PROVING WHY WE MATTER

USING CAREER DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES TO MEASURE OUR EFFECTIVENESS
What they think we do!

I need a JOB!
HOW ARE YOUR CURRENT EFFORTS MEASURED?
TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

- Needs
- Participation
- Satisfaction
LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

AN INTRODUCTION
HOW IT ALL BEGAN
STEP 1: DEFINING CONTEXT

- Clearly define the career intervention
- Identify the intended learners
- Identify the primary stakeholders
- Connect your career intervention to relevant mission statements

Resource: Learning Outcomes Assessment Step-by-Step: Enhancing Evidence-Based Practice in Career Services by Julia Panke Makela and Gail S. Rooney
STEP 2: BRAINSTORMING OUTCOMES

• What should your intended learners know as a result of the intervention?
• What should your intended learners be able to do or demonstrate as a result of the intervention?
• What should the intended learners value or feel as a result of the intervention?
• What difference should the intervention have made for the intended learner?

Resource: Learning Outcomes Assessment Step-by-Step: Enhancing Evidence-Based Practice in Career Services by Julia Panke Makela and Gail S. Rooney
STEP 3: CRAFTING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Learning outcomes should be specific and measurable

• Use action verbs that specifically demonstrate the abilities the postdoc should achieve as a result of your service or program
  • Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Cognitive Skills

• Writing learning outcomes is a process
SAMPLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Postdocs who utilize individual career counseling will be able to:

• Identify specific resources to gather pertinent career-related information (i.e., books, campus resources, organizations)

• Formulate and implement an Individual Development Plan (IDP)

• Evaluate interests and skills to explore and expand career options

TIPS:
• Avoid verbs such as know, understand, and learn. While they are often used, they are also open to interpretation

• Incorporate outcomes at the higher levels of learning
STEP 4: SELECTING YOUR METHOD

- Which evaluation method is best?
- What tools do you have available to you?
- What ethical considerations should be addressed?

Adapted from, Learning Outcomes Assessment Step-by-Step: Enhancing Evidence-Based Practice in Career Services by Julia Panke Makela and Gail S. Rooney
REFLECTING ON THE RESULTS AND PROCESS

...and where do we go from here?
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

REASON FOR VISIT

• Help developing and executing a plan designed to increase my competitiveness in the job market (80%)

• Help developing job search strategies along with supporting materials (60%)

Surprising Data:
“I am not sure what I want to do and need help figuring out my next steps” was checked the least with 20%
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

IMPACT

Most frequently checked learning outcome:

• Increased self awareness (53%)
• Specific resources to help gather pertinent career-related information (47%)
• A starting point for exploring potential options (40%)
• Strategies for researching potential career options (40%)
• Specific skills building activities (40%)

What we learned:
Contrary to what they believe, many postdocs are at the early stages of career development and need to move through those stages before moving on to the more advance stages.
SUMMARY OF RESULTS
SATISFACTION

Rating Averages (with 5 being the highest)

- Helpfulness, 4.8
- Competence and knowledge, 4.87
- Overall satisfaction with service, 4.73
Specific Comments

- Dara Wilson-Grant was very helpful! She asked me questions to understand the type of position that I wanted and she helped me to practice and develop smart ways to answer interview questions. I will highly recommend the training provided by the OPA. I think the OPA should better advertise the one-on-one training they provide.

- I wasn't sure what to expect during my meeting with Dara because I'm very undecided about my career options, but she was especially helpful. She listened to my interests and my situation, provided me a self-assessment and gave me very useful resources that will help me to narrow my focus. I'm happy I met with her early in the process. I think she will play a fundamental role in my career development while at UNC.
Specific Comments

• I can't say enough good things about Dara. She was supportive and understanding, and made me feel a lot more confident about what I am going through at this stage in my career development. She was very helpful in identifying action steps I can take right now, and I look forward to working with her more in the near future. Thank you so much for Dara and the OPA for all that you do!!

• I got my PhD at UNC and wish I had this resource as a PhD student on the job market. I have learned so much from the OPA and really wish these programs and one-on-one training sessions had been available to graduate students—because then UNC can brag about the amazing jobs their grad students get!

Learning how to toot your own horn is an important skill, but it is much easier (and at times, more effective) when someone else does it for you.
SHARING YOUR RESULTS

• Department Meetings
• Faculty Advisory Committee
• Annual Reports
• Most recently, OPA’s five-year review

“Without promotion something terrible happens - nothing.”

~ P.T. Barnum
Dara Wilson-Grant, MSEd
Licensed Professional Counselor
Associate Director, UNC Postdoc Affairs
Owner & Consultant, Careers in Bloom

www.careersinbloom.com