

COAT OF ARMS: AN INTRODUCTION FOR STUDENTS TO LIFE DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

In the existing literature on life design, there is discussion on the relationships between a person's past experiences and background in their life design experience. The current literature on life design process focuses is scarce with few examining how it could integrate into undergraduate college curricula. However, the extant research shows promising in utilizing life design methods.

INTRODUCTION

Guichard [3] discusses how narrative innovation can develop increased engagement by restructuring the past. During the interventions, counselees are able to reflect on their own life experiences and give them a more general meaning. Doing so allows for the counselees to create a channel from emotion to cognition, or "... a passage from a felt – emotional – temporal continuity to an expressed temporal continuity" [2, p. 78]. The participants then arranged their past and present events which extended meanings to these memories. Afterwards, many counselees noted an energized feeling and a motivation to work towards goals in their lives. Pordelan, et al. [4] shared their experience with digital storytelling and the life design paradigm. Their study compared in person and digital narration of their life stories, discovering their life meaning and career environment, creating a success formula and then rewriting their life stories. The results showed that the career decision making abilities increased with no difference between digital storytelling and face-to-face storytelling.

This paper shares how the development of a Coat of Arms assignment which is part of the Live Regally program [2] combined with the Odyssey Plan described by Burnett and Evans [1] aids in helping students visualize and prepare for possible post-college careers. See the Appendix for examples of student Coat of Arms submissions. The instructions for the project are provided along with a proposed research study examining the impact of this assignment on three student outcomes.

H1: The use of the Coat of Arms and the Odyssey Plan affects the career preferences of students.

H2: The use of the Coat of Arms and the Odyssey Plan clarifies the personal values of students.

H3: The use of the Coat of Arms and the Odyssey Plan affects student motivation to advance in their professional life.

The study will measure if the use of a Coat of Arms and an Odyssey Plan in conjunction with Life Design will impact or improve students career preferences, personal values, and motivation to advance in professional life with a pre-project survey, post-project survey, and follow-up interview.

A Coat of Arms is an interactive exercise to be completed by participants of the study. The Coat of Arms allows asks participants to develop four quadrants of a Coat of Arms visually following a set of guided questions and after these are placed in the four corners of the shield or flag the students add a motto, credo or slogan. The Odyssey Plan is a larger project used to have students visualize and then describe in concrete terms three unique career plans that the student believes he or she can achieve in the next 3-5 years of their lives.

The Coat of Arms exercise starts by asking the question: *What do you live for?*

After internalizing the question, participants will be asked to complete the first of four quadrants.

1. The first quadrant asks participants to define their Regal Animal.
2. The second quadrant asks participants to define their Kingdom.
3. The third quadrant asks participants to define their Signature.
4. The fourth quadrant asks participants to define their Heritage.

The students then combine these four images into a coherent image, often in the shape of a shield or flag. Many students use Power Point to add art from the Internet that represents the four quadrants, but some are able to draw them into a coherent whole. Only after doing the graphic portion of their Coat of Arms are they asked to add a motto. This helps them use both hemispheres of their brain and encourages them to be creative in connecting their sense of self with the Odyssey Plan assignment which involves research three careers of interest to them. The Odyssey Plan then asks them to reflect on each of the three jobs in terms of the resources needed to obtain the job, how much they will like the job, their level of confidence that they will be able to get the job and how well that job fits their values and interests or in other words how coherent is this choice.

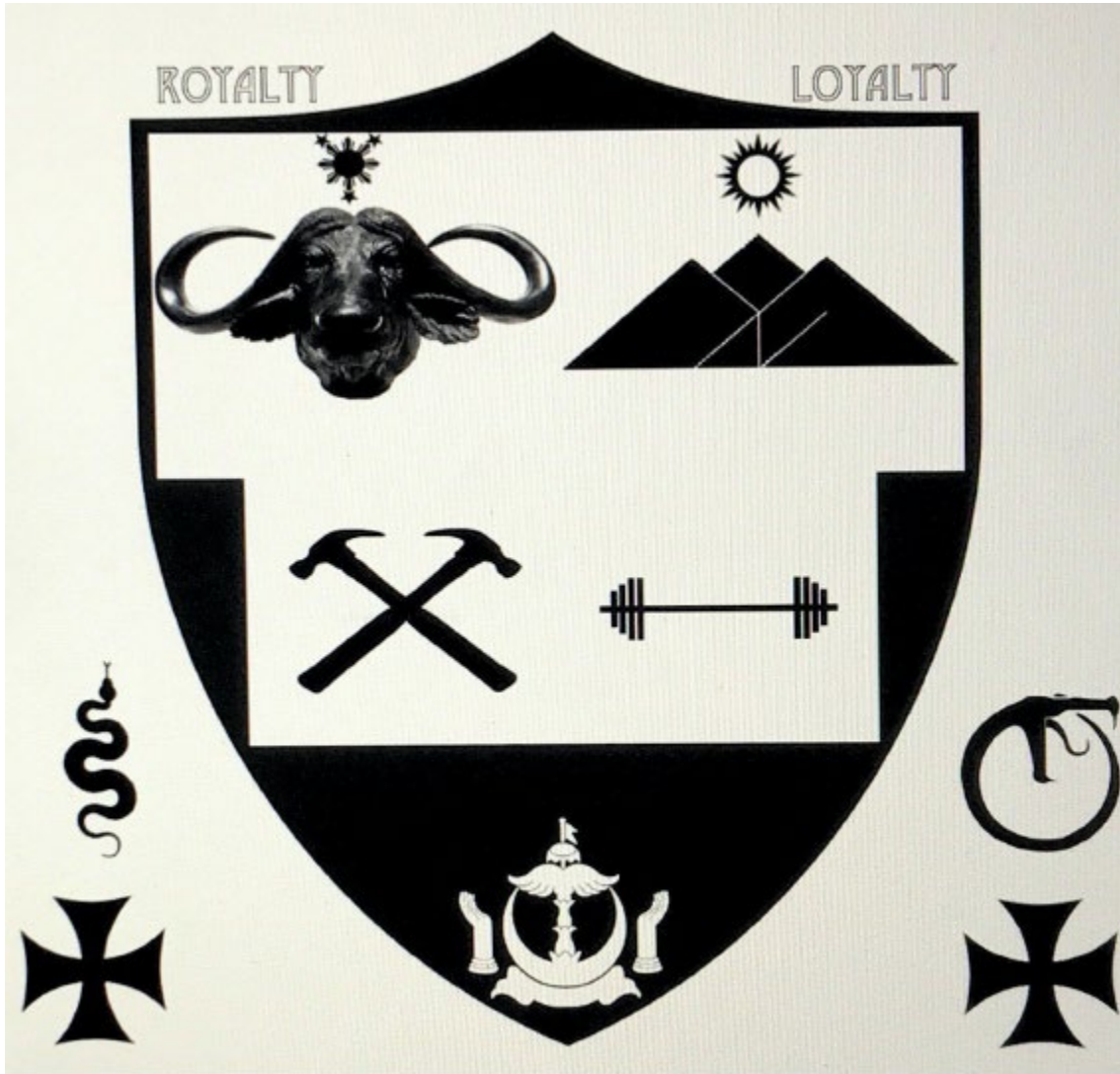
In conclusion this paper provides a case study for the application of a class or career center activity- The Coat of Arms- based on the life design model that embraces a person's past and background to help inspire the student develop a career plan that fits his or her interests, values and talents using a design thinking approach.

REFERENCES

- [1] Burnett, W. & Evans, D. J. *Designing your life: How to build a well-lived, joyful life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016.
- [2] Golding, J. 2020. Living Regally. <https://www.liveregally.com/>
- [3] Guichard, J. Reflexivity in life design interventions: Comments on life and career design dialogues. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 2016, 97, 78–83.
- [3] Pordelan, N., Hosseinian, S. & Baei Lashaki, A. Digital storytelling: A tool for life design career intervention. *Education and Information Technologies*, 2021, 26 (3), 3445–3457.

APPENDIX

Student Example 1



Student Example 2



love
MAKES A
FAMILY
Adventure



Vigilance/ Adaptable/ Alertness



Student Example 3



Student Example 4



love
MAKES A
FAMILY
Adventure



Vigilance/ Adaptable/ Alertness

