

04 Career Planning and Lifelong Learning

Abstract: The doctrine of modern career planning originated in United States. Its development in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan has existed for more than two decades. In Macao, it has just been started in recent years. Career planning is rich in content and is feasible for implementation. There are various forms for individual learning and professional services. Career planning is a sustainable learning process and needs lifelong learning as a necessary means of implementation.

1. Introduction

With global division of labor and regional integration, the economy develops rapidly and turbulently. Knowledge-driven and talent winners are the determining factor for regional sustainable development. Respect for individuality, people-oriented and accurate positioning, and the best use of experts are the wonderful interpretation of career roles.

2. What is career planning?

There was a similar career planning concept in ancient China. The doctrine of modern career planning came from the United States and originated from vocational guidance. It has existed for about a hundred years and rapidly developed comprehensively and become popularized after the 1950s. It has become an important branch of counseling psychology. The broad sense of career planning involves various aspects of people and the narrow sense of career planning involves the vocational development of people.

In Europe and the United States, career planning penetrates in all levels of education and personnel management, including professionals on working interest, abilities, values evaluation and counseling. In Hong Kong and Taiwan, it was started earlier than other regions in China. Due to the unfavorable job market situation, vocational counseling, training and certification authentication for vocational guidance teachers have been promoted in universities in China for over 10 years.

In recent years, Macao's economy booms rapidly. The general educational level rises continuously and there is no difficulty for young people's employment. But due to the limitation on industrial structure, it is not easy to apply knowledge learned and make the best use of talents. According to a survey conducted a few years ago, the learning habits of young employees in the gambling field have not been formed and they are afraid of competition from overseas workers; the community groups advocate career planning, hoping to assist more people to find their life directions.

3. Macao begins to promote career planning

Career planning is based on a large theoretical system but is not full of instructional teaching contents. At the application level, it provides specific and practical principles and methods. However, in the initial stage, Macao is unable to provide vocational guidance class to all students and lacks a large number of experienced vocational guidance mentors. In addition, Macao's circumstance is very special and therefore it needs some people to furnish a lot of works with localized tools.

Now the general way to carry out promotion in public is to invite celebrities to talk about ideal, growth history and future prospect. Also, some community groups use to carry out sizable survey in questionnaire through media to call on young people to take high regards on career planning. The community groups which started career planning projects early set up workshops; organize enterprises visits, people discussions, job fairs; establish the human resources database for university students; prepare appointments for internship; prepare job description for common job position in Macao and try to promote consulting services etc.

It seems that there is a great variety of activities but the effectiveness of promotion is far from enough. It can only solve some urgent needs. For example: How will the secondary students select tertiary curriculum properly? How will the university students prepare themselves for entering the job market? How will the working young people make use of their leisure hours to pursue further studies? All these are problems. Career development is a continuous and non-stop process in our life. It needs repeated learning, exploration, preparation, implementation and adjustments. Thus it cannot be separated from lifelong learning.

4. To talk about learning for career planning

If we do not plan for ourselves, we shall be planned according to our surroundings. Planning is not an easy thing. Career is different in accordance to different people, time and places. Each career path is unique. Still the surveyors found a number of patterns and effectively assisted people to avoid detours, reduce risk and to contribute more to the society.

Firstly it is learning. Those who are interested can try to understand what assistance can be provided inside. If you like reading, internet is very convenient for you. There are a great number of articles which describes definition, source, development, theory representatives and their representatives, analysis tools and implementation methods from different facets. Also there are piles of tests which you can try to increase your learning interest.

If you have stamina to read a treatise, there is a good selection in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. It is no doubt that overseas you can also find lots of selections which include teaching theories, analysing cases, answering inquiries, stimulating morale and guidance for job seekers. If you like lectures, it is likely that you will have more opportunities. We have experts in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan; courses in Macao and online video. If you like to chat, you can make appointment for free consultation in Macao or purchase commercial services from overseas.

When we first read the theory, we feel that it seems to be somewhat understandable and met somewhere before. Some discussions are thought-provoking. At the method level, it is always about "Know yourself – Know the environment – design program – implementation plan – assessment method – adjustment method". In between, every step involves a lot of knowledge.

Continuing on P.20



To take knowing ourselves as an example, we have to clearly understand our interest, expertise, knowledge, different social abilities, character, intelligence quotient, emotion quotient, philosophy, sense of worth and accomplishment etc. Many people have the same feeling that even though they have been working for many years, still they do not know: what do they like; what are their expertise; what are important to them; what are their potential and what are their ultimate accomplishment.

Fortunately, the industry has prepared a series of assessment and designed tools which include a variety of psychological evaluation or games, past memories, career fantasy, occupation combination cards, career genealogy, career strategic balance sheet and consultation for individual and groups which allows more justification for career strategy. Even if for now you do not have the interest to seek counseling at this professional level, I believe that you can still benefit from career planning theory learning, thinking and exchange.

5. Preparation of blueprint for life through career planning

Design of career planning allows people to have clearer directions from their vocational development to whole life course. They become more initiated, more strategic to advance their goals, better adaption to different changes and play their roles in life better. Design allows people learn to choose, to allocate time, effort, money and other resources in different jobs, learning and leisure activities rationally.

There is one thing that we must clarify. Career planning is the life blueprint of the person involved. Everyone understands his vision well and has the ability to overcome difficulties. He is able to design the best pathway and is responsible for his own decision. The duty of vocational guidance teacher is to listen carefully, to keep information with strict confidential, to understand and respect, do not make value judgement, to use methods appropriately, to play the mirror role, to have clear ways of thinking and to assist by the sides. They never plan for others. We hope that you do not feel surprised at this.

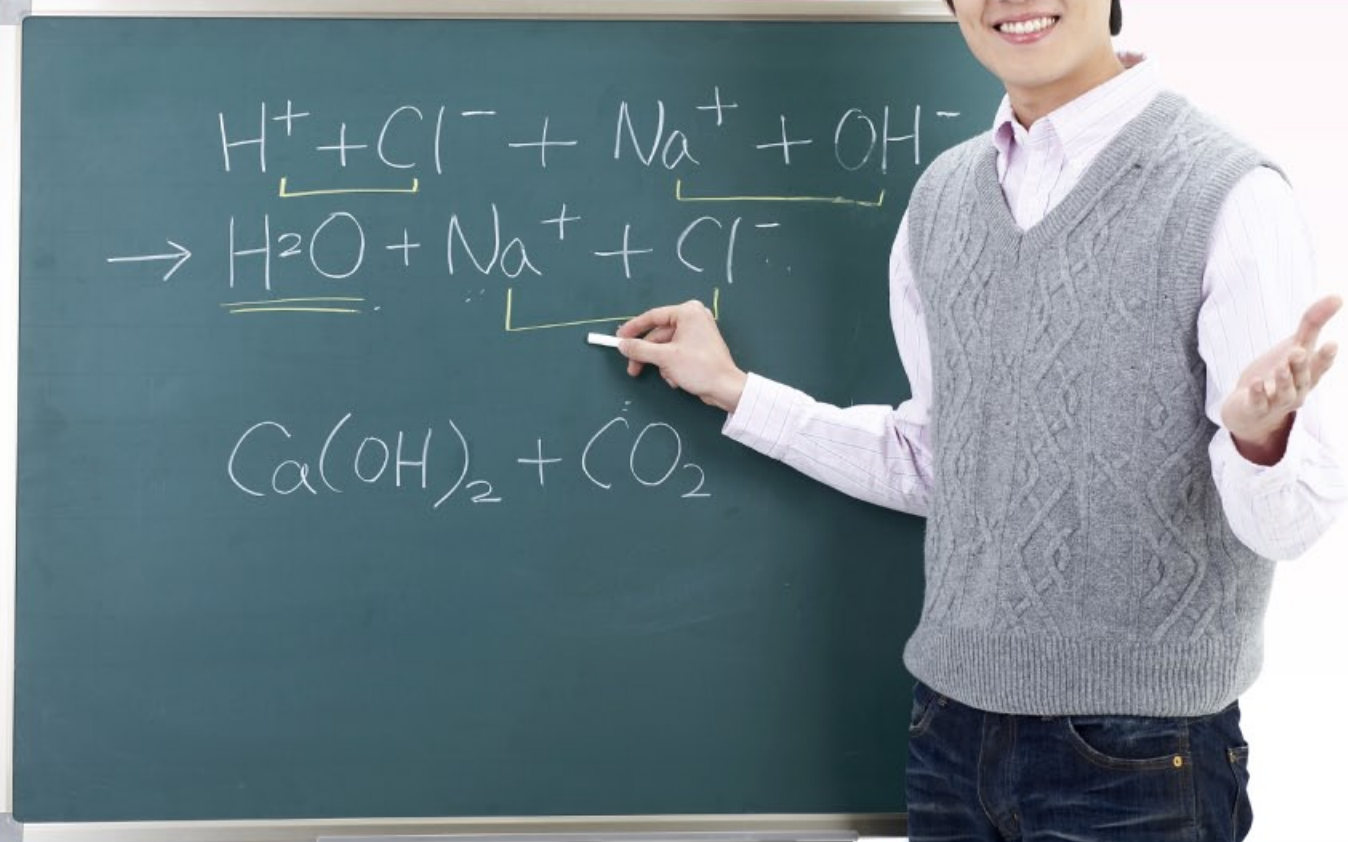
If we cannot achieve lifelong learning, career planning is just empty talk. There may be a lot of learning purposes and strategies. The learning strategy in career planning is to apply one's knowledge, to encourage people to combine their learning with interest, abilities, occupation and goal, to select learning, to learn with achievement, to learn attentively in order to enhance their professionalism from learning, so as to play the role well and to learn how to adapt to environmental changes.

Preparation can speed up our work. If you can learn professional knowledge well and enhance your efficiency, "work busy" should not be the excuse for refusal to learn. If training can improve one's skill, then even if we need to use our private hours and pay school fee by ourselves, we should not haggle over every ounce. Some people said that learning is the most cost-effective investment. The Japanese scholars have the 321 theories: to spend 30% of time, 20% of money for participation in the top 10% course. Even if the tuition fee is very expensive, it is worthy. As to me, reading books is the cheapest entertainment, quality resource for free learning and it is the same for learning online or at home. Some people suggest reading 50 books every year. The Jews and Russians can do it. The Americans are trying to do so. How far from that are the Macao people?

6. Conclusion

Under the one country two systems mode, Macao is supported by Central Government. Macao has sizable investment from overseas and is providing a lot of quality job positions. Following the continuous elevation of the general educational level, sustainable development of regional cooperation, appropriate diversification of local industries, Macao is able to provide broader vocational development space for local residents. Although Macao's career planning starts late, it has unique advantages: for example, free economy, free flow of information, convenient access to border, comprehensive community network, emphasis of equal opportunity, etc. If it is valued by all parties and united together by all parties, it is not difficult to catch up and will benefit our future.

Leung Cheok Teng (Vice President of Macao New Chinese Youth Association)
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