The Role of Theory in Improving Evidence-Based Career Interventions

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Ideal

 Researchers propose, validate, and refine theories

  Practitioners apply those theories.

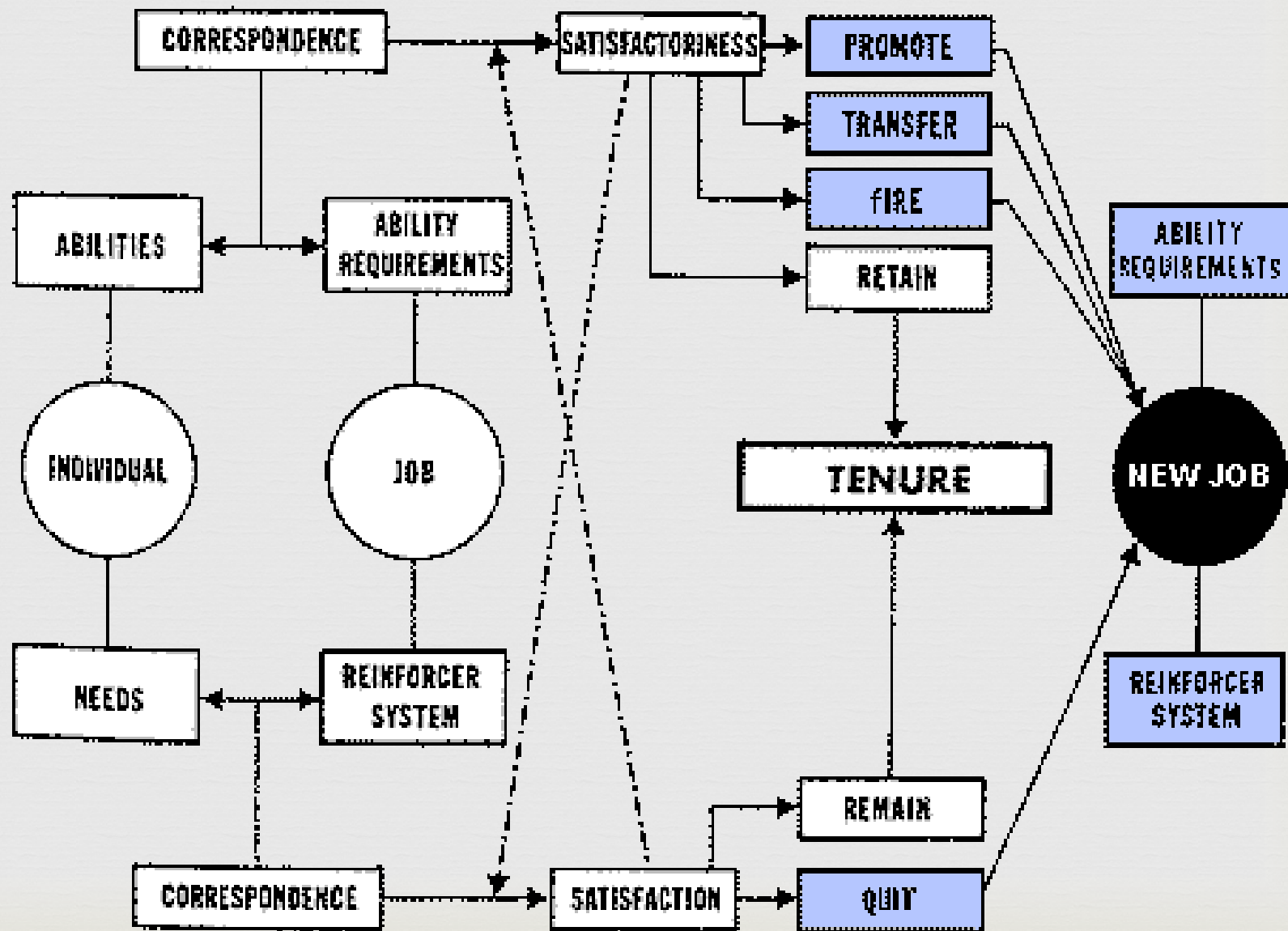 Practitioners communicate with researchers about the need for further refinement and development of the theories

We don't do this well
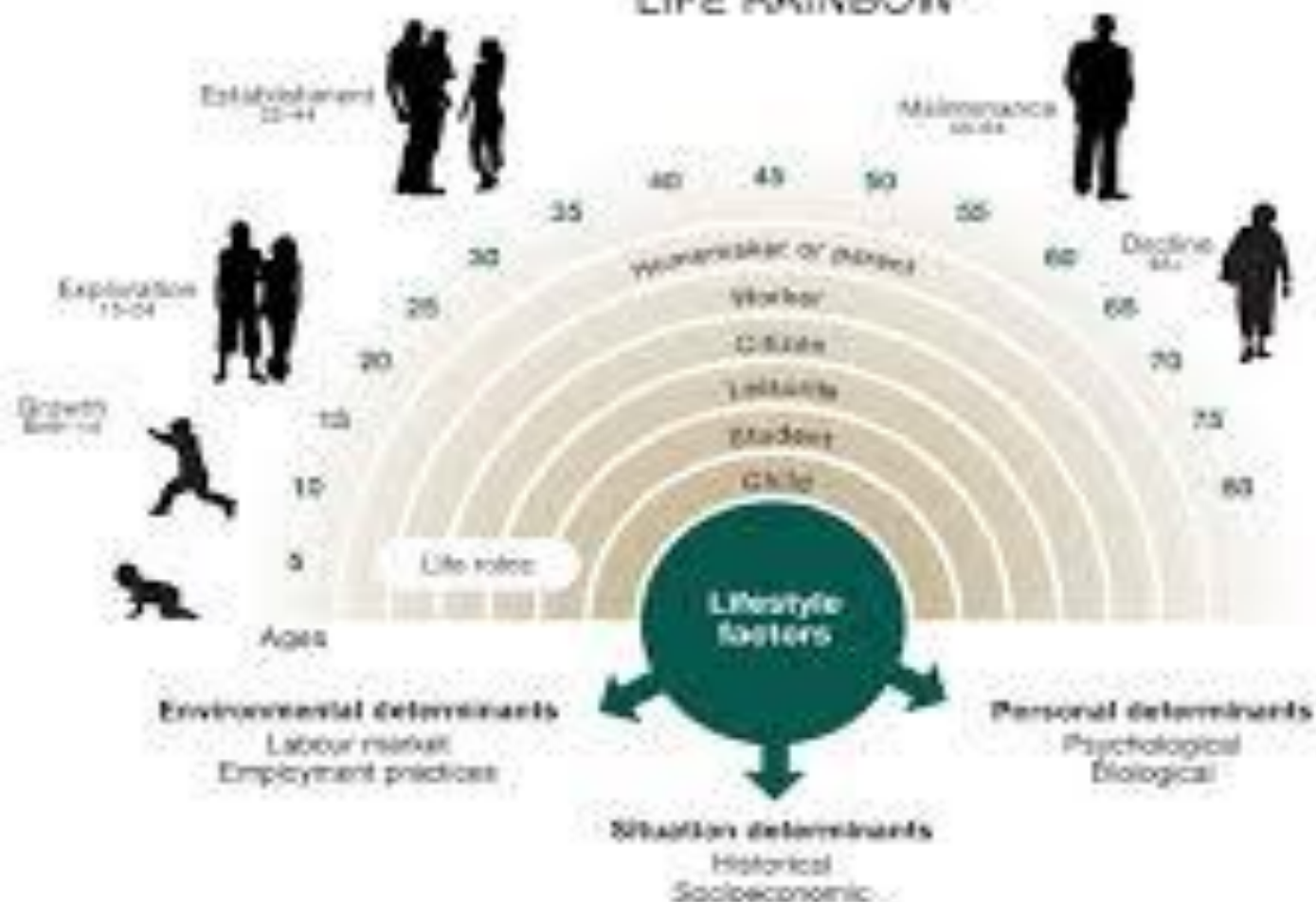
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ଔSampson, Hou, Kronholz, Dozier, McClain, et al.'s, (2014) review of 2013 articles

ଔ50% focused just on research

ଔ30% on theory

ଔless than 25% on practice
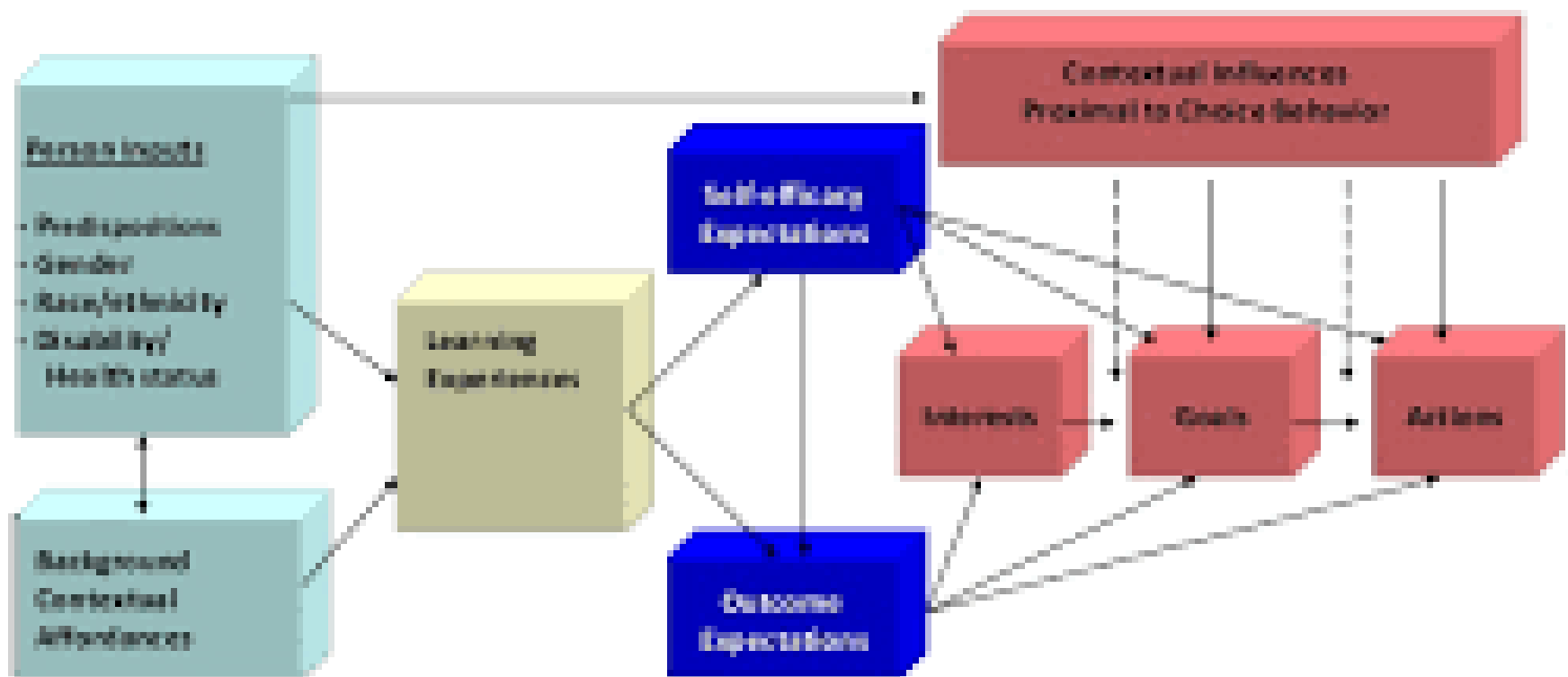
ଔ only 44% integrated theory, research and practice.
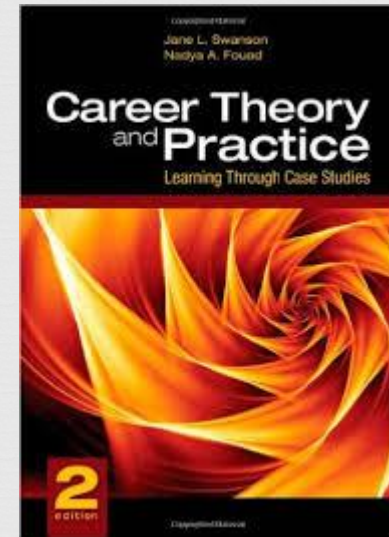
LIFE RAINBOW

Social Cognitive Career Theory
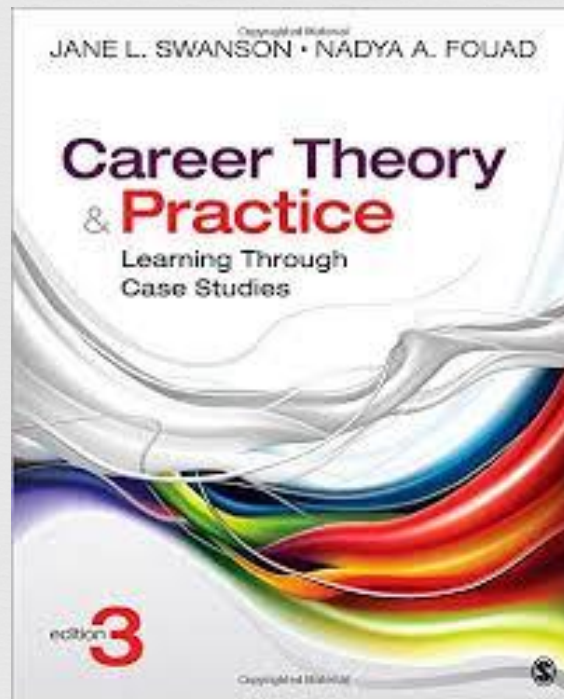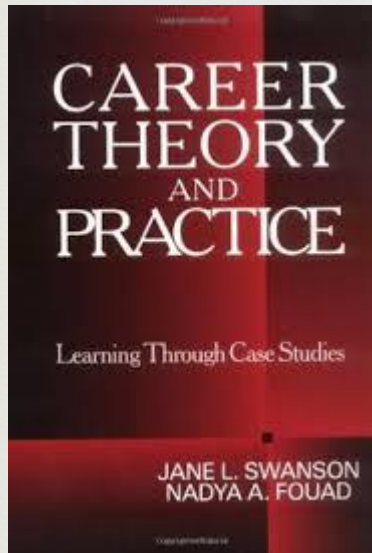## (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994, 2000, 2002)

Krumboltz (1994)

- Krumboltz (1994) also used a metaphor for a map at Career Convergence Conference in 1992
- Theories represent reality, or some portion of it;
- Omit nonessentials to focus on specific behavior important to the theory;
- Exaggerate some behaviors to make a point;
- Represent the unobservable; and
- Is useful to answer one set of questions.

CAREER
THEORY
AND
PRACTICE

Learning Through Case Studies

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Why the Gap?

❧ Researchers study relatively circumscribed problems

❧ All the limitations of research may not be helpful to someone needing an immediate answer about a client

❧ Hard to make sense of the many ways that problems are defined or studied.

❧ Hard to sift through many studies to come to conclusions about research in an area

❧ Researchers and practitioners use different language,

AND

Practitioners don't have an effective mechanism to convey their research questions to scientists

May not necessarily explain the questions in ways that are easily translated to a research study.

Researchers may not immediately think of the practical implications of their studies.

And this assumes theory is in the middle (which may not be true)

IMAGINE:

- Jason's (a career counselor who uses SCCT) new client has a career concern that Jason has not yet experienced

- Jason finds no research on this, so he calls Bob and Steve and asks them what they think.

- Bob and Steve say "Good question! We'll design a study to consider that, and we will call you up to let you know what we find and then we will revise our theory accordingly"

If career theories are used to develop interventions

 People applying those interventions need to have ways to communicate how the intervention did, or did not, work.

  Was it effective for some clients, and if so, which?

 Was it effective for some career concerns, and if so, which, and which were less effective?

 Was it more or less effective at some point in the career counseling process?

We must find ways to address the gap.

꒰The science-practice gap is not a trivial matter.
꒰Our scientifically based career interventions are the core value we provide to the public.
꒰The greatest threat to our profession: people who believe that they can become a career coach with no training or background.
꒰ Demonstrating that career counseling is based on sound, scientific evidence is our best way to argue that practitioners need to be trained to provide this service.

Future Recommendations

 Create teams of researchers and practitioners, who collaboratively work to identify problems and ways to assess them from within a theoretical perspective.

 Invest time, patience, and energy in the partnership. True partnerships take time to develop, especially with the need to ensure everyone is using the same language to communicate about the issues.

 Investigate how research informs not only practice but policy. A research study in a university career center can be used to demonstrate the need for more resources.

 Recognize that everyone in a partnership must benefit from that partnership. Be open and honest about the benefits needed in each setting.

Future Recommendations

 Education and training programs can model this by fostering conversations between supervisors and faculty. Supervisors could be invited in to talk about how the research that is discussed may be applied to real world problems (or how it may not be applied).

 Develop mechanisms, perhaps through a website, for practitioners to identify concerns that they want future research studies to examine.

Future Recommendations

 Develop mechanisms, through conference or newsletters, where researchers and practitioners can talk together about the efficacy of interventions and need for revision of theories.

 Ensure that articles published in journals emphasize the integration of theory and research, and where appropriate, practice.