

The Thesis: KRUMBOLTZ, Career Decision-Making, And Metco: Alumni share their experiences and recommendations, by Natascha Faye Saunders, Columbia, South Carolina: Self Published, 2022, 250 pp. \$19.99, paper.

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Natascha Faye Saunders, Ed.D., MBA, MS, CPSS has written an expanded version of her graduate school thesis, uniquely titled *The Thesis*, to reach education professionals and stakeholders charged with equipping high school youth. *The Thesis* demonstrates the findings of how former Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. (METCO) program students' experiences impacted their career decisions. The METCO program has historically been tasked with increasing school-choice and access to academic opportunities by bussing Boston students of diverse socioeconomic and ethnic/racial backgrounds to schools outside their neighborhoods. Sequentially, METCO has functioned to improve the educational disparity by decreasing school segregation and enhancing the cultural diversity at schools within the Boston metropolitan region. Dr. Saunders holds meaningful memories as a former METCO student, which demonstrates a solid authority throughout the text, fuels her research mission, and is evident in the sensitivity of the methodology. *The Thesis* is a contemporary addition to the body of Black education scholarship that evidences the positive impact and influence of structured opportunities, adult mentorship and guidance, and environmental academic expectations. The text uniquely advocates for education equity and education diversity programs that are presently employed throughout the United States to persevere because they are positively impacting students and purposefully shrinking the gap between education choice and access for students of color.

The foundation for the analysis of former students' experiences is built upon Krumboltz Social Learning Theory of Career Development which unpacks career decision-making into four factors: genetics, environmental conditions and events, task approach skills, and instrumental and associative learning experiences (Krumboltz et al., 1976). In seeking to understand how these factors influenced career decision-making, Dr. Saunders employed an interpretative paradigm known as portraiture, to robustly collect participant experiences in narrative format and interpret the meanings of their experiences. Interestingly genetics were a discarded factor from the analysis, however the unique voice of each participant was captured within the themes of environmental conditions and events, task approach skills, and instrumental and associative learning experiences. A strength of Dr. Saunders' text is presenting the impressions and bodily expressions of participants within the portraiture because they further strengthen the analysis of the influence and impact of their METCO experiences by highlighting the embodied reflections of participants. Dr. Saunders effectively expands the utilization of Krumboltz Social Learning Theory to a non-white population through the investigation of METCO experiences.

The Thesis is structured resembling a traditional thesis, and therefore the flow and layering of information is easy to follow and digest for students, administrators, counselors, practitioners, and educational policy makers. Therefore, seeking insight into the formulation of Dr. Saunders study and any recommendations is straightforward. There are useful figures provided throughout the text, nonetheless they are not detailed in the table of contents for quick access. The provision of recommendations will satisfy students, education professionals, and education researchers. Students and family members will have access to concrete objectives to

advocate for and seek from within their administration. Administrations and counselors will be able to develop effective programming to influence career-decision making and outcomes. Education policy makers are provided evidence for the power of METCO programs and ultimately the immeasurable value and benefit of its continued and increased funding to further bolster education equity within the United States.

This text will stir its readers to explore the educational influences involved in career decision-making while the recommendations provide structures to alleviate barriers often faced by students of color. For many readers, *The Thesis* could be the first introduction to METCO functions and programming, and thus provide a framework for enacting substantive career decision-making programming into academic institutions throughout the United States. Ultimately, Dr. Saunders convincingly evidences the necessity of METCO and similar programs, to further invest in career guidance and decision-making structures that cultivate skillsets, activate student interests, and bridge student connections to administrators, teachers, and former program alumni.

Krumboltz, J. D., Mitchell, A. M., & Jones, G. B. (1976). A social learning theory of career selection. *The counseling psychologist*, 6(1), 71-81.