

JUMP AT THE CHANCE

**ADVISING UNDECIDED STUDENTS USING
PLANNED HAPPENSTANCE**

Holly Justice
David Youhess
Career Services
University at Buffalo
Feb. 29th 2012

*“Serendipity is not serendipitous,
serendipity is ubiquitous”*

--John Krumboltz, Ph.D



- Happenstance plays a critical role in shaping our lives
- Uncontrolled events happen all the time



WE CANNOT PREDICT THE FUTURE

So why do we try?

W. PALS



Love Little Syndicate
© King Features Syndicate, Inc. 1976

5-26

ORIENTATION TO CHANCE EVENTS

- **Uncontrolled events have major impacts on our life, including our career path**
- **Chance events are both inevitable *and* desirable**
- **Life ≠ Simple, straightforward or logical**
- **Uncertainties around goals leads to new discoveries**
- **New experiences beget new interests, skills, opportunities, contacts, . . . knowledge**



Practical Applications:

- “Anxiety is a normal part of the career planning process, but it can be replaced by a sense of adventure and curiosity”

IT'S ALL ABOUT LEARNING!

- Become conscious of how each experience is an opportunity to learn and grow
- We are not matchmakers, we are educators!
 - We facilitate the learning process, we structure the learning process
- Encourage students to be creative in exploring new avenues of learning
- HLT Framework \equiv Chance + Learning
 - The undecided student and HLT
- Not all learning is created equal! Not all learning is positive or results in growth!
 - Sometimes, past experiences become barriers to action

Practical Applications:

- Give permission to students for any sequence of educational or occupational events.



HAPPENSTANCE LEARNING THEORY IN A NUTSHELL:

Human Behavior \equiv # of learning experience(planned + unplanned situations)

AND IF

Exploration generates chance opportunities for increasing our quality of life

THEN

We should be in a position to help students develop **SKILLS** that will enable them to
seize opportunities to continue learning toward their career goals



SO WHAT ARE THE SKILLS?

*“To exercise **curiosity** to explore new learning opportunities, to **persist** despite serious setbacks, to meet changing attitudes and circumstances with **flexibility**, to **optimistically** view new opportunities as possible and attainable, and to **take risks** by being proactive in the face of uncertain outcomes” **

CURIOSITY:

- *Exploring new learning opportunities*
- Curiosity provides a framework for learning!
- Career Decisions **V. S.** Career Readiness
 - Ask: “*What would be fun to learn about next?*”
- Remove pressure of commitment / Give permission
- Developing and understanding interests is the first step!



Practical Applications:

- “How have chance events contributed to your curiosity
- Encourage exploration through volunteering and campus involvement

OPTIMISM:

- *View new opportunities as possible and attainable*
- The gateway to curiosity
- Optimism as a necessary precondition for action
- Millennials—The benefits of entitlement



Practical Applications:

- “What is a possible benefit of that course of action?”
- Become aware of internal messages (self-talk)

RISK TAKING

- *Taking action in the face of uncertain outcomes*
- Action Steps = Outcomes
- *What are the possible outcomes of taking a risk?*
- *Doing nothing results in nothing!*
- Encourage the development of an action plan
- Understand the barriers to action



Practical Applications:

- “How would your life change if you took action? How about it if you did nothing?”
- Set a date/time for the student to email you about their progress

FLEXIBILITY



- *Changing attitudes and circumstances*
- Remember the orientation toward learning
- Say “YES” to new opportunities
- The world of work is more fluid, dynamic, decentralized, transient than ever before

Practical Applications:



- “How have you been blocked from doing what you want to do?”
- Go somewhere new / Take up a new hobby or sport

PERSISTENCE



- *Exerting effort despite setbacks*
- Millennials and instant gratification
- Follow up on action steps
- Understand the barriers to our decision making
- Take opportunities where you can learn new knowledge and skills, even if it's not your first choice.
 - Ask: “How can pursuing that bring you closer to you goals?”

Practical Applications:



- “What action are you afraid of taking now because you might make a mistake?”
- Find a mentor / teacher to help you work toward goals

THE ROLE OF REFRAMING

UNDECIDED

- Assigns label to a state of temporary indecision
- Removes student control by offering a diagnosis
- Encourages firm commitments
- Creates pressure by affirming dominant frames

VS

OPEN-MINDED

- Highlights importance of action & exploration in decision making
- Gives power to students with license to explore
- Sensible approach to goal-setting
- Allows students to respond to peer/family pressure

Practical Applications:

- “What would be fun to learn about next?”
- Help students to respond to the pressure to commit to a decision in way that is positive.

VIDEO:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBKKcxCuH-g>



QUESTIONS?

