

This is the correct format for the running head beginning on page 2.

Abstract

The basis of this project was to become more familiar with theories and models of career development, counseling and career decision-making. Specifically, this paper describes John Krumboltz's theory and model of career development. The purpose of the project was to research the history and development of Krumboltz's theory and better understand how to implement it with people who need assistance with career, academic and personal problems. The paper will also discuss the capacity of how it can be used to facilitate individuals who encounter unanticipated opportunities and happenstance situations. The initial part of the project concludes with ethical and cultural considerations to Krumboltz's model and how to implement the concepts of the model with special populations. The second part of the project addresses a personal application of my career development experience in relation to Krumboltz's theory. A detailed description of the career opportunities and experiences is included.

Theorist

John D. Krumboltz, PH.D., has demonstrated throughout his life and work that counselors can help clients with career, academic, and personal problems to explore and expand their learning experiences; challenge unhelpful beliefs; embrace unanticipated opportunities; and take positive actions to create more satisfying lives for themselves ("John Krumboltz," n.d.). Krumboltz believes that career counselors should utilize career assessment tools and cognitive behavioral counseling methods to assist clients and improve their ability of obtaining careers.

John Krumboltz is a very accomplished theorist. He received from the American Psychological Association, the award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Knowledge (2002) and the Leona Tyler award (1990), the nation's foremost award in the field of counseling psychology ("John Krumboltz," n.d.).

History

John Krumboltz was a theorist who led his respective field in career development. In 1979, he proposed a social learning theory of how an individual can best choose a career. In 1996, he expanded this into a learning theory of career counseling and has since added the concept of planned happenstance ("John Krumboltz," n.d.).

Krumboltz's career path was not a result of meticulous planning. Instead, he was undecided on a major while attending his undergraduate experience at Coe College. His tennis coach at the time suggested that he should major in psychology and that ultimately led him to earn his bachelor's degree in psychology through Coe College. He went on to

earn his master's degree in guidance at Teachers College, Columbia University. Upon completion of his master's degree, he worked as a high school counselor and taught algebra as well in Waterloo, Iowa.

He was not completely satisfied with his high school position and experience and as a result he obtained a Ph.D. in counseling and educational psychology from the University of Minnesota. Once he obtained his Ph.D., he became a research psychologist in the Air Force and continued on to be an assistant professor at Michigan State University. According to "John Krumboltz" (n.d.) he has been a professor of education and psychology at Stanford University since 1961 and has served as an exemplary role model for lifelong, challenging, and positive learning. Many of Krumboltz's career guidance and opportunities occurred through happenstance rather than rational planning. This is a major emphasis and the underlying factor that surrounds his theory.

Assumptions and Characteristics about Theory

Krumboltz's Happenstance Learning Theory has evolved over time. He originally introduced a theory based on instrumental conditioning, which he called associative learning. In 2008, he modified the decision making model to more effectively empower the individual to cope with happenstance situations specifically related to career choices.

According to "Krumboltz's Theory," (2016) indecision is desirable and sensible, as it allows the opportunity for individuals to benefit from unplanned situations. If counselors can help clients develop an optimistic outlook, they will be better equipped to deal with change in their lives. Krumboltz's theory offers insight on how to deal with the

limited degree of control we have over some career experiences (“Krumboltz’s Theory,” 2016). Krumboltz’s theory is centered around the fact that social factors that are unpredictable, random events that happen by chance, and environmental factors all influence peoples lives.

Krumboltz’s theory suggests that counselors need to foster certain characteristics in clients to help them approach happenstance occurrences and events positively. These characteristics include: curiosity to explore learning opportunities, persistence to deal with obstacles, flexibility to address a variety of circumstances and events, and optimism to maximize benefits from unplanned events (“Krumboltz’s Theory,” 2016). Included in the theory are the following factors to improve career management in individuals: the commitment to ongoing learning and skill development, ongoing self-assessment, assessment and feedback from others, effective networking achieving work-life balance, and financial planning to incorporate periods of unemployment and retirement (“Krumboltz’s Theory,” 2016). According to Brown, (2016) the four factors that influence individual development and ultimately the career decision-making process include genetic endowment and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. All of these aforementioned factors can be applied and utilized to help advocate for individuals’ diverse career development and employment opportunities in the global economy.

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

Krumboltz’s theory can be applied to all genders, racial and ethnic minorities, and those people who fear discrimination; including gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender clients (Brown, 2016). Krumboltz’s approach to career counseling has considerable

merit, particularly for disenfranchised and marginalized groups in our society (Brown, 2016). Krumboltz empowered individuals to break the mold and pursue their dream. He believed in using positive reinforcement for people who applied themselves to the best of their ability, because a lot of the people he worked with came from negative surroundings. Krumboltz was also a proponent for helping people of special populations identify with a role model they could relate to. Krumboltz continuously encouraged his clients to formulate goals that would help them achieve their career of choice.

References

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