Donald Super’s Life-Span, Life-Space Theory

Richard Cleveland Teaching Demonstration
Career Counseling Class, Seattle University
Tuesday April 9th, 2013

Agenda
- Introductions
- Super’s Developmental Life-Span, Life-Space Career Theory
- General Questions

Introductions
Richard Cleveland
- Aircraft Maintenance
- Professional School Counselor
- Doctoral Candidate
- Adjunct Instructor & Accreditation Assistant

Introductions
Richard Cleveland
- Spouse, Father, Son, Brother
- School Counseling Advocate
- School Counseling Educator
- Believer in Meaning & Hope

Introductions
Ice-Breaker
- What is something unique about you?

Super’s Life-Span, Life-Space Career Theory
- Why
  - Standards, Refining & Meaning
- What
  - Life-Span, Life-Space, & Self-Concept
- Processing
  - Strengths & Limitations
- How
  - What’s Next?
Why

District, State, National, & Professional Standards
- Everett School District Career & Technical Education
  - http://www.everett.k12.wa.us/cte/Home
- Washing State Certification in School Counseling
- WA CGCP
  - http://www.cgcpframework.org

Why

District, State, National, & Professional Standards
- ASCA National Model 3.0
  - http://schoolcounselor.org
- ASCA National Standards

Why

District, State, National, & Professional Standards
- CACREP
  - http://cacrep.org

Professional & Ethically Refining Our Practice
- Choosing to engage in an asymptotic journey
- Never quite arriving, but getting closer
Professionally & Ethically Refining Our Practice

- "Guidance consists in the agencies, persons, and activities which operate directly in the discovery and treatment of aptitudes, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses of individuals in the areas of personal, social, and vocational career building."
- "...the United States has been through a period of great economic depression; and this period has been marked by violent attacks upon the whole educational system of the country. Among others has been the attack upon all the so-called "frills" of education; guidance being near the top of this ... list. ... Urgent pleas for a return to the Three R's have been made. In every state in the Union certain schools have been forced to close because of lack of funds."
- "It is not surprising, then, that the White House Conference summed up the demand for guidance in the schools by this significant statement: "Counseling procedures should be established in all school systems, ... Counseling should be made available to all children in those grades in elementary and secondary schools..."

### Table 18: Exploratory Shop Courses for Boys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>Wood</th>
<th>Metal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto</td>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>Sheet Metal</td>
<td>Read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>Typing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Crafts</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Repair</td>
<td>Machine Art</td>
<td>Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Pattern</td>
<td>Commercial Drafting</td>
<td>Making Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 19: Exploratory Shop Courses for Girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foods</th>
<th>Clothing</th>
<th>Crafts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Weaving</td>
<td>Typing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jr. Office</td>
<td>Gdn Shop</td>
<td>Orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Novelty</td>
<td>Laundry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial</td>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting</td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smithing</td>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>Cottage Decorations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Why

**Professionally & Ethically Refining Our Practice**

- Viewing Career as More Than "just a job"
  - Finding fulfillment, happiness, and meaning in life
  - Recognizing the contextual influences of life
  - The possibility of hope via the developmental platform

### What

- Dr. Donald E. Super
- Life-Span, Life-Space Developmental Career Theory
  - "differential-developmental-social-phenomenological career theory"
  - Developmental over time across the life span
  - Stand-alone theory or synthesis of theories?
  - Similar energies as for developing theoretical orientation now only for career theory: Are you eclectic or integrative?
  - Life-Span+Life-Space+Self-Concept = Career Development

### What: Super's Theoretical Assumptions

- People's self-characteristics and self-concept differ,
- These self-characteristics make them eligible for various occupations,
- Individual occupations require specific traits, but these requirements are flexible enough to allow for diversity of persons,
- Self-concept develops over time, ergo making choices and adjustment are continuous processes,
- The change process can be described and fits within certain stages (not surprising for developmental),
- Occupational level and career pattern are influenced by contextual and personal factors,
- Degree of readiness to address scope with career developmental tasks (career maturity) influenced by degree of success from previous tasks in earlier stages,
- Career development can be "facilitated" with developmentally appropriate career interventions across the lifespan,
- Career choice is a synthesizing and compromising process that is interactive with the individual's environment,
- Life satisfaction is dependent upon finding life-role opportunities and life-role involvement consistent with a person's valued self-characteristics, preferences, and values.
LIFE-SPAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Approx Age Range</th>
<th>Main Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Childhood (age 4-13)</td>
<td>Develop a beginning sense of self &amp; understanding of the world of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Adolescence (age 14-24)</td>
<td>Crystallizing &amp; specifying occupational preferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment</td>
<td>Early Adulthood (age 25-45)</td>
<td>Stabilizing, consolidating &amp; advancing within the occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>Middle Adulthood (age 45-65)</td>
<td>Holding, updating &amp; innovating within the occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengagement</td>
<td>Late Adulthood (age 65+)</td>
<td>Deceleration, retirement planning &amp; retirement living</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIFE-SPAN: Growth

- Main task is to develop a beginning sense of self and understanding of the world of work
- Substages: Fantasy, Interest, and Capacity
- Natural curiosities about work, occupations, etc. propel children to investigate the world of work and their own interests, talents, and skills
- Thus we progress from curiosity, to investigate interests, to recognition of capacities

LIFE-SPAN: Exploration

- Main task is crystallizing and specifying occupational preferences
- Substages: Tentative, Transition, and Trial
- Narrowing choices and trying these out via choosing (or not choosing) further training, education, etc. for an occupation
- Fluid process as choices disappear, reappear, but the goal is the crystallization of preferences specific to occupation(s)
- Also note the importance of knowing self

LIFE-SPAN: Establishment

- Main tasks are Stabilization, Consolidating, and Advancing
  - Stabilization: Is this occupation (a) one in which I can succeed, and (b) allows me to express my self-concept
  - Consolidating: Starting to dig in, produce, and develop a positive reputation/presence
  - Advancing: Engaging in Consolidating, resulting in advancement within the occupation (i.e. increased pay, responsibility, opportunity, etc.)

LIFE-SPAN: Maintenance

- Main tasks are Holding, Updating, and Innovating
- Holding to the occupation, choosing to update with the demands/changes, and even innovating self rather than remaining stagnant
- Interactive with self-concept so process is as much about personal self-concept, preference, etc., as it is about specific technical occupational skill

LIFE-SPAN: Disengagement

- Main tasks are Deceleration, Retirement Planning, and Retirement Living
- As individuals progress through the life span, concerns about lifestyle, retirement activities, as well as physical, financial, and spiritual considerations emerge
LIFE-SPACE

ROLES
- Child
- Student
- Leisure
- Citizen
- Worker
- Spouse/Partner
- Homemaker
- Parent
- Pensioner

THEATERS
- Home
- School
- Workplace
- Community

SELF-CONCEPT

- Self-Concept: “picture of the self in some role, situation, or position performing some set of functions, or in some web of relationships.”
- Career decisions are our attempts at translating our self-understanding into career terms.
- Objective/Subjective elements within self-concept:
  - Objective: homogenous; generalizable; definitional aspects:
    - I am like a school counselor in that I like working with children and youth, and am good with interpersonal communication skills.
  - Subjective: heterogeneous; what we as individuals bring; how we have dealt with, constructed meaning from unique life experiences:
    - I lost my dad as a young man and know the pain that can come with grief. I want to be able to help other children and youth facing that challenge.
- Dynamic, continuous nature of Super’s theory. If life experiences are constantly changing my self, then self-concept is being changed, ergo my Life Space and Life Span are being impacted as well.

What: Life-Span+Life-Space+Self-Concept = Career Development


Processing: Discussion Activity

Strengths & Limitations (aka Your Likes & Dislikes)
- Turn & talk with neighbor(s) to discuss...
  1. Where might there be alignment/tension between Super’s theory & Professional School Counseling?
  2. Where might there be alignment/tension between Super’s theory & your own personal approach, beliefs, theoretical orientation, etc.?

Processing: Limitations

- While Super did dedicate some time to exploring differences between men/women, theory predominantly based on white (male) subjects who hold a social value of independence.
- Theory originated during time when most men spent career in single company/occupation and most women worked as homemakers or sexually segregated occupations.
Processing: Strengths

- Developmental
- "Career Maturity" becomes "Career Adaptability"
- The role of context
- Extending adaptability to adolescents & children
- Dynamic, continuous nature of context
- Assumption that career is intertwined with satisfaction in life
- Career: "the life course of a person encountering a series of developmental tasks and attempting to handle them in such a way as to become the kind of person he or she wants to become."

How

So What’s Next?

- Instrument Ideas
  - Super’s Career Development Assessment & Counseling (C-DAC) Model
  - Career Development Inventory (CDI) (Thompson, Lindeman, Super, Jordan, & Meyers, 1974)
  - Salience Inventory (Super & Nevill, 1986)
  - Values Scale (VS) (Nevill & Super, 1986)
  - Super’s Work Values Inventory-revised (SWVI-r)
  - Strong Interest Inventory (SII) (Harmon, Hansen, Borgen, & Hammer, 1994)

- Intervention Ideas
  - “Pie of Life” exercise (pg. 58)
  - Genogram (pg. 59)
  - Adjusting a “Life Map” to a “Career Map” exercise
  - Book(s): Bibliotherapy
  - Creativity

How: Resources

- Sample lesson plan out of U of O found at: http://oregonce.usu.edu/pdf/curriculum/life_roles_rainbow_ms.pdf
- “Starting” reading list on page 62 in text
- Professional School Counseling (ASCA Online)
  - Flam & Sundel-Hansen (2008) – PSC 10(1)
  - Kolodinsk, Schneider, Merriport, McLean, Mangan, & Pederson (2000) – PSC 10(2)

How: Resources
How: Small Group Activity

Creating a Career Unit/Lesson Plan Outline

A. Break into small group by level (ES, MS, HS)
B. Sketch out a lesson/unit plan based on Super's theory
   1. What stages(s) are applicable for your level?
   2. What's your objective? (Think in terms of task)
   3. Activity idea(s) for the lesson/unit? (Creativity)
   4. What other subject areas/lessons might this connect with? (Collaboration)
C. Be prepared to share your work

References


General Questions

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