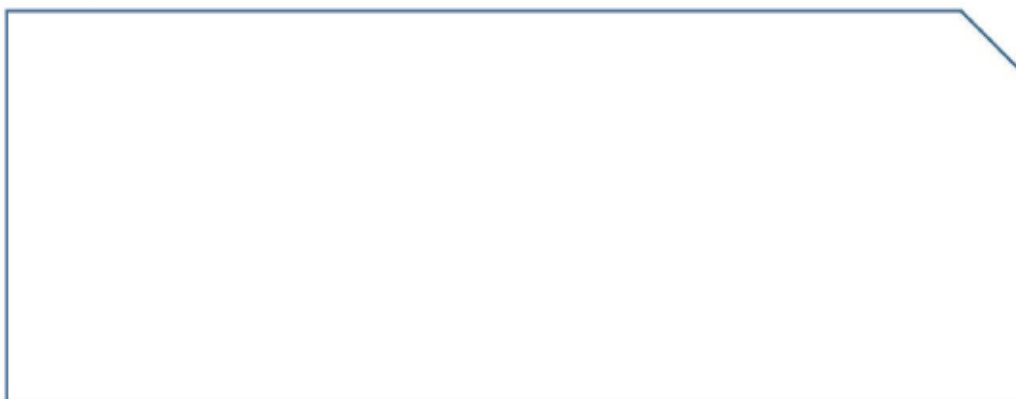
Step 2: At the end of the five minutes, the faculty member should summarize what the student said.

Step 3: After the faculty member has summarized the comments, the observer should comment on the good and weak aspects that he/she noticed.

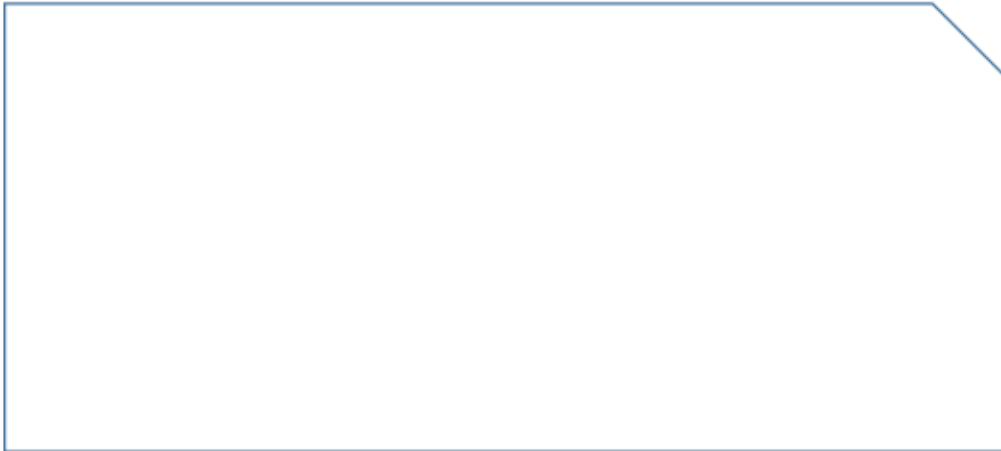
As the faculty member, how hard was it to remain silent as the student talked? Did active listening come easily to you? Did your mind drift as the student talked? Discuss.



As the student, and the sender of information, did you feel that the faculty member summarized appropriately what you were trying to convey? Were there any points that were missed or misinterpreted?



As an observer, were you able to share your feedback with the student and the faculty member? What interpersonal skills did you witness in this interaction?



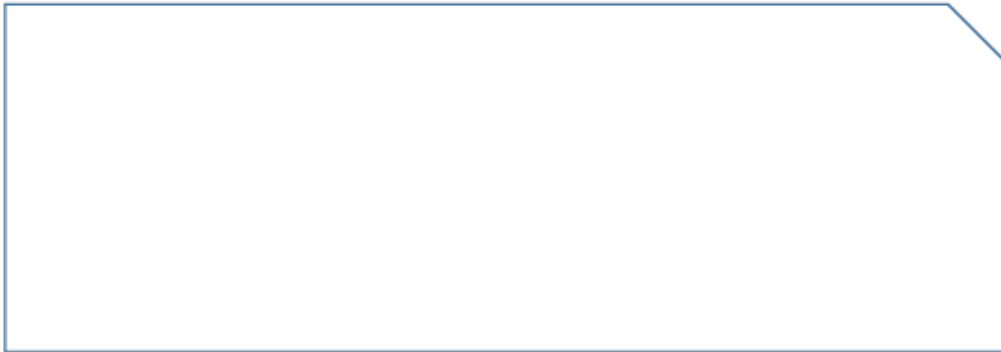
PART TWO: UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES

Take a moment examine the following picture, first individually, and then as a group. What did you see? Most individuals see a vase, two faces, or both. Talk with your colleagues for a few moments about what they see in the picture and then answer the following questions.

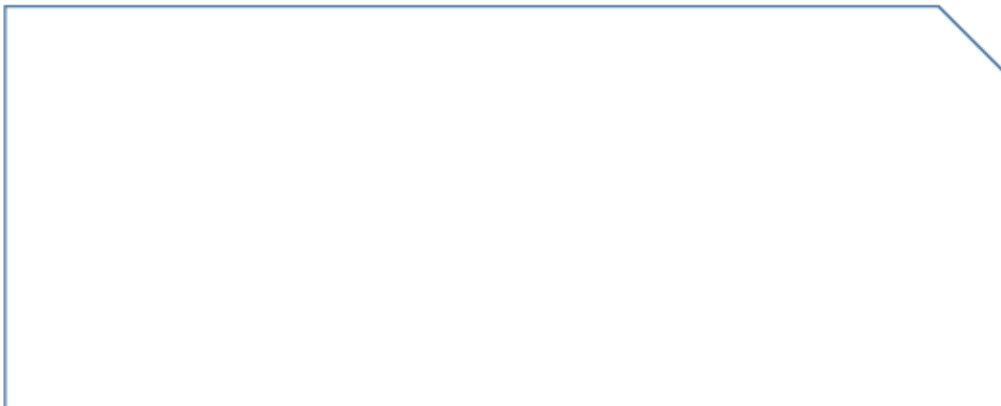


How did you feel when others in your group saw the same thing that you did?

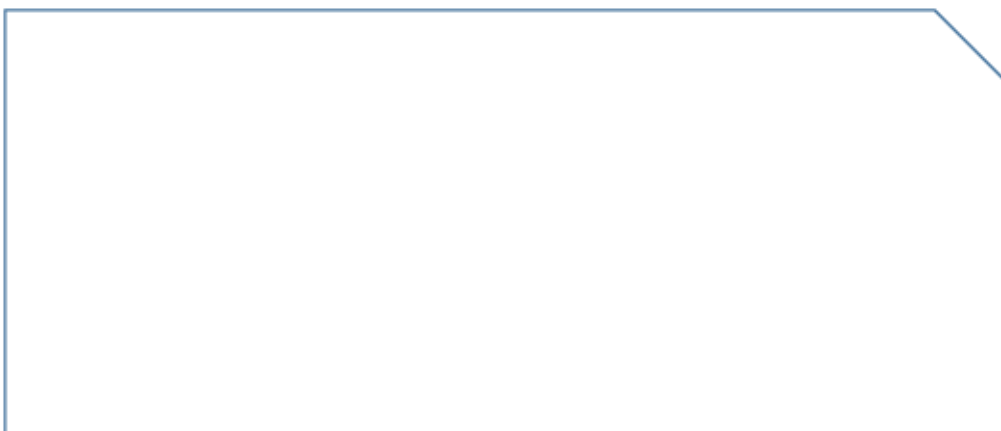
How did you feel when others saw it differently?



Explain the reaction you have to differing perspectives (in this example or others):



Why is it important to value differing and potentially unique perspectives?



PART ONE: RESEARCH

Directions: Read McMahan's (2008) article "How to Become an Academic Advisor" and then participate in the following role-play scenario.

PART TWO: SCENARIO

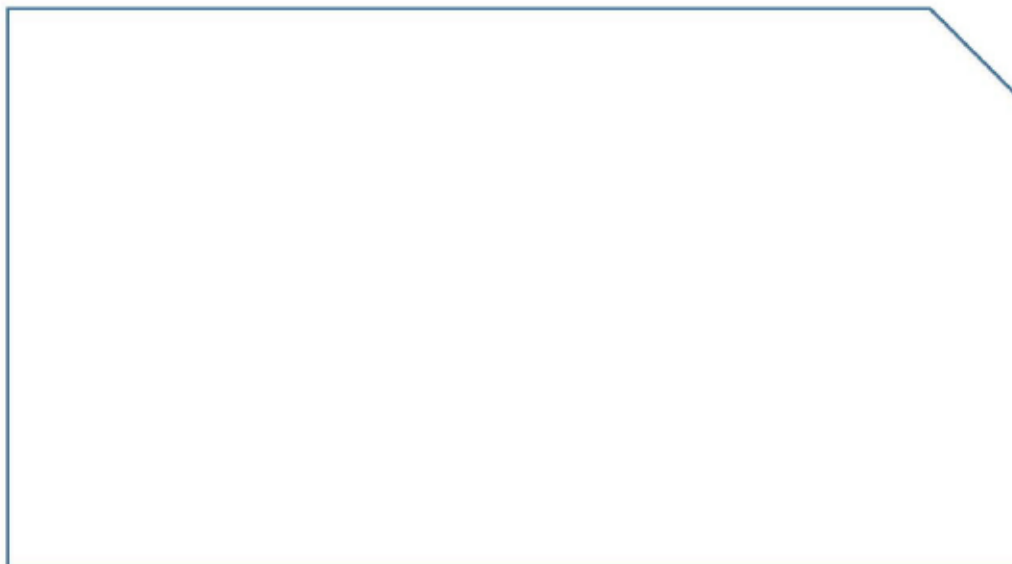
Directions: This activity is best done in pairs or triads with one person playing the role of the faculty member, the second person playing the role of the student, and the third person playing the role of observer. Switch roles at least twice to view the scenario from all three vantage points.

Situation: It is the 4th week of the semester and one of your students, Amy, has missed 3 of your 8 class sessions. She sent you an email stating that she will be coming in to meet with you during your office hours before class begins. When she gets to your office, she tells you that she thinks she might as well just drop your class because it's not what she thought it was going to be, and she doesn't know what she wants to do with her life anyway.

What will you say to the student? Conduct a 2-3 minute conversation, role-playing the situation and incorporating typical comments you might hear from the student, as well as the responses that you, as the faculty member, would make.

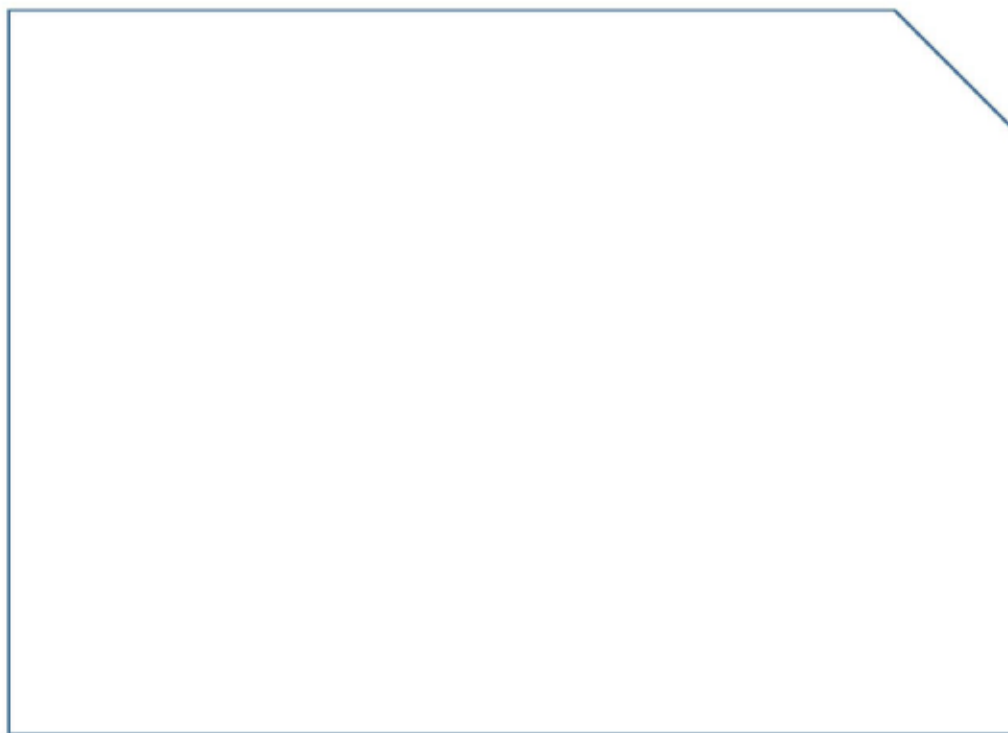
PART THREE: REFLECTION

Reflect on this scenario in both your faculty and student role. Share your thoughts on how the article by McMahan helped prepare you to respond as a faculty member:



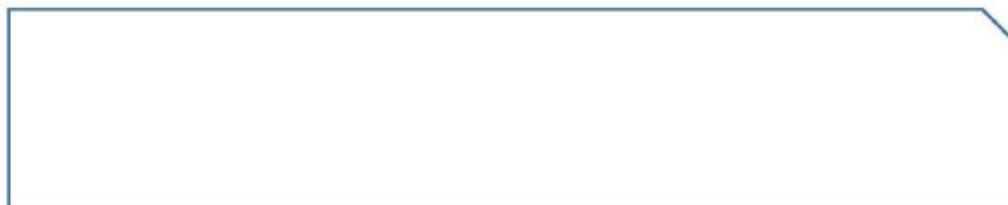
PART FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION

Using your insights from the readings and the role-playing exercise, choose three skills related to the role of an academic advisor from the McMahan article that you wish to develop as a faculty member and share your reasons why, below:

**OPERATIONAL SKILLS****PART ONE: RESEARCH**

Directions: Meet with a representative from your college's advising office to understand the student connection to key technologies and systems used in advising and to support student success.

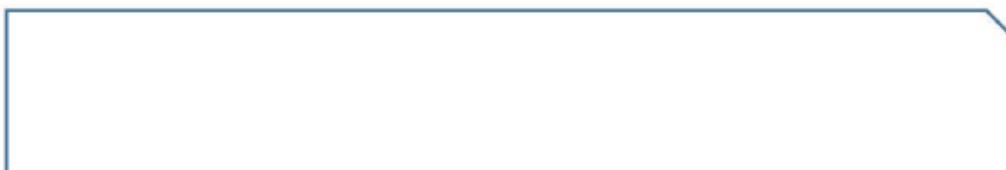
What is the name of the degree evaluation system, at your college?



Where is it located and do you, as a faculty member, have access?



Do you have access to the student portal?

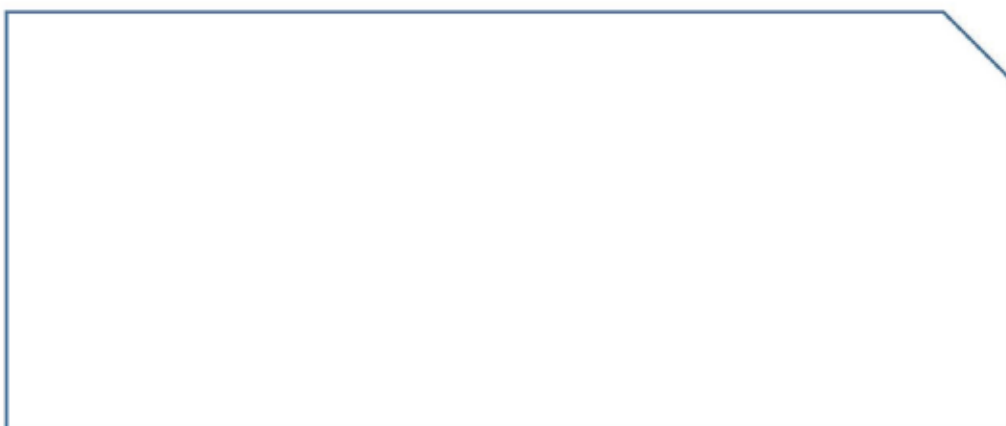


Does your college use an Early Alert system?



PART TWO: REFLECTION

Think about barriers that students at your institution may face such as housing, transportation, and food insecurity. What is your role in supporting students who face these barriers and how can the new knowledge you have obtained on key technologies and systems used at your institution help?



PART THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

How can you synthesize the knowledge you have gained through this brief experience to share with students at your institution or in your classroom how these tools can support their success? Respond individually on each tool:

- Degree Audit
- Student Portal
- Success/Early Alert Programs/Services

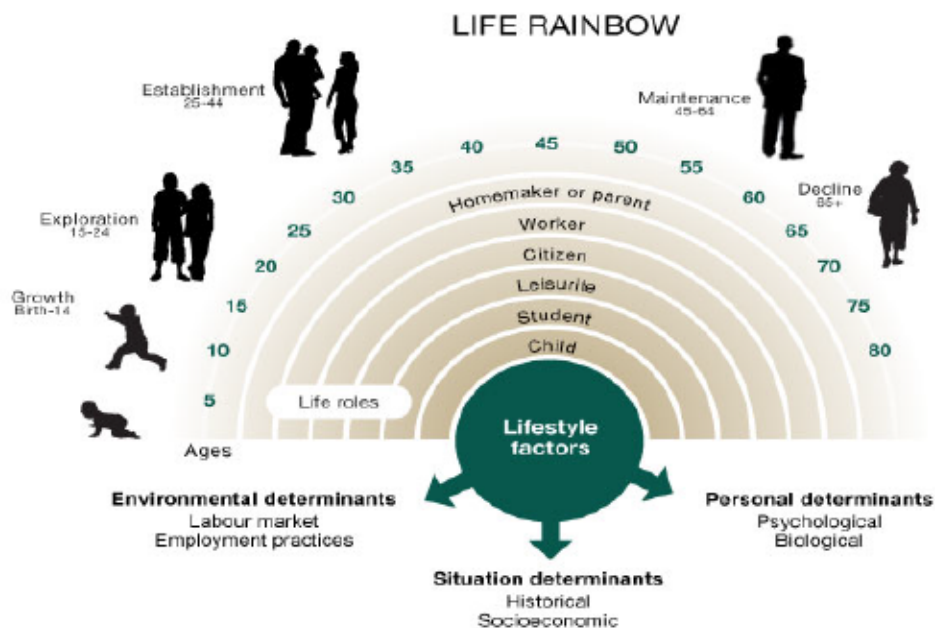


CAREER DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Career theorist Donald Super (1977) created a career development rainbow comprised of five stages, each with specific tasks:

1. **Growth** (fantasy, interests, and curiosity)
2. **Exploration** (crystalizing, specifying, and implementing)
3. **Establishment** (stabilizing, consolidating, frustration, and advancing)
4. **Maintenance** (holding, updating, stagnation, and innovating).
5. **Decline** (decelerating, retirement planning, and retirement living)

The process is often visualized this way:



Reference: Career Research. (n.d.). Super's career development theory. Retrieved from <http://career.iresearchnet.com/career-development/supers-career-development-theory/>

Clearly, as a faculty member, there are strategic points where your guidance could be of great benefit.

Ways to integrate this into your courses and to support the student's connection to offices on campus that may also be of help are to:

- ⇒ Familiarize yourself with career exploration tools available to students on your campus.
- ⇒ Tell your story! Make a point to share with your students how you got to where you are in your career.
- ⇒ Provide formal and informal opportunities for students to learn more about your field.

CAREER EXPLORATION TOOLS

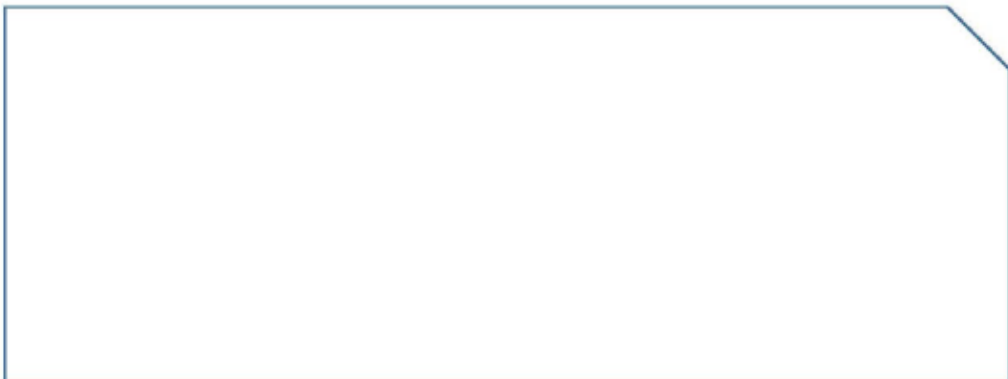
PART ONE: WITHIN THE INSTITUTION

Directions: What career assessments does your institution currently use in order to help students decide on their pathway or major and explore career options?

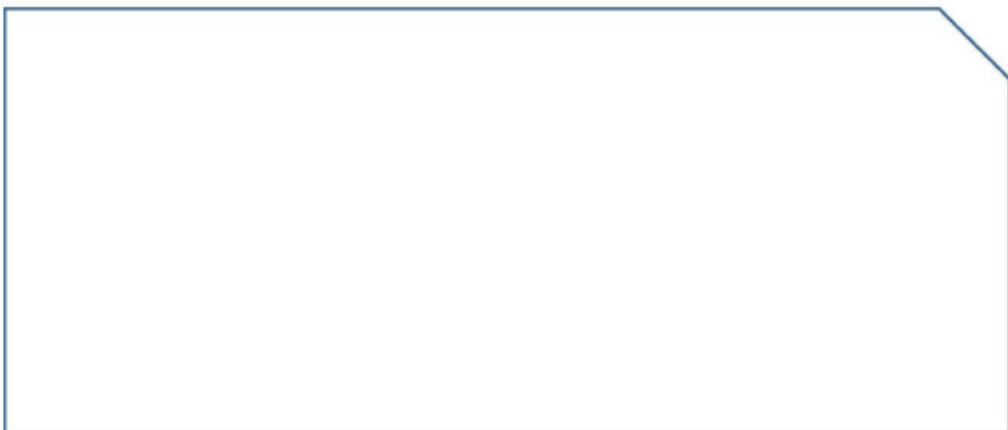
What current career exploration tools are used at your institution? Please list:



Explore one of the identified tools as if you were a current student at your institution. Below, please detail information about your experience, as well as your results:



Did you find the information you needed and expected when you used the tool? Do you feel the results accurately reflected your interests and abilities? Share your response below:



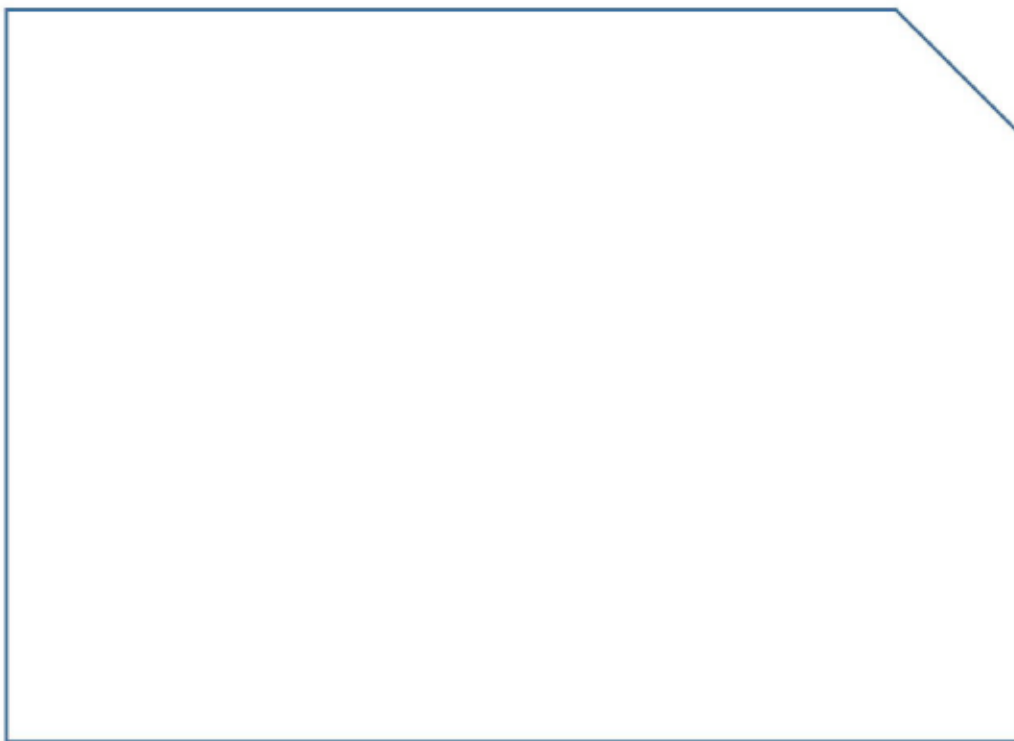
PART TWO: OUTSIDE THE INSTITUTION

Directions: Visit www.mynextmove.org and navigate to the box "Tell us what you like to do." Click "Start" and follow the prompts to complete the inventory.

List your score relative to each interest below:

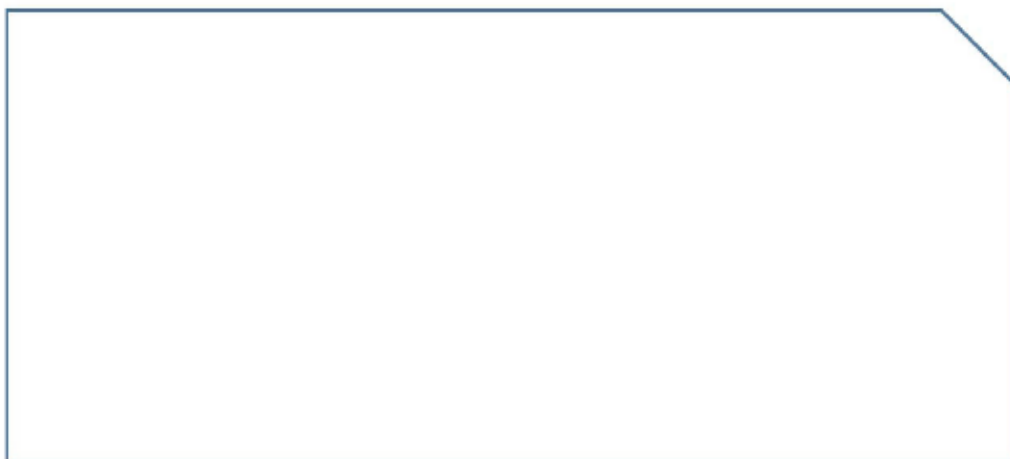
- ⇒ Realistic: _____
- ⇒ Investigative: _____
- ⇒ Artistic: _____
- ⇒ Social: _____
- ⇒ Enterprising: _____
- ⇒ Conventional: _____

Do the results accurately reflect your interests? Discuss below:

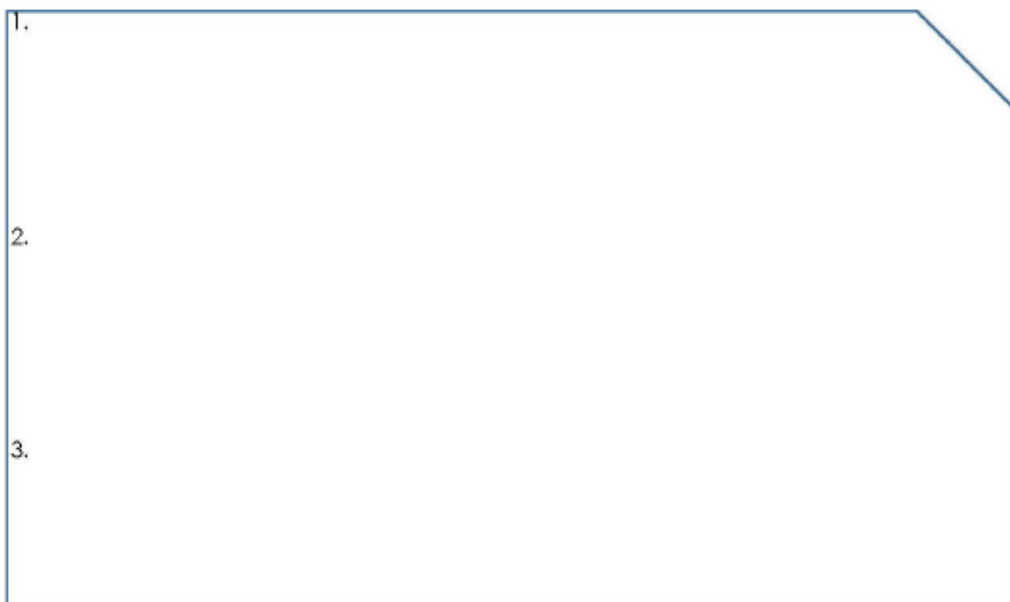


PART THREE: REFLECTION

Reflect on your experience with both career exploration tools. How can your understanding of these tools be useful to students who are undecided on their major?

**PART FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION**

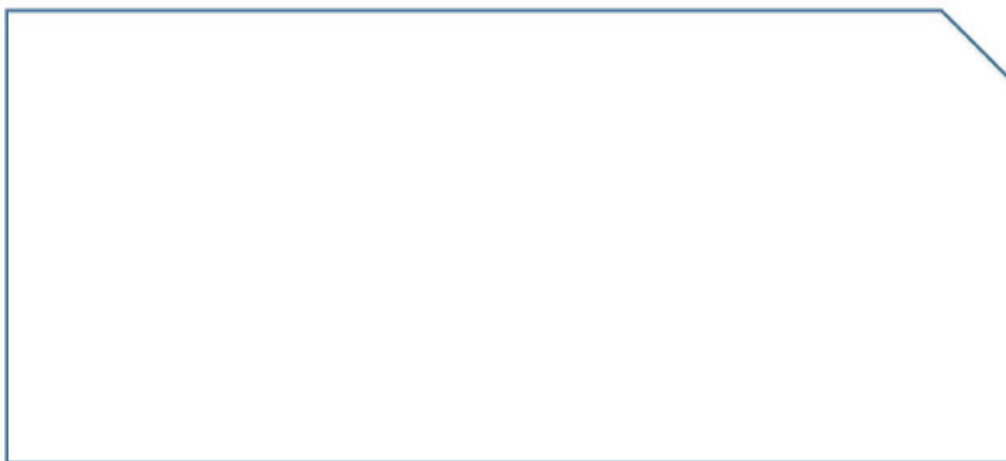
How can you apply the knowledge you have gained through this brief experience with career exploration tools to better support students at your institution or in your classroom? List at least three ways below:

1. 
- 2.
- 3.

YOUR STORY

PART ONE: REFLECTION

Reflect on your own educational journey. Do you remember why you selected the major and career you did? During your educational journey, did you ever change your major? Why and how? Share your story below:



PART TWO: IMPLEMENTATION

How can you share the information about your story with students? How much disclosure are you comfortable with? Would you like a partner from advising to assist you in delivering career information specific to your discipline?



STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLORATION

PART ONE: RESEARCH

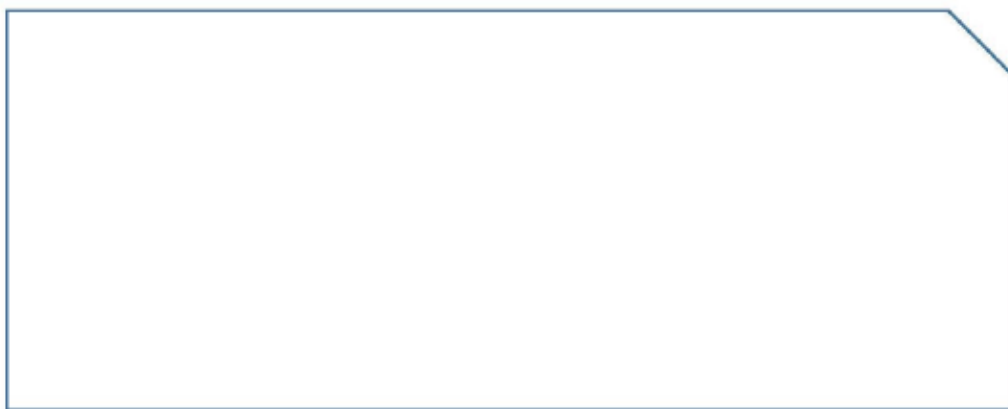
Directions: Survey the students in your class to see at what point of the career decision-making process they are in. Ask them for ideas on activities or learning opportunities that would be most beneficial for their current stage in the process. As you develop your questions, include specific questions that pertain to your course topic, your professional field, similar fields, or other areas of study the college offers.

Example questions you may ask your class are:

1. How many of you have fully decided on a major?
2. How many of you are still exploring the major that suites your interests and abilities?
3. What would be most helpful for you at the point you are at in the career decision-making process?

PART TWO: REFLECTION

Reflect on the information your students shared in response to the survey. What ideas did they provide that you could develop to help them? Include both formal instruction as well as materials or information that might help the students.



PART THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

Identify some of the key points from the student survey results and from your own reflections. Be prepared to share these with your colleagues at your next department meeting.



COURSE MATERIAL INTEGRATION

According to Fink (2003), academic advising and student services are important components of a student's overall education. However, it is argued that many areas in education are so disjointed, choppy, and "siloed" with clear boundary lines that it is hard for students to learn across the curriculum in any real contextualized manner (Fink, 2003). These boundaries act as barriers to student learning, can disrupt the flow of service, and create frustration on everyone's behalf.

Bain (2017) discusses contextualized learning as the process the student must complete to make connections and the faculty member must follow to facilitate the connections. Faculty members' facilitation should include guided activities, problem solving, metacognition, and reasonable inquiry. Contextualized learning can be vital to the improvement of teaching and learning because it will help promote student growth and allow students to be able to solve problems at a deeper level.

Integrated Course Material Examples

At Harper College, as part of the implementation of the Areas of Interest model, faculty were charged with integrating campus resources into their academic classes. This first example was used in a first-year course and was adapted for students to use a creative outlet in connecting to campus resources.

Example 1

Commercial Assignment

50 points

You will create a commercial for Harper College. The goal is to educate other students on the available resources on campus. Please use video footage, still pictures, music, and creativity to add interest and excitement. Use your Passport and scavenger hunt to identify services on campus.

Criteria	Points Possible	Points Received
Central idea of commercial, introduction to student resources at Harper, at least 5 resources identified	15	
Locations identified with description and picture/video	10	
Resources were described	10	
Creativity and Interest	10	
Appropriate music/verbiage	5	

Example 2

This assignment, developed by faculty members at Harper College provides students with an opportunity to discover their learning styles and preferences and to better understand how those preferences impact their success in the classroom.

Learning Style Assignment**100 points**

Take the brief learning styles assessment at <http://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/>. Choose a learning strategy from those that apply to your learning preferences according to the assessment, and create an example of how you would organize information from your FYS course utilizing this strategy.

What are your strongest learning preferences according to the VARK and what are the key words associated with these learning preferences?

What study strategies apply to your learning preference? Select three that interest you and describe them in your own words.
--

How have you used these strategies for studying in the past? Can you remember learning activities you have done that included aspects of these strategies?
--

How might you use these strategies for studying in the future in your college courses?
--

On the following page, create a sample of reading notes, lecture notes, or study materials that demonstrate your use of one or more of the recommended learning strategies. Describe the learning preference, label the recommended strategy, and show how you have applied it to the course materials.

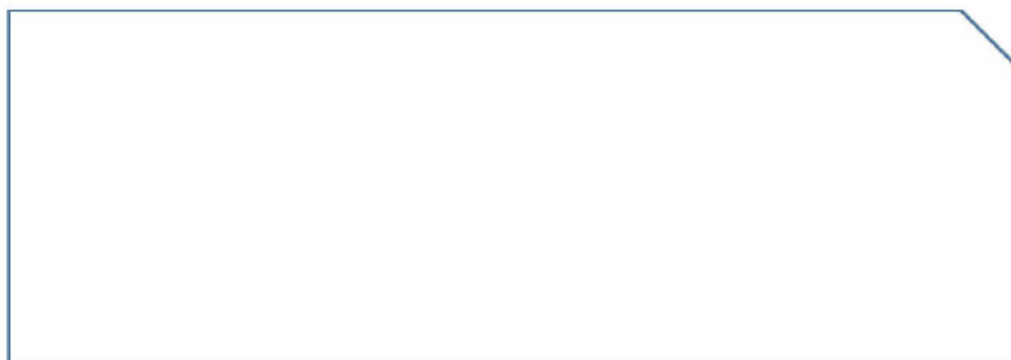
Part One: Research

From the *Completion by Design Game Changer Series*, read:

"Integrating Student Supports and Academics," by Dadgar, Nodine, Bracco, and Venezia (2013): Through interviews with leaders in higher education, this piece seeks to explain how student support services can become a more integral part of students' ongoing experiences in courses and in other aspects of college life, rather than an option that students have to seek out actively.

Part Two: Reflection

Do you currently integrate any student success/support topics in your classroom? What support do you need to continue integrating student supports into your instruction?



Conclusion

As a faculty member, this Guide was designed to provide you with the tools and training materials that are key components in working with students who are undecided within a Guided Pathways model. You should now have a deeper understanding of the Guided Pathways movement and how it relates to your individual institution and academic programs. Additionally, you have learned about Student Development theories, the career decision-making process, and the soft skills needed to partner in advising undecided students. Finally, you learned how to integrate your new knowledge into your classroom and/or into your course materials.

According to Bailey (2017), faculty should be involved in their institution's reform to a Guided Pathways model from the beginning, helping their students to understand that the guided pathways approach does not limit choice, but rather provide a structure in which their students can make informed choices. Socrates once said, "Not life, but good life, is to be chiefly valued." As an instructor, you have the opportunity to share some essential tools with your students to help them on their pathway to clarifying their goals. The Guided Pathways approach at your institution can only be successful if the people behind the model, like you, are helping their students make informed choices when it comes to college major and career selection.

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CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Undecided students are an important population to consider when it comes to student success measures, especially when a community college is transitioning to a Guided Pathways approach. Tinto (1990), Cooney (2000), and Grites (2012) assert that undecided students are less likely to be successful in college than their peers. In examining the history of career development services and support, we find that career exploration and college resource wayfinding has often been left to the student. In the Guided Pathways model, the importance of early major selection is essential. As a result, more career and academic advising knowledge is needed from college personnel. Because faculty have the closest (and sometimes only) interaction with students, it is important to train faculty to work with undecided students and to integrate these skills into the classroom.

The faculty guide represents an opportunity for faculty to gain a deeper understanding of effective ways to work with undecided students and it provides other stakeholders critical insight about the importance of incorporating intentional, student-focused support for undecided students into their curriculum.

Recommended Model for Implementing the Guide

The co-researchers recommend implementing the guide through training by a facilitator with a training group of five to ten faculty members. A group allows faculty to reflect and

roleplay in small, facilitated groups. A group of no more than ten participants will best support an environment of inclusive, participative training. This model is recommended to allow faculty to gain additional insight from their peers.

The co-researchers suggest that the training be held over a three-week period, with a multi-modal approach of ten hours of in-person training and twelve hours of outside training, for a total of twenty-two hours for completion of the training. Outside training hours allow faculty to explore the questions and activities in the guide that are specific to their department or institution

In-Person Training

A suggested schedule for in-person training is to have two four-hour sessions and one two-hour session. The first week of training introduces faculty to the first half of the guide:

Training Part I:

- 8:00 Welcome, introductions and overview of training
- 8:30 Understanding Guided Pathways in Practice
- 10:00 Student Development Theory
- 11:30 Introduction to outside activities for next week:
 1. Outside Work
 2. Academic Advising at Your Institution

The second week will focus on the second half of the guide:

Training Part II:

- 8:00 Debrief on Week One activities training
- 8:30 Skills needed for high-impact advising
- 9:30 Interpersonal skills: Role plays
- 10:00 Career decision-making process
- 11:30 Introduction to outside activities for the next week
 1. Soft Skills Scenario
 2. Operational Skills
 3. Your Story
 4. Student Opportunities for Exploration

The third week focuses on reflection and assessment of the training:

- 8:00 Debrief on Week two activities
- 8:30 Putting it all together
- 9:30 Wrap-up and opportunities for further training

Because small group work is encouraged, it is recommended that the training be held in a classroom that can be easily modified for individual or small group work. Financial implications may come from the cost of renting a room, depending on an institution's policies; printing faculty guides, estimated to be less than \$20 per participant; and hiring an outside facilitator if needed. The co-researchers encourage faculty members to use professional development funds or suggest that institutions apply for grants to offset the cost of this additional training.

Present, Apply, Review Model

The question of whether it would be best to have training facilitated by an internal college employee or an outside facilitator should be decided collectively by the faculty and administration. However, it is recommended that the facilitator be familiar with the faculty guide, has experience with an institution that has transitioned to Guided Pathways; and is able to employ the PAR (present, apply, review) model through training. This model suggests 35% of the training time dedicated to presenting and includes the objectives and goals of the training as well as the new material; 60% of the time dedicated to the outside-of-training work that encompasses the application of the new knowledge; and 5% review.

Assumptions and Limitations

The Guided Pathways movement is one of the latest innovations on community college campuses, but there is a lack of significant longitudinal data to fully assess the model and its impact. As this information becomes available, colleges can adapt their approaches to align with successful practices. The co-researchers assume that colleges will focus proactively on the implementation of Guided Pathways before pursuing training and development for faculty members in the model.

The literature on career development and student development provides a theoretical grounding and background, but limited research has been conducted on how to best train academic faculty to support advising in those areas. Anecdotal information from Harper College indicates that faculty welcome the support, but the scope of that information is limited to faculty from the co-researchers' college. The co-researchers hope that faculty from other institutions will be motivated to seek professional development opportunities that further support a holistic view of student success at community colleges and allows them to enhance their classroom instruction.

A limitation of the faculty guide itself is that some of the exercises may be difficult and less meaningful to complete on an individual basis. The greatest potential benefit will be with two or three participants. For faculty members who are anti-Pathways, the faculty guide will not provide additional motivation towards acceptance.

Finally, this dissertation is limited to the experiences the co-researchers at their large, suburban community college. This college has moved past the implementation stage of Guided Pathways, and the co-researchers had already begun providing support for all academic

advisors and some faculty because gaps had been identified that a faculty guide could address. This faculty guide may need to be adapted for smaller institutions or for those with greater opportunity for connections between the academic and student service areas in implementing the Guided Pathways model.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of the study were selections that were made by the co-researchers for the product. The product used examples from three community colleges, one of which was Harper College, and which was chosen based on the co-researchers' familiarity and experience at the institution. Based on familiarity and experience, the career research website used was www.mynextmove.org.

Suggestions for Future Research

The scope of this faculty guide was limited to working with community college faculty. The faculty guide could be expanded to all staff at an institution so that all are familiar with these critical resources for student success. This would ensure that students receive support in all areas of the institution as well as faculty and staff using a common language and avoiding confusion for students who are undecided.

Additionally, while the faculty guide provided is a tool that can be printed for in an independent format, it can easily be adapted to fit the needs of an in-person or remote workshop with a facilitator. The faculty guide may also be adapted as a web guide or training with course modules that assess for understanding prior to moving forward. This versatility would likely increase participation as it is adapted to fit users' needs.

In order to encourage faculty participation through professional development, it is suggested that the faculty guide be used as a tool for program and faculty development within individual departments and service areas. In this way, faculty and staff might qualify for continuing education units (CEUs) upon completion of the program.

Further research may be needed on student success and retention rates as more faculty become trained in working with undecided students. The use of this faculty guide could be used in tandem with quantitative research, such as student focus groups, or qualitative research, such as institutional data regarding student success, retention, and completion.

Faculty assessment and evaluation is a recommended next step for any institution that utilizes the faculty guide. Formative assessment is employed at the conclusion of each week in the training to assess the understanding of each weeks' topics. However, the co-researchers suggest that institutions implement a summative assessment of faculty at a six-month mark to determine the overall effectiveness of the program and make appropriate changes as needed.

Conclusion

Undecided students are an important population to consider from a student-success perspective. When students feel that their needs are being met, when the obstacles and barriers are mitigated or removed, student success is optimized. Encouraging faculty to be open and amenable to the needs of each student is essential. This dissertation provides a comprehensive faculty guide for working with undecided students in a Guided Pathways model to provide an opportunity for community college faculty to engage in a learning experience that will provide immediate benefits for their students. A college-wide adoption of a student-centered and holistic approach will put undecided students on the road to success.

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