Overview: Discovering Personal Genius (DPG)

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Getting to Know You

Discovering Personal Genius (DPG), or Discovery, is a structured method of revealing an individual's existing or emerging skills, the tasks they perform or desire to learn, and their preferred conditions of employment (e.g., work schedule, job duties/tasks, pay, company culture). The DPG process identifies individual Vocational Themes that direct the career search and negotiation in companies where other workers share the same dominant Theme(s). DPG results in knowing the employment seeker in a more personal way and “discovering” the most important factors for employment, including their unique skills, interests, learning style, support needs, and personal preferences. DPG involves crafting activities with each employment seeker in places where they typically spend time, rather than completing paper-and-pencil evaluations or other types of work tests.

More Than Just Interests Alone

DPG focuses on identifying an employment seeker’s skills instead of only focusing on interests. While interests are important, skills provide the best foundation for building quality employment. An employment seeker who has an “Animal” theme and strong computer skills might find a higher paying, more secure job doing data entry and posting social media messages at an animal rights organization than cleaning cages at the local pet store, for example. DPG activities may be identified through the interests the employment seeker has, but the DPG activities themselves are used as evidence of existing skills, or those that can be taught, as the starting point.

Spending Time Together

DPG is a time-limited, quick-paced process that reveals vocational themes based on the employment seeker’s interests and skills. Vocational Themes guide us to explore businesses in the community where other people with the same or similar vocational themes work. This process helps identify unique employment opportunities that are a better fit for both the employment seeker and the employer than those that are found through more traditional approaches, such as searching the want-ads for available jobs.

Stages of Discovering Personal Genius

DPG takes place in seven basic stages, with different tasks, activities, and observations to be completed in each. Generally speaking, DPG takes a range of 20 to 60 hours, over a period of approximately 6 to 8 weeks, though sometimes less, and occasionally more, when
interruptions such as illness occur. The average time DPG takes a skilled and experienced team is about 30 hours over 4 weeks. Without a time limit, DPG can go on indefinitely, because people are constantly learning and changing. The purpose of DPG is not to decipher all of life’s twists and turns, but rather build a plan for targeted career development and to create a sense of urgency for entering the workforce.

DPG’s steps produce evidence through activities, interviews, and observations, contributing to a vocational profile or career development plan. The process identifies at least three (3) solid Vocational Themes that inform the individual profile and the job creation framework. Conducting DPG includes spending time with the employment seeker in his/her community, performing tasks to observe skills and identify possible support strategies, getting advice and information from people and business owners that share similar interests and skills, and putting all this into a plan of action using the Discovery Staging Record (DSR).

**Generally Accepted Stages of Discovery include:**

- Visiting the individual’s home and neighborhood to get to know the employment seeker better and to identify key support people and local resources
- Interviewing people who know the employment seeker best to reveal relevant experience and preferences
- Performing concrete and measurable activities related to emerging Vocational Themes in order to document skills and tasks
- Completing Informational Interviews with business owners or top level managers where employment seeker Vocational Themes, interests, and skills lead us, to get career advice and learn more about the unmet needs of companies and possible work opportunities once DPG is finished
- Verifying 3 Vocational Themes with information related to specific employment seeker interests, skills, and conditions of employment
- Developing a written vocational profile (using the DSR) that summarizes and synthesizes Discovery information into a plan for job creation
- Developing Lists of 20 different business for each of the 3 Vocational Themes for pursuing employment

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