



The Future of YOUR Education: Using Positive Psychology for Career Planning

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Abstract

Career uncertainty has been cited as a major factor impacting academic success and persistence in post-secondary studies [1]. Traditionally, career planning has focused on uncovering personal preferences and interests, often drawing from personality indicators, interest inventories and aptitude testing. However, research has indicated that individuals who select careers that are aligned with their personal values tend to experience greater life satisfaction [2], career satisfaction [3], happiness [4] and work productivity [5]. This paper will outline several ways that Positive Psychology approaches can be used in secondary and post-secondary settings to enhance the career planning process. These approaches include using interview strategies that draw out themes of optimism, hope, love of learning, justice, enthusiasm and persistence to support students to consider their career choice within the greater context of their identity. Identification of signature strengths using the Values in Action survey (VIA-IS) [6] will be discussed and the authors will outline how this measure is being compared with results of traditional career interest inventories. Initial results from a quantitative study will be presented along with case illustrations of positive psychology career practices. Finally, recommendations for enhancing values that are correlated with academic success in the post-secondary context will be provided. It is our hope that these interventions will make significant contributions to the future success of our students.

References

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