



A Research-Based Program

Background

MyCollegeMax (MCM) is an interactive web site that provides high school and college students with the tools, information, and guidance they need to develop proactive, higher order skill sets often identified as gaps by colleges and employers. MyCollegeMax is based on a cross-disciplined theoretical framework that includes but is not limited to (See Attached Reference List):

- **Educational, Economic and Employment Trends (EEE):** MCM uses national research databases, educational and trade journals, and news resources to develop a framework for what students are currently facing as they transition to college and career. At every point a statistic is mentioned on MCM, a reference is provided. This adherence to citing our facts is consistent with our efforts to remain transparent, honest, and straightforward. We also make sure that all citations on MCM are from reliable sources.
- **Neuroscience & Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional intelligence is critical to the success of college students and professionals. MCM taps the works of Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, Annie McKee in *Primal Leadership*; James Collins in *Good to Great*; Daniel Pink in *Drive*; and Frances Jensen in *The Teenage Brain* to define emotional intelligence (EI) and identify opportunities for students to develop their own EI.
- **Active Learning:** Active or experiential learning lends itself to “activities with a purpose.” John Dewey, the “Father of American Education,” developed his influential theory on experiential learning. It’s Dewey’s theory that is the basis for many of the activities and items on the College Readiness Scale and Career Readiness Scale.
- **Psychology:** Jensen and the authors of *Primal Leadership* emphasize the role that individual agency plays in the development of internal motivation. The ultimate goal of MCM is to tap the often untapped capacity of students by providing “opportunities” that will lead them down a path that is rewarding, fuels their passion, and is aligned with who they are as proactive individuals.
- **Vocational Theory:** Based on the work of Holland, Banduras, Super, and Parsons, MCM combines vocational theory and the practical application of that theory to positively support the development of high school and college students in order to maximize career potential.

Outcomes

“Too often we measure what is not important to measure and cannot measure what is critical to know.” This statement was written by Paul Hogan, president of The John R. Oishei Foundation. As a researcher, there are limitations to what we can measure about human development, particularly when considering highly complex constructs like complex reasoning and emotional intelligence. Yet, we know we must move the needle on students’ development of higher order skills that are necessary for college and career success. The following outcomes for MCM are research-based and are the potential benefits, as evidenced by current research, for students who follow the MCM program.

- **Retention & Graduation Rates:** George Kuh through his work on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) has clearly linked experiential learning, educational engagement, and career engagement as leading predictors of retention and graduation rates. In addition, large foundations like The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and The Lumina Foundation have extensive documentation on the immeasurable value of student engagement beyond student-centered teaching strategies. This premise, infused throughout MCM, is the basis for positively affecting retention and graduation rates.
- **Time-to-Degree:** There are three critical aspects to graduating on time.
 - **Taking the Right Amount of Credit Hours:** Students must take minimally 15 credit hours per semester to graduate on time (College Completion, 2015).
 - **Choosing a Major:** Most students do not follow a structured approach to selecting their major. Research at the University at Buffalo indicated that female students choose majors by talking to parents and male students choose their majors by talking to friends. The resources offered by MCM are structured, reliable and valid, connected to the Department of Labor and current information on the 47,000+ jobs in the US/global economy, and are extremely easy to use. Students who base choosing a major on a structured approach and valid and reliable career assessments are less likely to change majors and have a much greater chance of graduating on time.
 - **College Selection:** Too many students select a college based on factors that do not connect to their number one goal of landing a great job upon graduation (Higher Education Research Institute, 2015). First and foremost, your college needs to have your major, be affordable, and offer the campus supports necessary to successfully engage in the community and employment market.
- **Job Placement:** According to the most recent employer surveys conducted by NACE, National Association of Colleges and Employers, most employers do not feel that college graduates are even minimally prepared for jobs after graduation. Employers are looking for candidates who have diverse experiences outside of the classroom, who can speak the “language” of the field, and who know what they want out of their career. MCM helps students with this by directing them to activities and choices that cultivate higher order skills and the language of their chosen field.
- **Life and Career Satisfaction:** In most cases, students take *interest* inventories. However, interests have low predictive validity for job satisfaction and therefore job success. Therefore,

according to vocational researchers like Holland, Super, Parsons, and Banduras a career path based on a multiple variable career assessment, varying degrees of engagement in the field, and purposeful activities that lead to higher order skills that are general as well as career specific are more likely to lead to life and career satisfaction.

Conclusion

MyCollegeMax is a multi-disciplined approach that maximizes student potential through the practical application of educational, psychological, neurological, and vocational theory. MCM uses current educational, economic, and employment trends to maximize the time students have by recommending activities with the greatest return on that time investment. Finally, based on research, MCM is likely to assist any student who follows the program with maximizing their potential while achieving their personal, educational, and career goals.

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