Designing and Delivering Tailored Career Counseling for Racial and Ethnic Minority Students

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Infusing Career Theory and Scholarly Research with Practice and Implementation
• Traditional career counseling theories, methodologies, and practices were created by White scholars and focused on European and Western values of individuality, competition, separation of work and family, and a pull yourself up by your own bootstraps mentality (Falconer & Hays, 2006)

• This is contrary to racial/ethnic minority cultures that place high value on community, cooperation, family, and collectively working together toward the progress and advancement of the community/village as a whole - not just the individual (Arthur & McMahon, 2005; Constantine & Flores, 2006; Lucas, 1993)
We tell our students to tailor their resumes for a specific job posting—we too should tailor our career counseling methods.

Career counseling is not a one-size-fits-all blanket process:
- We as career counselors must tailor our mindset, services, and programs to account for specific cultural backgrounds, ideologies, values, and customs that contribute to a student’s identity development (Clark, Severy, & Sawyer, 2004)
- Tailor beyond the major and year in school.

The need for this is especially greater at PWI’s where ethnic minorities face feelings of isolation, microaggressions, discriminatory barriers, and low self-efficacy (Gloria & Hird, 1999).

Cultural norms may be misconstrued in the workplace:
- Lack of eye contact or not asking many questions may be misinterpreted as insubordination or a lack of initiative and engagement.
• Cultures rooted in community, cooperation, family, and collectively working together toward the progress and advancement of the group over the individual
  • While each culture is different, the above themes can be found throughout the mindset of racial/ethnic minorities in America
  • These groups also have shared experiences of racism and oppression rooted in American history (Arthur & McMahon, 2005; Constantine & Flores, 2006; Lucas, 1993)

• In the past roughly 40 years, only 6.7% of career development/career counseling scholarly studies focused on racial and ethnic minorities and multicultural students (Risco & Duffy, 2011)

• Ethnic/racial minorities hold a higher percentage of low-skilled/lower-paying jobs and constitute the highest unemployment rates in the nation (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019)

• Research shows that tailored multicultural career counseling lowers anxiety, bolsters confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and is even connected to increased retention and graduation rates (Osborn, Howard, & Leierer, 2007)
• **Constructivist Career Development Theory**
  Sense of ownership over constructing one’s own stories leads to increased career self-efficacy, bolstered confidence, and stronger career decision-making (Grier-Reed, Skaar, & Conkel-Ziebell, 2009)

• **Social Cognitive Career Theory**
  Developed by Lent, Brown, & Hackett in 1994, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) explains that the three interconnected aspects of career development are how basic academic and career interests develop, how educational and career choices are made, and how academic and career success is obtained (Based on Albert Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory)

• **Critical Race Theory**
  “Critical race theory encourages the storytelling of people of color to better understand their individual experiences, which contribute to understanding a more holistic reality” (Teranishi, Beringer, Grey, & Parker, 2009)

• **Systems Theory Framework**
  Accounting for individual, social, environmental/societal, cultural, and other factors that influence career development; utilizing holistic approach (Arthur & McMahon, 2005)

• **Multicontextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments (MMDLE)**
  Used to examine the institutional campus climate for racial and ethnic groups on college campuses (Nguyen, Chan, Nguyen, & Teranishi, 2018)
1. What is my career counseling philosophy/approach?

2. Do I make assumptions about my students’ career goals based on their name, appearance, vernacular, or other stereotyped aspects?

3. Do I consider, understand, and appreciate the ways in which my students’ racial, ethnic, gender, cultural, and socioeconomic experiences and backgrounds impact and influence their career choices?

4. Do I react with compassion and supportiveness or confusion, surprise, a lack of comprehension, and unintended judgement?

5. What career programming and services do we unapologetically offer solely for our students of color and marginalized groups?

6. How do my identity and background impact the way I interact with students?

7. Do I share my story with students as a way to create a space for open communication and trust? Storytelling is a strong practice, cultural norm for many, and builds bonding.

8. How do we prepare our students of color to exist successfully in workplaces rooted in White ideologies while maintaining and respecting their own identity and engaging in self-advocacy?

9. What information and knowledge do we share with our students? In what ways do we deliver that knowledge?
African American College Students

• Males face extreme barriers with regards to racism and distrust of “the system” (Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010)

• Females face racism and sexism on a daily basis (Storlie, Hilton, Duenyas, Archer, & Glavin, 2018)

• Both lack role models on campus (staff & faculty) and off-campus (workforce)

• Lack of black representation in high level and high earning careers such as STEM fields

• Benefit greatly from mentoring programs
Latino/a/x College Students

- Sense of communal/familial obligation, dedication, and retribution – familismo
- **Females** (Storlie, Mostade, & Duenyas, 2016)
  - Career paths influenced by wanting to give back to their community/nurturing
  - Pressures to fulfill wife and mother role
- **Males**
  - Commonly seen as honorable to drop out of college in favor working to provide for extended family (Risco & Duffy, 2011)
Asian American College Students

- Pressure and expectation to enter into high performing fields such as engineering and medicine (Kodama & Huynh, 2017)
- Combatting the Model Minority Myth

American Indian/Native American College Students

- Unique history of racism, oppression, and discrimination
- Culture values silence, laughter, and family (Jackson, Beecher, Hoffmann, Adolpho, & Fleischer, 2010)
  - Career counseling sessions can entail 30 minutes of silence, continual laughter, and bringing in family members
Pacific Islander Students

• P.I. culture is rooted in village/communalism, family-first, respect for elders and ancestors, interconnectedness, interdependence, sanctity of land, and giving back

• Unique experience due to colonization and banishment of cultural customs

• Survival and success in both native homelands and U.S.A. is dependent upon maintaining cultural ties (Kahakalua, 2004; Tuhwai, 2002; Vakalahi, 2009)

• “Their island homes determine values and beliefs that may contradict Western-based criteria for success required in American university settings. Consideration of these core cultural values is needed if Pacific-Islander students are to thrive in higher education” (Uehara, Chugen, & Raatior, 2018)
Narratives, Storytelling, Career Support Groups, Group Career Counseling

- “Talk story“ - Especially effective among racial/ethnic minority groups where these communal practices are the social norm and embedded in cultural traditions (Clark, Severy, & Ali Sawyer, 2004)
  - Conversations can take place during career course, other relevant campus courses, student organization meetings, student wellness center programming, RA trainings, orientation, etc.

- Students bond during group counseling sessions by finding similarities across cultures, such as family commitments/obligations

- Commonalities pave the way for increased comfortability, relationship-building, and allyship
SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Macro Level

1. What’s always on your mind? What do you think about a lot? If you are on the computer/internet, what do you spend your time reading or searching most?

2. What positive things do people say about you?

3. Who inspires you? Who would you most like to be like? Who are your role models?

4. What do you help others with that seems natural or easy for you? What do people come to you for? What do you do particularly well?

5. How do your upbringing, background, culture, belief-system, values, lifestyle, etc. impact your daily actions and life choices?

6. When do you feel powerful, passionate, free, useful, excited, and/or inspired?

7. Who do you want to help? Who would you like to inspire? Whose lives would you like to change?

8. If you had a chance to be known for something special or unique, what would it be? How do you feel you contribute (or could contribute) to society?

9. What is your biggest fear? What is the thing that scares you the most?

10. How would you like to be seen, recognized, acknowledged, remembered, praised – now and/or in the future? What’s the legacy you want to leave behind?
SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Macro and Micro Level

1. What are my values and what principles do I want to live by?
2. How can I use my strengths, values, ideals, and purpose to serve my community and the world?
3. What do I want to be when I grow up?
4. What does my family want me to be?
5. How does my relationship with my family and our cultural customs, values, and expectations impact my career thoughts and choices?
6. In which situations is it important for me to be surrounded by people who look like me, speak like me, think like me, and act like me?
7. In which situations is it important for me to be surrounded by people who are different from me?
8. I just want a good paying job when I graduate...I just want a good paying job that respects and values my identity and the diversity that I bring to the table.
• **Systemic racism** and **gender bias** are the reasons that people of color and women earn less money than their white counterparts and hold lower-skilled jobs/careers.

• Women and people of color are denied equal pay, promotions, and high-level job titles; even when they possess the same or even higher educational and professional experiences.

$$ DO YOUR STUDENTS KNOW THAT? $$$
• For every $1 a man makes, a woman makes 81 cents
• Ethnic and racial minorities are overrepresented in low-paying and low-skilled jobs/careers
• The wage and promotion disparity is largest for women of color
• White men are given higher wages/salaries and more promotions than any other demographic; even if they have the same or less educational and professional experience
• White men hold the highest percentage of Director and Executive level positions

https://www.payscale.com/data/racial-wage-gap
GENDER PAY GAP BY RACE, RELATIVE TO WHITE MEN
(INCLUDES ONLY THOSE WITH AT LEAST A BACHELOR'S DEGREE)

- **American Indian & Alaska Native**
  - Uncontrolled: $0.70
  - Controlled: $0.67

- **Asian**
  - Uncontrolled: $0.07
  - Controlled: $0.02

- **Black or African American**
  - Uncontrolled: $0.17
  - Controlled: $0.19

- **Hispanic**
  - Uncontrolled: $0.18
  - Controlled: $0.18

- **Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander**
  - Uncontrolled: $0.80
  - Controlled: $0.90

- **White**
  - Uncontrolled: $0.11
  - Controlled: $1.15

**CONTROLLED GENDER PAY GAP**: Measures pay for men and women with the same job and qualifications.

**UNCONTROLLED GENDER PAY GAP**: Measures median salary for all men and all women regardless of job type, seniority, location, industry, years of experience, etc.

https://www.payscale.com/data/gender-pay-gap
As women’s careers progress, their pay gap increases.
WOMEN OF COLOR FACE WIDER GAPS IN OPPORTUNITY

We also looked at the opportunity gap by race and found that most women of color are more likely to stagnate in their careers than white women.

### Race and Gender Still Limit Opportunities to Advance

*(Includes only those with at least a bachelor’s degree)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Individual Contributor</th>
<th>Manager/Supervisor</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Executive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native Women</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Women</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American Women</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Women</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Women</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Women</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Men</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Inform your students about the realities of the wage, promotion, and job title disparity for women, minorities, and other marginalized groups?

• Provide students and alumni with the knowledge and tools to self-advocate during salary negotiations, promotions, and job title designations?

• Discuss with your students and alumni how to recognize workplace discrimination?

• Create awareness for students and alumni in positions of privilege and power on how to be allies and make necessary change as future leaders?

• Wonder why it’s considered taboo to discuss salary in America? Is it just another culturally constructed form of oppression to keep people uninformed and “in their place”?
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• Infusing theoretical frameworks to better serve students of color and marginalized groups
• Incorporating theories, methods, approaches, and research into career staff training; check-in can be used as a checklist
• Tailor career counseling and programming for specific student groups
  • First-gen, student athletes, student vets, international, etc.
• Approaches and methods rooted in theory and research allows for greater faculty and administrative “buy-in”
  • Provides the validity and credibility that academic affairs and senior leadership often seek
  • Increased retention and graduation rates
• Employers can incorporate theoretical frameworks into tailored recruitment, hiring, and staffing practices
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REFERENCES & RESOURCES


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