# From Uncertainty *to* Direction

## Career Self-Discovery Framework

### Using AI-Supported Reflection to Guide Career Discovery

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REFLECT
DISCOVER
EXPLORE

*From Self-Discovery to What's Next.*

**When students understand who they are, they can make stronger educational and career decisions.**

## 1 The Challenge

A lack of self-understanding can affect students' persistence, major choice, excess credits, financial risk, and post-graduation direction.



- Lower persistence
- Uncertain major choice
- Excess credits and financial risk
- Difficulty connecting education to career goals
- Unclear post-graduation direction

## 2 A Theory-Informed, Practical Framework

The framework integrates leading career development theories and established practices to support a comprehensive, evidence-informed approach.

**Career Construction Theory**
People make career meaning through their life stories and experiences.

**Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory**
Career choices develop across multiple life roles and stages.

**Social Cognitive Career Theory**
Confidence, expectations, and perceived barriers affect career decisions.

**Holland's Person-Environment Fit**
People thrive when their interests and work environments fit.

**Strengths-Based Development**
Students grow by recognizing their strengths, what gives them energy, and what matters most to them.

**Narrative Reflection and Reflective Advising**
Meaning making through reflection, story, and intentional dialogue.

**Experiential Learning and Career Readiness**
Real-world experiences support exploration, decision-making, and next steps.

*These foundations informed the 20 reflective questions, the curated knowledge base, the AI analysis methodology, and the supporting resources used to identify meaningful patterns and realistic next steps.*

## 3 How the Framework Works

*A structured, reflective process with theory-informed AI analysis.*

### 1 Student Reflection

*20 intentionally designed, interview-style questions.*



- Students share their experiences in their own words. Their stories become evidence.
- A holistic look at experiences, strengths, values, interests, motivations, and aspirations.

### 2 Curated Knowledge Base + AI Analysis

*The analysis does not happen magically.*



- AI analysis draws from a curated knowledge base built from career development theory, research, and practice.
- Identifies key themes, patterns, and connections across the student's entire story.

### 3 Personalized Insights

*A richer, more holistic picture of the student.*




- Students receive an integrated analysis highlighting strengths, values, interests, motivations, work style, and possible pathways.
- Helps students develop language for who they are, not just what they major in.

### 4 Human Conversation

*A better place to begin.*



- The analysis gives both students and educators a shared language for meaningful discussions.
- Educators do not have to be career experts.
- Themes to listen for.
- Questions to ask.
- Places to go deeper.

### 5 Exploration and Action

*Students turn insights into meaningful next steps.*



- Students use what they learn to explore majors, coursework, internships, career fairs, networking, and job search strategies.
- Earlier conversations lead to more informed and intentional choices.

## 4 Early Implementation & Emerging Results

### A Career Exploration Coursework

**157** students enrolled across six course sections over two years.

| | |
|---|---|
| Spring 2025 | **41** |
| Fall 2025 | **28** |
| Spring 2026 (1) | **19** |
| Spring 2026 (2) | **22** |
| Summer 2026 | **18** |
| Fall 2026 | **29** |

- ✔ Students represented all four academic colleges.
- ✔ Participants ranged from first-year students through seniors.
- ✔ The Career Self-Discovery Framework was a standard course activity.

### B Interdisciplinary Degree Program

- ✔ Standard part of entry into an interdisciplinary degree program serving approximately 140-160 students.
- ✔ Supports students in shaping individualized coursework and connecting prior experiences with future goals.
- ✔ Used with students who bring varied academic backgrounds, transfer histories, goals, and timelines to degree completion.

### C What We Are Seeing

- ✔ Students identify clearer academic and career direction.
- ✔ Students recognize stronger connections among strengths, values, interests, and experiences.
- ✔ Advising conversations become more focused and specific.
- ✔ Students identify more intentional next steps for coursework, exploration, and career planning.

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*It's Time We Talk.* | Career Self-Discovery Framework |

*Helping students discover who they are and use that understanding as a roadmap for curriculum, career exploration, and what comes next.*

| *Turning Self-Discovery into Direction.*