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Career Exploration: An Intuitive Writing Assignment

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Theoretical Background and Instructional Strategies of the CDMT

Theoretical Background for CDMT

The CDMT is based on the Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) theory. CIP theory was developed through the joint efforts of a group of researchers at the FSU Career Center's Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development. This theory is an emergent career theory, designed to examine how individuals engage in career problem solving and decision-making. In particular, CIP theory describes career decision-making like a recipe, which involves several ingredients as well as a process for integrating these ingredients to come out with an end product. Two diagrams that help to illustrate this process are the Pyramid of Information Processing and The CASVE Cycle.

The information processing domains related to career decision-making and job placement can be conceptualized as a pyramid (Figure 1). Within these domains are exploratory questions for the individual to contemplate.

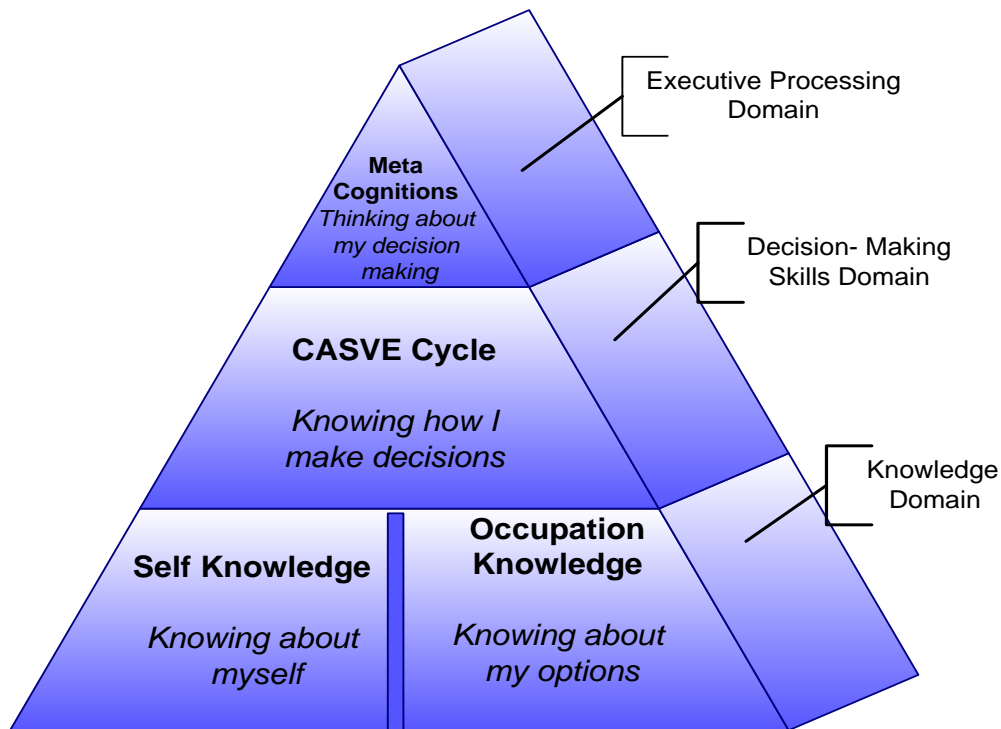


Figure 1 Pyramid of Information Processing Domains in Career Decision-making

Adapted from: Sampson, J. P., Jr., Peterson, G. W., Lenz, J. G., & Reardon, R. C. (1992). A cognitive approach to career services: Translating concepts into practice. *Career Development Quarterly*, 41, 67-74. Copyright © National Career Development Association. Used with permission.

Knowledge Domain

- Self Knowledge
 - What are my values, interests, and skills?
 - What are my job preferences?
 - What am I looking for in an occupation or a program of study?
- Occupational Knowledge
 - What kind of job can I get with my education and experience?
 - What is a typical day for a person employed as a _____?
 - What are the educational and training requirements for _____?
 - How can employers be categorized?
 - How is the world of work organized?

Decision-Making Skills Domain

- Generic Information Processing Skills
 - What are the steps in choosing an occupation, program of study, or job that will meet my needs?
 - How do I usually make important decisions?

Executive Processing Domain

- Metacognitions
 - Self-talk “I’ll never be able to make a good career choice.”
 - Self-awareness “I’m getting very scared about this.”
 - Monitoring and control “I need help in making this choice.”

Problem solving and decision-making can be conceptualized in terms of the CASVE cycle. The five stages of this cycle (Figure 2) include Communication, Analysis, Synthesis, Valuing, and Execution.

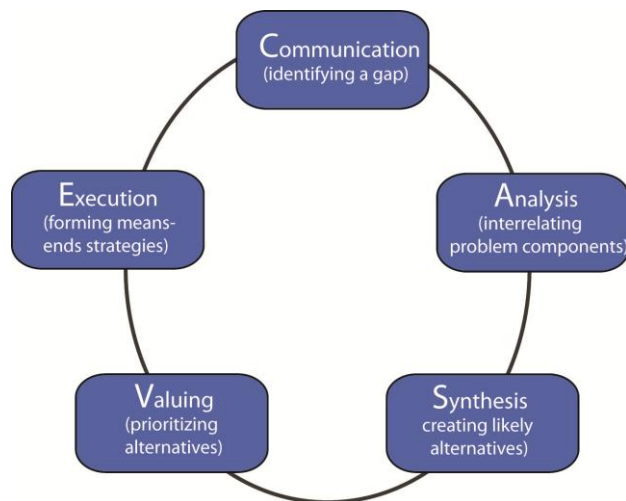


Figure 2 CASVE Cycle

Adapted from Career Development and Services: A Cognitive Approach by G. W. Peterson, J. P. Sampson, and R. C. Reardon. Copyright ©1991 Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Pacific Grove, CA 93950, a division of International Thomson Publishing, Inc. Used with permission.

Communication

In this first stage of the cycle, the individual communicates both within themselves through self assessment and reflective thinking, and with others in their life. The purpose of this communication is to identify the gap between where they are now and where they would like to be in the future through analyzing internal and external cues.

- Internal cues
 - Emotions — *“I’m scared about committing myself.”*
 - Avoidance behavior — *“I’ll get started next week.”*
 - Physiological — *“I’m so upset about this, I can’t eat”*
- External cues
 - Event — *“I’m getting ready to graduate and I don’t know what I will do after that.”*
 - Significant other — *“My parents really want me to make a decision about where I will go to college and what I will major in.”*

Analysis

The focus of this stage is for the individual to learn more about themselves, their decision-making, and the world-of-work. This is done through analyzing personal experience and information obtained from assessments and the use of a CIDS.

- Enhance self-knowledge
 - Values
 - Interests
 - Skills
 - Employment preferences
- Enhance occupational knowledge
 - Knowledge of individual occupations, programs of study, or jobs
 - Knowledge of the structure of the world-of-work (occupations, programs of study, or jobs)
- Generic information processing skills
 - Personal decision-making style
- Metacognitions
 - Self-talk — *“I need to make a decision.”*
 - Self-awareness — *“I’m uneasy about this whole process.”*
 - Control and monitoring — *“What information do I need to know about myself and my situation so that I am prepared to make a decision?”*

Synthesis

This stage assists the individual in expanding the list of possible career options and then refining this list to 3-5 alternatives. This is done by synthesizing all of the information derived in the prior 2 stages, and then using this information while considering the list of options.

- Elaboration
 - Identify the maximum number of potential alternatives
- Crystallization
 - Narrow potential occupations, programs of study, or jobs to a manageable number of options (3-5)

Valuing

This fourth stage of the cycle is evaluating the costs and benefits of each alternative to:

- Oneself
- Significant others (e.g. family)
- Cultural group
- Community and/or society at large

Through this, the individual will prioritize their alternatives to make tentative primary and secondary choices.

Execution

The purpose of this stage is to formulate a plan for implementing a tentative choice:

- Preparation program (formal education/training experience)
- Reality testing (full-time, part-time, and/or volunteer work experience, as well as taking courses or training)
- Employment seeking (steps to apply for and get a job)

Communication

By reviewing external demands and internal states during this stage, the individual will learn if their tentative choice is the right one for them.

- Has the gap been closed?
- Have the negative emotions and physiological states been replaced by feelings of serenity?
- Am I taking action to achieve my goal?

From Theory to Practice in the CDMT

The different steps within CDMT are based on the CASVE Cycle decision-making process. Each step in the decision-making cycle is presented as an individual module of instruction.

Furthermore, the CDMT breaks out the phases of Communication into two separate steps, the first to engage the learner in the decision-making process, and the second (which is the last stage of the decision-making process) to encourage learners to reflect on the process and the decisions they made.

As such, the steps followed in the CDMT for career decision-making include:

- Communication: Knowing I Need to Make a Choice
- Analysis: Understanding Myself and My Options
- Synthesis: Expanding and Narrowing My List of Options
- Valuing: Choosing an Occupation, Program of Study, or Job
- Execution: Implementing My Choice
- Communication: Knowing I Made a Good Choice

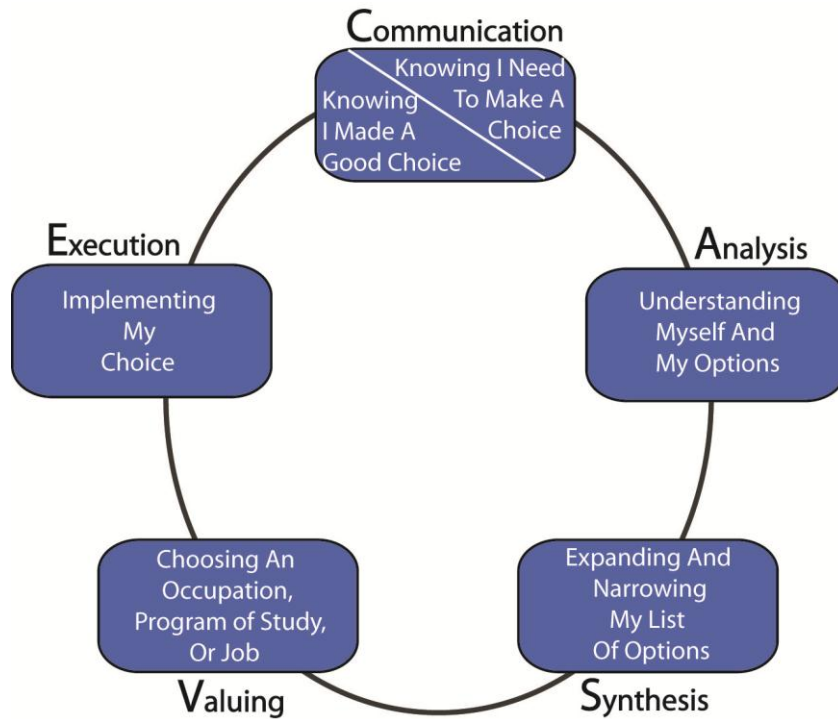


Figure 3 CASVE Cycle as Applied to Career Decision-Making

Adapted from: Sampson, J. P., Jr., Peterson, G. W., Lenz, J. G., & Reardon, R. C. (1992). A cognitive approach to career services: Translating concepts into practice. *Career Development Quarterly*, 41, 67-74. Copyright © National Career Development Association. Used with permission.

To simplify the CASVE Cycle, making it more user friendly for young learners, and to better facilitate instruction about the career decision-making process, the CASVE Cycle is known in the CDMT as the “Decision Cycle.” As many of the terms of the CASVE Cycle were identified as difficult for younger learners to understand, the stages of the CASVE Cycle have been translated into a simpler, 6th grade vocabulary in the Decision Cycle (Table 1). Furthermore, a new graphic was developed to represent the changes made for the Decision Cycle (Figure 4).

Table 1: Translation of Terms from CASVE Cycle to CDMT’s Decision Cycle

| CASVE Cycle | Decision Cycle | Meaning |
|---------------|----------------|--|
| Communication | Engaging | Knowing I Need to Make a Choice |
| Analysis | Understanding | Understanding Myself and My Options |
| Synthesis | Identifying | Expanding and Narrowing My List of Options |
| Valuing | Deciding | Choosing an Occupation, Program of Study, or Job |
| Execution | Acting | Implementing My Choice |
| Communication | Reflecting | Knowing I Made a Good Choice |

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For more information about the theory and instructional strategies used in developing the Web-based CDMT, please contact:

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