

BOOK REVIEW

review of
*Career Development & Planning:
A Comprehensive Approach*

Reviewed by Suzanne Savickas

Reardon, R. C., Lenz, J. G., Peterson, G. W., & Sampson, J. P. (2017). *Career Development & Planning: A Comprehensive Approach* (5th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing. 302 pages, \$83.50 list, ISBN 9781524912994.



The fifth edition of *Career Development & Planning: A Comprehensive Approach*, written by Reardon, Lenz, Peterson, and Sampson for an undergraduate course in career development, explains how to make career decisions and solve career problems. This quintessential text includes interesting activities and excellent resources that engage students and foster learning. The authors present the materials in chapters divided into three parts. The first five chapters in Part One, Career Concepts and Applications, explain career development from a cognitive-information framework and concentrate on five steps for making good decisions. The authors use their pyramid model to structure the content. The bottom of the pyramid is grounded in knowledge, particularly knowing about self and options; the top of the pyramid concentrates on the quality of thinking in making career decisions. The next five chapters in Part Two, Social Conditions Affecting Career Development, discuss contextual factors that influence career choices, including new work styles, economic trends, organizational culture, and dual careers. In Part Three, Implementing a Strategic Career Plan, the final five chapters concentrate on specific steps to form an intentional career plan while seeking employment. Topics include résumés and cover letters, interviewing skills, job search, and salary negotiation.

Throughout the book, the authors offer information about career development and counseling theories. They briefly discuss Frank Parsons's pioneering matching model of vocational guidance before outlining John Holland's theory of fitting vocational personality types to work environment. The text then moves to Donald Super's formulation of career development processes across the life span, including his life career rainbow. With this background, the authors fully develop their own cognitive information processing (CIP) theory of career choice. They inform



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the reader about the rationale for CIP and how students may apply it in developing their careers. The authors use excellent figures and illustrations that help students to visualize the CIP framework. Although the authors impart significant historical and contextual information on foundational theories (the most recent being 26 years old), they neglect 21st-century career theories such as Larry Cochran's narrative theory, Mary McMahon's systems theory, and Robert Lent and Steven Brown's social cognitive theory.

The text delves beyond theories, as the authors explore the importance of values, interests, work role salience, and how they affect an individual's career development. In addition, the authors include information on the importance of skills and abilities related to an individual's congruence. They stress the necessity for career decision making after one gains insight into vocational self-concept. The authors remind readers that individuals must have adequate self-knowledge before being able to obtain a suitable job or use transferable skills to obtain a new occupation. At the end of the career concepts and applications section, the authors include a table on general portfolio skills that can be used to apply knowledge learned and incorporate these resources in future practice.

The authors remind readers that careers are a series of choices and actions. An individual may have a general preference for a career or a major but may not know how to commit to a choice and pursue the path required to actualize goals. The authors analyze types of decision makers. They emphasize the importance of clear communication and the need to continually improve decision-making skills. The authors underscore the need for client reflexivity in order to successfully make a successful career decision, reiterating the integral concept of self-awareness, self-concept, and self-regulation. They define and summarize metacognitive skills and how to apply these skills before listing how to change negative career thoughts to career solutions.

The authors do not forget that the individual living in the postmodern world must successfully adapt to the rapidly changing environment and economy. The text outlines what components are needed in education, psychoeducation, vocational guidance, career development, and career counseling to prepare an individual for the world of work. The authors discuss environmental factors, familial roles, and strategies and provide a practical guide for students transitioning to this new ever-changing world of work. They incorporate content and resources that are culturally sensitive, including the integral cross-cultural context in career counseling. The book includes tables on occupational trends and outlook and provides concrete examples of new, successful global companies that relate to a contemporary audience.

The final section on implementing a strategic career plan provides necessary resources to use with a client attempting to gain employment. The authors include the tasks needed to successfully obtain employment, along with tips for job hunting. They highlight the importance of written communication during the job search, from cover letter to interview appreciation, letter of acknowledgment, and letter of acceptance. The authors even provide a section on letters of recommendation and transcripts. Furthermore, this book examines the use of social media and technology during the job search. This is a new consideration for job applicants.

The authors also explore oral communication, including informational interviews, networking, interviews, and the process of each component leading to successful employment. Once the client receives a job offer, he or she faces the challenging art of negotiating and analyzing the offer. The book includes employer ratings of skills and student ratings of employer characteristics. This tool can be shown to the client or student before and after an interview to prepare and determine quality of fit and methods of negotiation. This chapter walks the individual step-by-step toward gaining a more satisfactory salary in a congruent work environment. The authors do not abandon the reader once the individual has obtained a job. They guide the reader through the initial steps of making a good first work impression, work habits, and strategies for moving up the work ladder. The book explores adjusting from a job to a professional career.

The appendixes provide numerous resources that could stand alone as a manual and workbook. Appendix A is a glossary that concisely and precisely defines terms used throughout the book. Appendix B outlines a study guide, creating a summary for the student and making the student reflect on the most important aspects of the content. Appendix C came as a surprise to me. It introduced a creative activity of a student writing her career autobiography. This simple and straightforward narrative activity serves as a life and career plan. The remaining appendixes include directions for conducting a career field analysis, a guide to good decision making using acronyms as a mnemonic device, and directions for constructing an individual action plan. The book includes activities to improve negative self-talk related to careers, assignments a practitioner can use for informational interviews, activities for future academic and career planning, worksheets for résumé critique, case studies, and technology forms. As both an educator and practitioner, I found the appendixes most useful.

Not only are the contents and appendixes of the book a valuable resource for students, but also the layout and format provide an excellent structure. The chapters are presented in a linear manner. Overall, I found the fifth edition of *Career Development & Planning: A Comprehensive Approach* to be a thorough and comprehensive resource for students. However, the revised book's greatest strength is also its greatest weakness. The book covers everything from fundamental career theories to finding and securing a job. I believe that this book could be used—with assignment of different chapters—in a freshman-level course on career decision making as well as in a senior-level course on school-to-work transition. Despite the broad scope of material covered in this edition, I would definitely recommend using the book for an undergraduate course on career development, career education, and life planning. The book provides a conceptual framework to engage students in knowing themselves, exploring occupations, making decisions, and seeking jobs.