

Five careers theories

Name of theory	Social cognitive career theory (SCCT)
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCCT is based on the ideas of Albert Bandura and was developed by Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994). It incorporates aspects of developmental, constructivist and matching careers theory
Big ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-efficacy – defined by Bandura as a person’s belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations or to accomplish a task • Outcome expectations – what individuals believe is likely to happen to them • Personal goals – individuals change their actions and behaviour so that they can achieve the goals they have set themselves
Explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-efficacy is more important than interests, values and abilities in explaining career choice; and often more important than outcome expectations. • Individuals with a low sense of self-efficacy lack persistence and resilience. • Success shapes interest and strengthens outcome expectations through improved performance. • Personal and background factors (such as gender, ethnicity, SEND and parental influence) affect learning and performance
Practical implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions that help individuals raise the level of their belief in their own effectiveness and strengthen persistence/resilience are worthwhile. • Individuals need to be given opportunities to succeed. • Actions/interventions to influence and control the impact of background factors (such as engaging with parents/carers, challenging stereotypes, raising aspirations) will have a positive impact on choice and performance. • Making explicit the processes that are affecting them (such as low self-efficacy beliefs, low outcome expectations and barriers in the way that opportunities are structured) helps groups such as women and minorities to challenge and persist. • Access to high quality careers information can help to remove barriers to career exploration. • ‘Happenstance’ or ‘serendipity’ occurs in people’s lives but the ability to take advantage of unexpected opportunities depends a lot on learners’ self-efficacy beliefs.
Links	http://career.iresearchnet.com/career-development/social-cognitive-career-theory/

Name of theory	Career construction
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Savickas (2010) has developed a new approach that focuses on helping people to use career constructs to design their lives.
Big ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructs – Individuals construct their careers by understanding their vocational personality, interpreting their life themes (i.e. telling their own story) and demonstrating adaptability • Personal agency – Individuals are active agents in building their careers • Constructivism – Individuals make their own meanings when they engage in career learning • Narratives/stories – Individuals use their life stories, and especially their early memories, to understand, develop and anticipate their career trajectories • Adaptability – Individuals need to be highly adaptable in managing their careers in current economic conditions
Explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals make progress in developing their careers when teachers, advisers, trusted adults and peers structure learning opportunities for them. This makes it easier for individuals to build on what they already know about careers (known as ‘scaffolding’) and to assimilate new learning. • Helping individuals to learn in this way is not about imposing one person’s viewpoint but about validating different world views.
Practical implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operative, active/experiential and problem-solving learning approaches provide rich, open-ended activities that promote deeper career learning. • Helping learners to tell their own story is a powerful way of helping them to think about the place of work in their lives now and in the future. • Helping learners with a troubled back story (e.g. refugees) to tell their story in a more positive way is a powerful way of helping them. • Helping learners to acquire adaptability resources and skills are an important way of enabling them to cope • with the chaotic nature of labour markets in economically advanced countries. • CEIAG is more than just about making occupational choices – it is about ‘life designing’ and helping individuals to understand their experience of work and career in their lives as a whole.
Links	<p>Savickas, M.L. (2012) Life Design: A Paradigm for Career Intervention in the 21st Century Journal of Counseling & Development 90 (1) 13-19</p> <p>Vocopher http://www.vocopher.com (Career adapt-abilities Scale and MyCareer Story workbook)</p>

Name of theory	Matching theory
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The classic view of matching is fitting round pegs into round holes. Since Frank Parsons (1909) first explained his approach to matching individuals to jobs, matching has become much more sophisticated, especially with the application of digital technology. • The most widely-developed approach is that of John Holland (1997) who identified a way of classifying personality types and identifying the work environments that would suit people according to their personality profile.
Big ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching – Learners complete a test or questionnaire to assess specific facets of their make-up (e.g. their needs, interests, values or preferences) and receive matched job, course or leisure suggestions.
Explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching individuals to work environments is likely to increase individuals’ experience of career satisfaction and success.
Practical implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using matching programs with individuals who lack maturity and readiness is unreliable. • Matching programs are useful for helping individuals with few ideas of their own or who are not able to articulate their own ideas clearly. • Individuals change as they grow, so it is best not to rely on old results/printouts but to carry out a fresh assessment. • Jobs are changing rapidly so the assumptions built into the way jobs are coded may not be entirely accurate. • Individuals who have had a lot of relevant experience to inform their responses will get a better result. • Matching is a one-off activity and, therefore, not a substitute for a developmental careers programme. • Individuals still have to check the availability of opportunities
Links	http://www.careers.govt.nz/practitioners/career-practice/career-theory-models/hollands-theory/

Name of theory	Careership
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phil Hodkinson et al.'s theory of careership (2009) is about career decision-making and career progression.
Big ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horizons for action – People's decisions are bounded by what is possible for them, i.e. what they know about, what is culturally permissible. Habitus (taken from Bourdieu) – People aren't just influenced by the labour market, they are deeply influenced by their own dispositions – the habitus – which is deeply engrained but can and does change over time. Social and cultural capital – These are the valuable reserves or resources that affect individuals' choices. Social capital refers to the groups that the individual is connected to and their social networks. Cultural capital refers to any family, educational or class advantages that benefit the individual.
Explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career decision-making is neither cognitive nor rational in the way that is often assumed. It is 'messy' but most people appear to make decisions that are 'pragmatically rational'. Career progression is not linear – it is strongly influenced by actions, events and circumstances that lie beyond the individual's control. Individuals are active agents in choosing and constructing their careers but they often do so in gendered and classed ways. Individuals exert a strong influence on their own horizons for action by dint of their dispositions. Decisions are based on partial rather than full and impartial information which is probably just as well as too much choice can make individuals miserable.
Practical implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You need knowledge of the individual, and the learner needs self-knowledge, to extend the learner's horizons for action. Extending a person's horizons for action is a long-term project which cannot be accomplished overnight. It is not helped by turning CEIAG on and off (i.e. disjointed, discontinuous and inadequate inputs). We need to personalise careers information and help individuals become smarter in their use of it. We need to increase learner's personal agency and their ability to construct their own career narrative. We need to be aware of the limitations of CEIAG while at the same time seeking to extend its impact by creating synergies between CEIAG and other practical and learning interventions (e.g. through careers-related learning in subjects, bringing out the links with PSHE, citizenship, enterprise and employability).
Links	http://www.cegnet.co.uk/uploads/resources/Careership.pdf

Name of theory	Work adjustment theory
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This theory articulates a number of propositions that can be used to explain and predict the satisfaction of individuals with their jobs and the satisfactoriness of individuals in their jobs. • Dawis & Lofquist (1984) define six key needs or values which have a bearing on individual satisfaction: achievement, comfort, status, altruism, safety and autonomy. Work satisfaction and tenure will be good if the organisation supports the pattern of values that the individual holds. • They also define the ability requirements which have a bearing on satisfactoriness
Big ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction – The individual’s level of satisfaction depends on how well their needs are met by the job. • Satisfactoriness – How satisfactory an employee the individual is depends on how well their abilities meet the requirements of the job. • Work adjustment – achieved when there is correspondence between the individual’s personality style and the style of the environment
Explanations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals seek correspondence (i.e. a harmonious relationship) with their work environment. • If the individual’s abilities correspond to the ability requirements of the job the individual will be satisfied and satisfactory to the employer. • Similarly, if the needs and values of the individual correspond with the pattern of rewards in the job then the individual will be satisfied. • Dissatisfaction or lack of correspondence between the individual or the environment triggers work adjustment, e.g. promotion, redeployment, redundancy. • The way individuals behave (e.g. their flexibility and perseverance) can be used to predict how well they will maintain or regain work adjustment.
Practical implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals need to learn a range of strategies to maintain correspondence, e.g. how to change the requirements of the work environment, learn new work skills, re-appraise their needs, show persistence/resilience. • Individuals at the occupational choice stage should match themselves to the ability requirements of the job and the value patterns in the job to see if they are congruent with the abilities and values held by the individual. • This theory is important for improving teaching about employability – the way in which we help learners to become capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work.
Links	https://careersintheory.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/theories_twa.pdf