21st Century Career Development

Gathering Clues for Student Success
The Age-Old Question:

• “What are you going to do when you grow up?”

• The Question assumes that there is one correct and true career for each person and our task is to figure out what it is.

• The Question is so 20th century thinking.
Some startling statistics…

• 7 of 10 Americans would change careers today if they could.

• 70% of college graduates report that their careers were significantly influenced by unplanned events. (John Krumboltz *Planned Happenstance*)

• As job markets change quickly, careers in demand today may not be viable in 4-5 years.
• Students can no longer base decisions on single factors or traits.

• A set of skills, interests, & experiences can be applied to 20+ career choices during a lifetime.

• The one constant in life is change. Expect the unexpected & unpredictable to pop up throughout your life.

• **Moral:** people expect more from work than they’re receiving. Most 20th century workers fell into their careers randomly without much consideration.
Linear thinking developed in the early 20th century:
- Frank Parsons developed theory in 1909
- It assumed a relationship between a person’s traits (characteristics) and a job’s factors (characteristics of a job)

• Used to be a major a career:
  - Art = cartoonist
  - Economics = bond trader on Wall Street
  - English = editor, technical writer
20th Century Career Advice

• Don’t let unexpected events disrupt your plans
• Choose a career goal as soon as possible
• Do all you can to make your “dream” come true
• Take action only when you are sure of the outcome
• Avoid making mistakes
• Wait for a lucky break
• Go for a job only if you have all of the skills
• Believe that luck is just an accident
What’s Wrong with This Advice?

It assumes that:

• A student should stick to a plan – no matter what else comes along

• Mistakes are “bad”

• A person should wait to have the “right” skills or know the outcome first

• A student should have a dream or passion even when they have very limited experiences

This thinking is too simplistic for 21st century work and career planning
21st Century Thinking

• Connecting the Dots -- themes and patterns will emerge that connect student classes, experiences, jobs, hobbies, etc. pointing students in several career directions.

• 21st Century major → a career:
  – Art = special prosecutor
  – Economics = veterinarian
  – English = psychotherapist
Changes in Work Since 1977

• Competition is *global*, not local. Customers are no longer brand or business loyal

• Job *security* is dead

• *Life balance* is harder to find

• A new *two-tiered society* – information-savvy vs. have-nots

• Workers have to be *high-tech & high-touch*
• 40-60% of the **jobs of the future** have yet to be created.

• 20 somethings of today can expect to:
  – Work **9-13 jobs** in their lifetime (3.6 yrs. each)
  – Make **3-5 radical career changes**

• Workers will need **portable skills** – “have skills will travel”

• Workers need to **diversify** with **3-5 skill sets**, some of which are transferable to other careers

• Workers need to become **entrepreneurs** within their job and work as if they were self-employed
Career Advise for Today’s Students:

• Be curious
• Make the most of new & unplanned experiences
• Take the path less traveled
• Keep options open – try a variety of activities
• Explore/become involved in things of interest or intrigue
• Wake Up -- Don’t wait for your passion or dream to take hold
• Go ahead, take risks, and make mistakes even if rejection is a possible outcome
• Go for the job – then learn the skills
• Enjoy yourself – the good life is a balanced life
• Overcome self-sabotage
• Be adaptable and open-minded

Remember that finding a satisfying career is no accident!
You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
Any direction you choose.
You’re on your own.
And you know what you know.
And You are the guy
who’ll decide where to go!
For more information about the happenstance theory of career development consider these books by John Krumboltz:

- **Luck is No Accident – Making the Most of Happenstance in Your Life and Career** provides a look at how “planned” luck can have a major impact on peoples’ lives.

- **Fail Fast, Fail Often - How Losing Can Help You Win** concludes that happy and successful people spend less time planning and more time acting.