

## Learning Animals: Curriculum, Pedagogy and Becoming a Veterinarian

What Are the Career Development Theories?

Choosing a career or vocation is a major developmental process. Most people will spend the majority of their time working in a career. People make career choices based on many factors, including meeting expectations of family, friends, and teachers. Careful consideration of personal characteristics and abilities can help a person decide on a career path that suits their personality. The ancient philosopher Confucius explained it well with the philosophy "choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

Career development theories help explain how career paths, personality traits, and behaviors influence career success. There are five major career development theories:

Ginzberg's Developmental Theory

Holland's Theory of Vocational Types

Super's Developmental Theory

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

Parson's Trait and Factor Theory

Career counseling theories are based on these career development theories. Career counselors often use personality and aptitude tests that incorporate aspects of the five theories as they help clients select appropriate careers.

Ginzberg's Theory

Psychologists and human development specialists categorize human development into stages or phases based on age and appropriate developmental milestones. In 1951, the economics professor Eli Ginzberg, along with scholars Axelrad, Ginsburg, and Herma, developed the theory of career choice, describing it as a function of human development over time. An individual passes through three stages of career development that roughly correspond to human development stages. Early stages support later stages.

Fantasy stage (birth - approximately 11 years): children participate in pretend games and roleplay, imitating adults and others around them. Examples of this include playing house, playing school, or pretending to be a firefighter or police officer. Children may say they want to be a nurse or a teacher when they grow up, but they don't have a realistic view of what the career is like.

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children begin to understand their personal preferences, talents, and aptitudes as they become more self-aware. Personal life choices and educational opportunities influence decision making as young adults begin to make preliminary career choices. Realistic stage (age 17 - 24): young adults narrow in on a career choice. This stage can be divided into three "sub-stages": Exploration: the young adult begins experiencing possible career choices through educational choices and exposure to the realities of the career Crystallization: the young adult becomes more certain of a career choice as they are exposed to the realities of their choice. Many people remain at this stage throughout their career. Specification: The young adult realizes specific specialties within their choice. For example, a student studying to become a nurse will realize that there are many types of nurses and tailor their education to specialize in an area that meshes with their personal values and educational choices.

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Ginzberg's ideas align with the developmental stages of growth and personality development described by Erikson, a well-known human development psychologist. While it makes sense that normal personality development would influence career development, Ginzberg did not consider developmental changes that take place throughout a person's life. Career decisions and development continue past the age of 24, the end of Ginzberg's Realistic stage. Another limitation of this theory is that Ginzberg did not consider the personality traits described by other career development psychologists that also influence career satisfaction.

### Holland's Trait and Factor Theory

John Holland was a scholar who developed a theory based on the idea that personality traits influence our career choices. He believed that congruence, or balance between personality traits and job duties and the environment, would yield greater career satisfaction. He described six categories of personality types that correspond with six occupational environments.

Realistic: realistic people solve problems by acting rather than reflecting. People with the realistic trait value

practical, active solutions. Careers that match this trait include farming, construction, culinary arts, and architecture. Investigative: investigative people solve problems by analyzing information, and they prefer to work alone. Careers that match this trait include science, medicine, and computer programming. Artistic: artistic people are by nature creative. They enjoy music, writing, and the arts. Generally, they are more emotionally aware than some other types. They are independent, but enjoy working with others. Writers, musicians, actors and graphic designers match the artistic trait. Social: social people enjoy working with others, especially in the areas of teaching and helping. Teachers, counselors, nurses, and police officers possess this trait. Enterprising: people with this personality trait are known for being persuasive. They value status and respect and exhibit leadership qualities. Careers that match this trait include stockbrokers, lawyers, newscasters, and salespeople. Conventional: people in this category are happier in a structured environment where they know what to expect. As in the enterprising category, they value status and respect but need clear expectations. Possible careers include financial planners, accountants, data entry clerks, and bankers.

Holland believed that people have combinations of all six personality traits, but they also have one dominant trait and two related traits. Career choice counselors help identify dominant traits and explore occupations that have corresponding environments. A close match between the personality traits and the occupational environment leads to greater career satisfaction. While this theory acknowledges that developmental stages influence personality traits, Holland's Trait and Factor Theory does not consider how development changes over time, which will impact personality traits.

#### Super's Developmental Theory

Donald Super, a psychologist, focused on relating personal development to career development. Similar to Ginzberg, he related human development stages to career development. Super believed that as a person matures and becomes more self-aware, they develop a more realistic attitude toward career choice. He felt that maturity and mastering developmental tasks leads to more practical career choices. Super identified five stages:

Growth: (birth to mid teens): a young child participates in pretend and roleplaying, and as they age they become more aware of their own personal preferences. Exploration (mid-teens - early 20s): young adults begin applying education to career choices, identifying and targeting preferences, aptitudes, and talents. Establishment (mid 20s - mid 40s): as adults, the individual begins at an entry level, gradually becoming established in their career choice and becoming

more experienced in their choice. Maintenance (40s - 60s): this is often a stage of career plateau as the individual reconciles their career choices with their personal life choices. It can become a time for personal growth, or even career growth, as the more mature individual seeks to maximize their position within their career choice. Decline (late 60s through retirement): most individuals begin decelerating their career ambitions and concentrate more on their personal needs and the legacy they wish to leave.

Super believed that everyone passes through the five stages during their vocational lives regardless of their interests, aptitudes, personality traits, and career choices. The theory is especially useful as it helps the individual understand career satisfaction based on their developmental stage. A drawback of the theory is that it assumes that an individual will pass through the developmental stages at the same time in a straight line trajectory. It does not take into account the excitement and rejuvenation that might come with a late stage career change.

#### Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura was a psychologist who developed the social-cognitive theory based on the idea that an individual bases his behavior on what is experienced in the environment. Bandura believed behavior and success are influenced by:

## Reference

[Community-Based Participatory Research for Health: Advancing Social and Health Equity](#)

[Schoolwide Prevention Models: Lessons Learned in Elementary Schools](#)