Utilizing Undergraduates' Career Concerns to Create Self-Help Materials

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ABSTRACT: Career-development-related self-help materials for college students are necessary when implementing the three levels of service delivery included within the cognitive information processing approach suggested by Sampson, Reardon, Peterson, and Lenz (2004). This study suggests a process for developing resource-guide handouts based on feedback collected from college students regarding their career concerns.

The first step involves collecting and grouping feedback (items) obtained from college students regarding their career concerns. In this step, career concern items can be drawn either from career practitioners' recollection or from focus group interviews with college students. These career concern items can then be grouped into specific categories by reviewing them or by surveying college students. The latter is a quantitative approach, and the survey data must be analyzed and categorized using exploratory factor analysis. After categorizing (grouping) the career concern items, career practitioners or researchers must examine each career concern category to identify possible reasons or issues associated with each category. In this step, career practitioners must explore all possible interventions, materials, and resources available on campus or create new interventions if necessary.

The second step involves matching the gathered interventions, materials, and resources with the established career concern categories to create a resource-guide handout. In this process, some interventions (or programs), materials (books, handouts, videos, audios, etc.), or resources on campus (any services provided on campus) may be matched with one or several career concern categories.

The third step involves creating and delivering career-development-related self-help materials in different formats. In this study, three types of career resources were developed: a career development guidebook, a series of resource guides, and a series of self-help handouts. Notably, the career development guidebook is designed for those who wish to learn the overall process of career development. Each resource guide is designed as a one-piece handout including a title containing a representative career concern expression to draw the attention of college students; similar career concern expressions; possible causes or problems related to the concern; possible outcomes derived from reading the guide; further explanations for career development or problem-solving; and related self-help handouts, books, and resources (programs or services). These handouts were made for self-help so that college students could read them and obtain solutions to their career concerns. Various types of handouts are available at present—some including only reading contents and others including some instructions and worksheets.

In recent years, many people prefer online materials over paper materials; hence, numerous creative strategies can be adopted to attract the attention of college students. Rather than placing resource guides on a wall or a table in a career center, a large poster can be displayed with images related to each career concern and a QR code for related PDF files. This will allow students to locate their career concerns within the guide and access relevant resources using their mobile devices. The designed

career development guidebook and self-help handouts can also be displayed in a similar manner.

REFERENCES

Sampson, J. P., Reardon, R. C., Peterson, G. W., & Lenz, J. G. (2004). *Career counseling and services: A cognitive information processing approach*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.