

**Transitions, Transformation, and Transcendence:  
Thoughts Around Re-Inventing Advising and Coaching for 2030  
By William H Johnson Jr, Life Design Catalyst Facilitator**

***WANTED: Change Agents! Revolutionary and progressive academic advisors and coaches interested in changing how we work with students, tired of engaging in meaningless, monotonous work that's not inspiring. Looking for open-minded educators fascinated by ideas, concepts and strategies that stimulate the heart, mind, body, and spirit and provides opportunities to utilize talents and gifts in unique and special ways. Seeking like-minded partners and collaborators longing to instill hope for a better future and a better life for all.***

## **Introduction**

“Your purpose in life is to become the best version of yourself and use your gifts in service to something bigger than yourself.” – Life Design Catalyst

Are you happy with the work you're doing with students right now? Are you excited to get out of bed and go to work most mornings? How often do you get to use your skills, strengths, gifts, and talents on a daily basis? For many, the answers are: No, not often, and not as much as I'd like.

If there's one thing you need to know about me, I've been OBSESSED with making a difference in higher education! For over thirty years, my work has been focused on helping students figure out what they should do in life and how they can profoundly serve others, then sharing that content with others. And instead of winding down towards retirement, I am fanatical about digging deeper into this work to create more meaningful experiences for our students and for the advisors and coaches that serve those students. I'm ready to go; are you ready to join me?

The ONE question most students want help answering is: "What should I do with my life?" The answer is generally focused on choosing a major and/or deciding on a career. Do a Google search on "how many students change their major at least once in their college career?" and you'll find percentages as low as 33% and as high as 80%. Why is this a problem? Because 18-year-olds are being asked to pick a major, assuming the major they pick will be the career they pursue for the rest of their lives. It's heartbreaking that we put so much pressure on young people to make such an important decision so early in life, especially when they don't know anything about that major and potential career options. Today, students have NO opportunity to explore different areas because colleges and universities push students to take 15 credits a semester in order to graduate in two years (from a two-year school) or four years (from a four-year school). Although it's important for institutions to implement strategies to raise money through increases in tuition, state funding, research dollars, and donations while increasing retention and graduation rates, the main priority should be to help students make meaningful connections and answer the question, "What should I do with my life?"

Looking for a progressive idea? Consider the Life Design Catalyst Program.

## **An Alternative**

“Our job in this lifetime is not to fit into some mold that others have determined is best for us. Our job is to find out who we already are – and become it.” - Steven Pressfield

What comes to your mind when you read that quote? For me, this quote represents the focus of my work – helping students find out who they are and then become it. The Life Design Catalyst Program, currently in the School of Health and Human Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, facilitates the growth process by empowering students, faculty, and staff in higher education to optimize their lives by using their gifts to express the best version of themselves in service to something bigger than themselves in order to make the world a better place. It's an approach that views the exploration of Purpose (“Who am I meant to be?”), Meaning (“Why do I matter?”), Mission (“What am I here to do?”), and Vision (“Where do I want to go?”) as the foundation for student development and ultimately, student success.

The Life Design Catalyst Program integrates academic advising, academic/success coaching, career exploration, personal development, contemplative practices, holistic health and well-being, and developing the entrepreneurial

spirit/mindset as a foundation for the college experience – especially for first-year students. The Program embraces the "The Catalyst Spirit" (also known as the "Entrepreneurial Spirit"), where the Facilitators and students: (1) become deeply engaged in and committed to meaningful work and purposeful, passionate goals; (2) are intentional and persistent in all activities by taking calculated risks to create substantial value and generate significant results despite adversity, obstacles, and failure; and (3) step out of our comfort zone to use curiosity, creativity, imagination, and resourcefulness to design and plan a better life and a better future for ourselves and for others.

The Life Design Catalyst Program subscribes to the following beliefs:

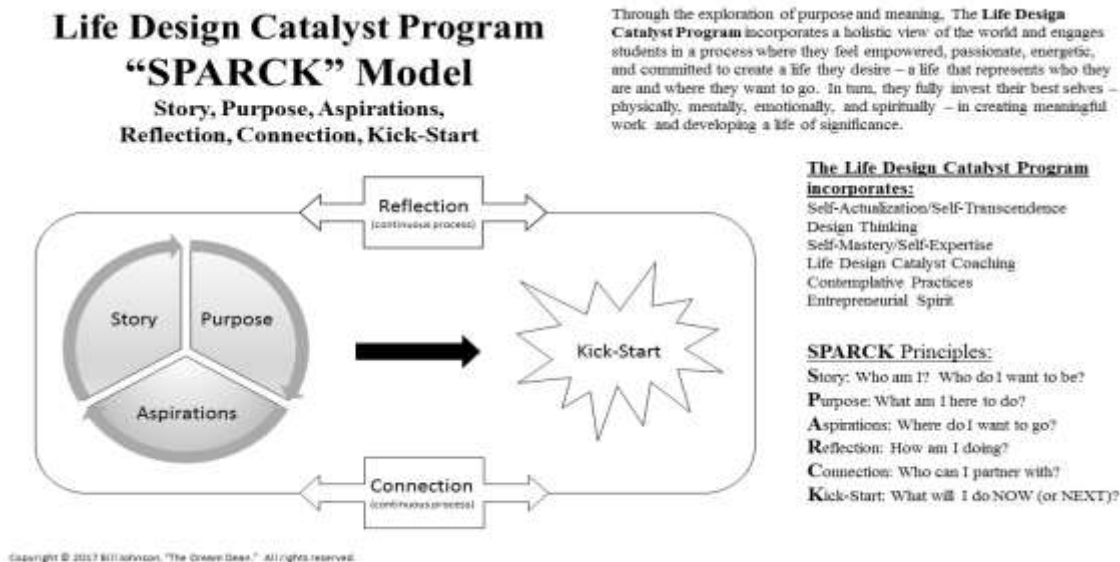
- Simple Rules for Success:
  - Know Yourself.
  - Serve Profoundly.
  - Find Your Right Pond.
- Values: “Profound care for self. Profound connections with others. Profound service to the world.”
- Philosophy: Better Character = Better People, Better People = Better Students.

Before we move further, recognize that the Life Design Catalyst Program is focused more on student development than student performance. Practices focused on performance typically addresses and fixes specific problems or challenges. It’s about putting out the fires on everyday stuff. Practices focused on development turns the focus from the issue at hand to the person dealing with the issue. It’s about moving forward to learn, grow, and improve, rather than fixing a problem. Both are necessary, but it’s important to know that this Program primarily concentrates on development, not performance.

## Frameworks/Models

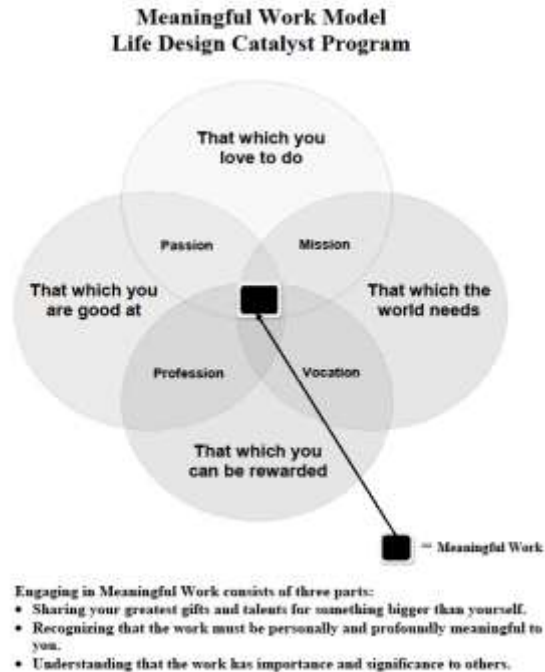
The SPARCK Framework and the Meaningful Work Model guides the Life Design Catalyst Program. The SPARCK Framework - Story, Purpose, Aspirations, Reflection, Connection, and Kick-Start – is the process that guides our curriculum. The Meaningful Work Model provides the groundwork that defines how to serve the world – and how to be rewarded to do such great work.

### SPARCK Framework



Students in the Life Design Catalyst Program are encouraged to define their story, construct their purpose, and create aspirations (dreams) for the future, then take action to kick-start their lives towards a better future. Throughout the process, they engage in internal and external reflection, while enhancing connections with themselves and with others.

## Meaningful Work Model



The Meaningful Work Model is used to help students create a one-sentence Meaningful Work Statement, a statement that describes how they want to serve the world. The Model illustrates that meaningful work consists of four parts: (1) What you are good at doing, (2) What you love to do, (3) What the world needs, and (4) How you can be rewarded/paid.

Once defined, the statement is used to create academic (choosing a major/minor, identifying potential employers/employment opportunities, beginning and mid-career salary levels, involvement in student and professional organizations, and graduate school opportunities) and career plans (educational, experiential, employable, and entrepreneurial).

### Contemplative Practices (Framework)

One way to get students to reflect and get connected to their inner self is to incorporate contemplative practices in your classes, workshops, and/or sessions. What are contemplative practices? My favorite definition comes from The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (<https://www.contemplativemind.org/practices>):

*Contemplative Practices cultivate a critical, first-person focus, sometimes with direct experience as the object, while at other times concentrating on complex ideas or situations. Incorporated into daily life, they act as a reminder to connect to what we find most meaningful. Contemplative practices are practical, radical, and transformative, developing capacities for deep concentration and quieting the mind in the midst of the action and distraction that fills everyday life. This state of calm centeredness is an aid to exploration of meaning, purpose, and values. Contemplative practices can help develop greater empathy and communication skills, improve focus and attention, reduce stress, and enhance creativity, supporting a loving and compassionate approach to life.*

The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society has put together “The Tree of Contemplative Practices” that illustrates the components of contemplative practices used in organizational and academic setting, as shown below:



Some of the contemplative practices we’ve incorporated into our Program include breathing meditation, loving-kindness meditation, contemplative arts, storytelling, retreats, deep listening, dialog, journaling, and visualization. We’ve also taken the principles behind contemplative practices and encouraged students (and our Facilitators) to incorporate some type of daily practice/routine into their lives, something they can do for themselves to feel centered and at peace within the self. Five practices have been found to increase health and well-being (which are the practices students are encouraged to incorporate into their lives) are: meditation/prayer, movement/exercise, journaling, random acts of kindness, and gratitude.

These Frameworks and Models are instrumental in developing life plans (daily practices, minimizing obstacles and limiting beliefs, building a dream team, and creating a vision for the future). Think of ways how they can enhance the work that you do with students – and with yourself. Today is a great time to start!

### THE Catalysts

Over the next decade, as students and parents question the value of a college degree, advisors and coaches focused strictly on degree/course planning and/or college success will become obsolete. Technology is fast replacing the need for “humans” to go over their course schedules for the semester, plan their 4-year course work, and develop the academic skills to be successful in college. What will replace advisors and coaches by 2030? The Life Design Catalyst Facilitator, otherwise known as “THE Catalyst.”

Life Design Catalyst Facilitators assist all students (traditional, non-traditional, transfer, and returning adults) with the process of Transitions (moving from one state in life to a better state in life), Transformation (becoming a better version on yourself), and Transcendence (serving something bigger than yourself). They use introspective tools to empower students to create ambitious academic, career, and life plans that lead to success in school and in life. Facilitators will show students how they can connect their gifts, talents, skills, and abilities to potential jobs and entrepreneurial endeavors. Facilitators will utilize a variety of skills in working with students because every student is different – different backgrounds, different stages in life, and different wants and needs. Facilitators will need to employ a variety of strategies to help students navigate their journey in life. A “one method fits all” mindset will not work with students today.

So, who is a Life Design Catalyst Facilitator? It is an individual who:

- Helps students make something happen, helps make things easier, helps find answers to problems, and/or helps brainstorm solutions for success through deep listening and open, honest bi-directional conversations.
- Serves as a dynamic ally, realizing that both parties are creating a shared experience in life’s journey in designing lives that matter.

- Helps them resolve their internal and external struggles, then inspires them to create an aspirational identity that positively shifts their perspectives about themselves.
- Uses powerful questions, introspective tools, and curated information, to help students design meaningful lives and aspiring futures.
- Serves many different roles, sometimes within the same exchange – as an advisor, coach, mentor, facilitator, guide, teacher, counselor, collaborator, knowledge expert, presenter, listener, supporter, inspirer, and maybe even a friend.

The Life Design Catalyst Facilitator must work from the heart, where the most useful tool in the toolbox is love – love for the work and love for the students. To be most effective, the Life Design Catalyst Facilitator must be passionate about the transformation and transcendence of students in transition in order to help them improve the way they see themselves and have hope for a better future.

As a Facilitator, these are a few examples of groups that could benefit from the work of a Life Design Catalyst Facilitator:

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| • First-Year Students            | • High school juniors and seniors        |
| • Transfer Students              | • Minority Mentoring Programs            |
| • Returning Adult Students       | • Programs like Big Brother/Big Sister   |
| • Graduate students              | • Non-profit organizations like Goodwill |
| • Alumni                         | • Athletic/sports teams                  |
| • Veterans and Military Families | • Business Organizations/Entrepreneurs   |
| • Former inmates                 | • Workforce Development                  |

Although this is not an exhaustive list, it may provide you with ideas of one or two population that you believe you can serve best.

A Life Design Catalyst Facilitator:

- Assists others in exploring one's purpose in life and creates a vision for the future.
- Encourages and supports personal growth and development.
- Focuses on instilling effective, lasting change and positive behaviors.
- Serves as a sounding board to listen and to give honest feedback.
- Acts as an accountability partner, providing both empathy and tough love when needed.
- Shares knowledge and advice when applicable.
- Is a difference maker who desires to make an impact on the lives of others.
- Inspires change!

A Life Design Catalyst Facilitator empowers students to:

- Have a higher level of self-awareness.
- Live life with purpose and meaning.
- Set smarter and more relevant goals.
- Bridge the gap between where you are and where you want to be.
- Increase self-confidence.
- Identify more opportunities for meaningful work.
- Implement more desirable habits.
- Create, sustain, and improve relationships.
- Achieve higher levels of success in careers and in life.
- Take more personal responsibility for actions and decisions.
- Remove obstacles and minimize limiting beliefs.
- Overcome low confidence.
- Self-generate strategies and solutions to problems.
- Be clear about how to live a fulfilling life.

The Facilitator encourages and support students to take control of their lives and see adversity, obstacles, and problems as opportunities for growth, not as hindrances.

Think of a world where advisors and coaches in higher education are trained on using specific introspective tools and powerful questions that empower students to create ambitious academic, career, and life plans that lead happy, healthy, and successful lives in school AND in life!

## The Tools

Unlike most academic/success coaching programs – where the emphasis is on one-on-one coaching, we created Design Your Life courses to serve a multitude of students in a group coaching format. When caseloads stretched into the hundreds for our advising staff, it became impossible to see every student more than once or twice a semester. Over the course of an hour, we would see 2-3 individual students once or twice a semester. In our group coaching format (class), we can serve 20-24 students at a time. In addition, this format allowed us to free up time during the day to spend time outside of class with students with more needs, special situations, etc. The other benefit of the group coaching format is that students build rapport not only with their Facilitator, but with many of their classmates as well.

The Life Design Catalyst Program we've constructed consists of two Foundational 1-credit Elective courses, specific to new first-year and transfer students: (1) HHS125: Design Your Life I – What Could I Do With My Life (which is typically taken in the Fall Semester), and (2) HHS135: Design Your Life II – Redesign a Life You'll Love. These group coaching courses are limited to 20-24 students per section and meets once a week for 50 minutes. Most of the introspective activities are done in-class; Poster Projects are done outside of class, where students typically have one week to complete. Another unique feature of the class is that each class starts off with five minutes of meditation – we start with a simple breathing meditation, then, over the course of the semester, incorporated relaxing New Age and Native American music, loving-kindness meditation, and body scan meditation. We believe it's important for students to understand the connection of the head and heart with the hands in writing their story and designing their future. The Design Your Life classes are taught by trained Facilitators, who are required to complete the Life Design Catalyst Facilitator Training; all prospective facilitators must attend a Training in order to teach the course.

Below is a small list of the activities we've incorporated in the HHS125 and HHS135 classes. Three things that's special about our courses and Program: (1) the tools listed below were created in-house, so students have access to all of the materials for free, (2) the curriculum is fluid, so we have been able to modify current tools or create new tools to enhance exploration, and (3) students can take both classes twice for credit, so every now and then we'll have students enroll in their first year (transitioning from high school to college) and then again in their senior year (transitioning from college to the world of work).

### Introspective Self-Assessment Activities

- 50 Kick-Ass Questions to Awaken Meaningful Change
- Personal Responsibility
- I Am Statements and Empowering Statement
- Storytelling
- Lollipop Moments/Core Emotional Challenge Themes
- Personality Type Assessment (Myers-Briggs, Holland Code, and Enneagram)
- Values Assessment (Personal Core Values and Desired Work Values)
- Strengths Assessment (Character and Engagement Strengths)
- Find Your SPARCK Questions
- Meaningful Work Statement
- Make Your Mark
- Personal Philosophy/Personal Manifesto
- Personal Motivations
- Problem to Solve/Why It Matters
- Life's Work (Educational, Experiential, Employable, Entrepreneurial)
- Seven Word Life Motto
- Establishing a Daily Practice
- Personal Superpowers
- Transformation Triad
- What's Working/What's Not Working
- What's Holding You Back (Obstacles and Limiting Beliefs)
- Your Eulogy
- Dream Team/Dream Community
- Lollipop Moments/Emotional Core Challenges
- My Life Self-Assessment
- Desired Feelings
- StoryBrand One-Liner
- Life Word Activity

### Projects (Posters/Presentations)

- My Life Story Poster
- Major/Career/Calling Exploration Poster
- Calling Connection Mind Map
- Personal Charter

- You...The Superhero
- Current State vs. Ideal State (One Year)
- 5-Year Portrait of My Best Life

For the topics listed above, we provide videos, podcasts, articles, and other curated materials that enhance the activities and projects listed above. This allows the Facilitator to contour the group coaching sessions to his or her liking.

Sometimes, instead of working with the introspective tools, you may want to have conversations around coaching questions. At the heart of Life Design Catalyst Program are questions to move people forward. In some instances, you may need to think and act quickly to help students take action immediately. Use the questions below to transform conversations from thoughts into actions.

1. What do you want? Why are you here to see me? What on your mind?
2. What's the problem? What's the issue? What's your dilemma?
3. What do you want to happen? What do you want as the end result?
4. What are you willing to do? What do you need to do right now?
5. What do you need from me? How would you like for me to help you?

This short and focused questioning technique can be used by Facilitators to help students identify and work through personal change. Use when you aim to get the desired outcome in the shortest amount of time. Use this technique when you want to get to the source/root of the problem and get students to act fast. To be effective, you need to think quickly on your feet, be flexible, utilize what you know and have, and make sure to stick to the outcome – growth and development results. Sometimes, the initial problem is something prompted by a much deeper issue that may need to be addressed first. In this case, asking “Why” or “What else” can be integrated at some point in the conversation (usually at the problem stage) to get to the deeper level of the problem, cause, or issue. The favorite question Facilitators uses as a guide is : “Is the decision I’m about to make (or the action I’m about to take) moving me forward into growth (+1) or backward into safety (-1)?”

### The Data

Does it work? Yes, in a variety of ways. Not only have we been able to increase retention and graduation rates, but student feedback clearly state that we have helped them answer the question, “What should I do with my life.” The information below provides a glimpse of the success of the Program.

#### Results from the HHS125: Design Your Life I - What Could I Do With My Life course

- Enrolled over **2,500** students in course since Fall 2008
- Over **230%** enrollment growth over past three years (243 students enrolled in 2015-16, 388 in 2016-17, 443 in 2017-18, and 567 in 2018-19).
- Projected to enroll up to **600 students in 27 sections** of HHS125 in the 2019 Fall Semester (25 in-person and 2 online sections).
- From Fall 2008 to Fall 2013, achieved slightly higher Retention Rates (**3.2%**), as well as higher 5-Year (**6.4%**) and 6-year (**2.8%**) Graduations Rates than the UNCG average.
- Since Fall Semester 2014 (when we implemented the Poster/Presentation Projects), achieved over **81%** Retention Rate for all students, over **40%** 4-Year Graduation Rate, and over **63%** 5-year Graduation Rate - a 5-Year Graduation Rate that's significantly higher than the 5-year AND 6-year Graduation Rates averages for all UNCG students.
- Achieved over **82%** Retention Rate for all Minority students, including:
  - Over **84%** Retention Rate for Black/African American students.
  - Over **83%** Retention Rate for Hispanic/Latino students.
- Achieved over **91%** Retention Rate for Transfer Students (Fall Semester 2018 to Fall Semester 2019).

#### Results from the overall First-Year Experience: Combination of HHS125 and HHS135 in First Year of College

- Students who've taken HHS125 in Fall Semester and HHS135 in subsequent Spring Semester of their first year in college:
  - Achieved over **88%** Retention Rate.
  - Achieved over **69%** 5-Year Graduation Rate.

**Student Feedback on HHS125 course** (328 responses - Fall 2017; 399 responses - Fall 2018) - Percentages based on responses to "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to statements. First percentage refers to results from Fall 2017 evaluation; second percentage refers to results from Fall 2018 evaluation.

- **86.0%** and **91.5%** - This course helped me understand my meaningful work - how I plan to serve others.
- **86.9%** and **81.9%** - This course helped to clarify my goals and dreams and create a vision for my future.
- **87.8%** and **89.5%** - This course provided me with knowledge that could help me be successful in life.
- **82.0%** and **84.4%** - I believe that I can make better decisions about my life and my future now that I have completed this course.
- **80.0%** and **84.9%** - I have a much better understanding of who I want to be and what I'm here to do now that I've completed this course.
- **90.8%** and **95.7%** - I would recommend this course to other students.

Although the results are positive, there's much more work to be done. Not only are we trying to find ways to continue to raise the retention and graduation rates, but we are looking for strategies to maximize the students' experience in class, to get them more connect with their classmates and with UNCG.

## The Movement

Over the years, Life Design Catalyst work has been shared across the United States, as well as in Canada and France. The lists below are institutions and organizations/associations that have participated in some form of LDC Coach Training and/or uses Life Design Catalyst activities/tools in some capacity at their institutions; those entities marked in **BOLD** indicates institutions/organizations that have hosted a Life Design Catalyst Facilitator Training Program, Life Design Catalyst Workshop, and/or Life Design Catalyst Boot Camp at their institution or organization. Here are a few fun facts about the Program:

- Life Design Catalyst Facilitator Training Program is a content-based program. Participants engage in introspective, personal development activities that allow for reflection and deep, intimate conversation. The LDC Facilitator Training Program is **EXTREMELY INTERACTIVE!**
- Life Design Catalyst Training Program provides tools that allows for flexibility, adaptability, and customizable in a variety of settings (individual appointments, small groups, large groups, workshops, classes), situations (15-30 minute appointment, 50-90 minute class, 60-minute group coaching session, half-day or full-day workshop, three- or four-day training), and populations (traditionally-aged, transfer students, returning adult students, faculty/staff, community members, etc.).
- Training is a professional development workshop through a personal development experience.
- The first Training was held June 2014. Local Trainings are typically in the Summer (May/June) and Winter (December). As of December 2019, we have facilitated **TWELVE (12)** Coach Trainings locally. We've also facilitated 3- and 4-Day Trainings at five institutions across the country.
- We have trained over 500 Life Design Catalysts Facilitators (and Navigators/Coaches), as well as conducted workshops/trainings at over 80 different colleges and universities throughout the world.
- Provide one- and two-day Life Design Catalyst Boot Camps (personal/staff/workforce development) and three- and four-day Life Design Catalyst Facilitator Trainings (professional/entrepreneurial development). Prior program and/or workshop topics included personal growth coaching, health/well-being, purpose exploration and meaningful work, personal core values, and side hustle/entrepreneurial endeavors – or any combination of the above.

### *Listing of Colleges/Universities*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American University-Paris (France)</li> <li>• Appalachian State University (NC)</li> <li>• Arizona State University</li> <li>• Bay de Noc Community College (MI)</li> <li>• Bennett College (NC)</li> <li>• Boise State University (ID)</li> <li>• Bossier Parish Community College (LA)</li> <li>• Carolinas College of Health Sciences (NC)</li> <li>• Catawba Valley Community College (NC)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Central Florida Community College</b></li> <li>• Central Wyoming College</li> <li>• <b>College of New Jersey</b></li> <li>• <b>College of William and Mary (VA)</b></li> <li>• Fanshawe College (Canada)</li> <li>• Fayetteville Technical Community College (NC)</li> <li>• Florida Atlantic University</li> <li>• <b>Folsom Lake College (CA)</b></li> <li>• Fordham University (NY)</li> </ul> |
|--|---|



- **Fox Valley Technical College (WI)**
- George Mason University (VA)
- Georgia State University
- Greensboro College (NC)
- **Guilford College (NC)**
- **Guilford Technical Community College (NC)**
- Green Mountain College (VT)
- High Point University (NC)
- **Jackson College (MI)**
- Kennesaw State University (GA)
- **LaSalle University (PA)**
- Los Angeles Harbor College (CA)
- Manhattanville College (NY)
- **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**
- Michigan State University
- Nicolls State University (LA)
- **North Carolina A&T State University**
- **North Carolina Central University**
- **North Carolina State University**
- North Carolina Wesleyan College
- Northeast Iowa Community College
- **Northern Arizona University**
- **Ohio University**
- Palomar College (CA)
- Pamlico Community College (NC)
- **Paradise Valley Community College (AZ)**
- Pennsylvania State University
- Piedmont Virginia Community College (VA)
- **Pitt Community College (NC)**
- Quinsigamond Community College (MA)
- Richland Community College (IL)
- **Rowan University (NJ)**
- Savannah State University (GA)
- Scottsdale Community College (AZ)
- Shaw University (NC)
- **Southwest Illinois College**
- **Stanly Community College (NC)**
- Tennessee Technological University
- **Texas A&M University**
- **The College of Wooster (OH)**
- **Thomas Edison State College (NJ)**
- University of California-Davis
- University of Cincinnati-Blue Ash
- University of Colorado-Boulder
- University of Dubuque (IA)
- University of Illinois Laboratory High School
- **University of Maryland-College Park**
- University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- **University of Missouri-Columbia**
- University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
- University of North Carolina-Charlotte
- **University of North Carolina-Greensboro**
- **University of North Carolina-Wilmington**
- University of Northern Colorado
- University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
- **University of Louisville (KY)**
- **University of Oklahoma**
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**
- University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
- **University of Wisconsin-Platteville**
- University of Tennessee-Knoxville
- University of Tennessee-Martin
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Wayne Community College (NC)
- **West Chester University (PA)**
- **West Valley College (CA)**
- Western Carolina University (NC)
- William Peace University (NC)

***Departments/Organizations - On-Campus (UNCG)***

- Academic Coaching Program
- ACE (Academic Recovery) Program
- Beyond Academics
- Bryan School of Business Advising Center
- Campus Activities and Programs
- Career Services Center
- Center for New North Carolinians
- **Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**
- Department of Counseling and Educational Development
- Department of Human Development and Family Studies
- Department of Kinesiology
- Department of Teacher Education and Higher Education
- Department of Public Health Education
- Development Office
- **Elliott University Center**
- Foundations for Learning Program
- **Healthy UNCG (Staff) Program**
- Human Resources
- Institute to Promote Athlete Health and Wellness
- **Learning Communities**
- **Middle College at UNCG**
- **Office of Intercultural Engagement**
- **Office of Housing and Residence Life**
- **Office of Service Learning and Leadership**
- Office of Sponsored Programs (Research)
- **Outdoor Adventures**
- Program for the Advancement of Girls and Women in Sport and Physical Activity

- **Residential Colleges Program**
- **Special Support Services**
- **Staff Senate**
- **Student Success Center**
- Students First Office
- Teaching and Learning Commons
- TEAMQUEST
- **UNCGuarantee Program**
- Undergraduate Admissions

#### *Organizations/Associations - Off-Campus*

- Alamance–Burlington School System (NC)
- AmeriCorps Vista
- CACI International, Inc. (VA)
- Caswell Correctional Facility (NC)
- **Center for Creative Leadership (NC)**
- City of Winston-Salem Recreation Department (NC)
- Coleman Foundation (IL)
- College Foundation of North Carolina
- DavidsonWorks Workforce Development (NC)
- Deftable, Inc. (NC)
- Eagles Royal Football (Soccer) Club (NC)
- Education Foundation (DC)
- Family Services of the Piedmont (NC)
- Game Changer/EdRevolution, Inc. (NC)
- **Golden Key International Honour Society (GA)**
- **Goodwill Industries (NC)**
- **Launch Greensboro, Greensboro Chamber of Commerce (NC)**
- Learning to Learn, Inc. (NY)
- Lorven Child and Family Development Center (NC)
- **National Academic Advising Association (KS)**
- **National Career Development Association (OK)**
- **National Resource Center for First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (SC)**
- **North Carolina Division on Career Development and Transition**
- **On Course (MD)**
- Sage Wine and Gourmet (NC)
- Tyrell Country Community Development Corporation (NC)
- University of North Carolina General Administration

As you can see, the Life Design Catalyst Program is growing, serving in a multitude of areas – colleges and universities, for-profit and non-profit organizations, business entities, and education-related organizations.

#### **The Future of Work**

What will the world of work look like by 2030? I have read or heard that by 2030, between 50% and 90% of employed people will be independent workers (currently, in 2020, it's about 40%). Think about that for a minute...by 2030, AT LEAST one-half of employed people in the U.S. will be working in jobs they create themselves. Not only will many of the students we work with may have to create their own job, but for many of us advising and coaching, we may also need to acquire the skills to create our own jobs in the future. This is the time we ALL must be PROACTIVE rather than REACTIVE in creating our futures!

What is one of the most important skills necessary to survive the next ten years – and beyond? Becoming a self-starter, someone who has the motivation and desire to turn an idea into reality. We all have ideas, things we want to create and share with the world, whether it's creating a piece of art, developing an app, writing a book, cooking delicious food, hosting a workshop, or selling stuff online. In the Life Design Catalyst Program, we've created two entrepreneurial activities to turn ideas into reward/money: (1) Side Hustle 101, and (2) The Start Something Now 7-Day Challenge.

Side Hustle 101 was created based on the book, "Side Hustle: From Idea to Income in 27 Days" by Chris Guillebeau; the objective is to take a few minutes each day to follow a structured, 27-Day plan to start a business. By sticking with his prescribed format, a person is more likely to start and finish with a finished product or service that generates income. Even though we've modified his structured program somewhat, the overall concept works! Since we've implemented this curriculum three years ago, 75% of the students have stated something that has generated income – some more than others.

The Start Something Now 7-Day Challenge takes the Side Hustle 101 concept of starting a side gig – and instead of turning your idea into reward/money in five weeks, the Challenge has you starting something in ONE WEEK – that's right, 7 DAYS! Although we haven't had many engaged in the Challenge so far, we did a pilot on the concept the end of 2019 and had four of seven people create something that generated income/business in a week.

Ultimately, both the Side Hustle 101 and the Start Something Now 7-Day Challenge requires you to develop the mindset of STARTING SOMETHING - turning an idea into action and action into reward. In both activities, there's a low barrier of entry - you need little or no money to get started, you won't need to devote a lot of time to it, you don't need a business degree, a business plan, or business experience to start, and you don't need to hire additional people for help.

Future students will not be able to follow the traditional majors/concentrations format because of the lack of relatedness and adaptability to the future of work. Programs in education – and especially in higher education - need to de-emphasize major declaration and degree completion and move towards skill-stacking (combining many different skills into something unique) and alternative credentials – such as certifications, licensures, diplomas, professional designations, and/or completion of trade or vocational school.

### **What now? What's next?**

As you think about your work in advising and coaching, take time to think about these two questions from the book, “Know What You're FOR: A Growth Strategy for Work, An Even Better Strategy for Life” by Jeff Henderson:

1. What are you known for?
2. What do you want to be known for?

How would you answer these two questions? I believe they could be useful as you think about how you want to move forward in your work and your life.

If you don't know where to start, think about these questions: What is the problem you want to solve? What's the contribution you want to make? How would you like to serve your students, help them be successful, and create lives that matter? Use any or all of these fill-in-the- sentences to define your “What now?” and/or “What's next?”

- My workshop helps [target audience] solve [main problem]. They start by feeling and thinking like [current emotions and/or mindset]; when they have finished attending, they will think and feel like [new emotions/mindset].
- My program helps [target audience] solve [main problem]. They start by feeling and thinking like [current emotions and/or mindset]; when they have finished attending, they will think and feel like [new emotions/mindset].
- My course on [course topic] helps [target audience] learn how to [outcome] so they can [some benefit].
- The problem I want to help [target audience] solve is [main issue]; I will do this by [action taken]. By the end, the [target audience] will [end result].

Hopefully, these simple, but necessary activities will at least provide you a start into what you'd like to be doing, whether your teaching a course and/or running a program – or whatever you desire. Where do YOU want your life to be in five years? What about in ten years? Here's the key: DO. SOMETHING. NOW!

### **Final Thoughts**

Guess what? Whether you like it or not, CHANGE IS HERE!

The economy is changing. The job market is changing. Education is changing. Our students are changing. And you need change. Get on the bus or get left behind. You choose.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there were 4,298 degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the U.S. at the start of the 2017-2018 Academic Year. Although that's a lot of institutions, my hope is that I can get ONE PERSON from each institution to work with us in utilizing to use both their gifts, talents, and strengths AND some aspect of Life Design Catalyst work to help students optimize their lives and to become better people in service to the world. We need this now more than ever!

Just like our students, we need to design our future so that it allows us to use our talents and gifts to take us where we want to go in service to others. Of course, that's assuming that we know where we want to go in the first place! This is

your chance to define your own unique mixture of gifts, skills, desires, and preferences, then create self-designed and self-directed learning opportunities to prepare for an unpredictable economy and unknown future. This is your chance to not just build a resume, but to build a portfolio of experiences that is uniquely you.

We need YOU - advisors, coaches, and educators – because you are willing to be authentic, vulnerable, and courageous. We need YOU because you care about your students as much as you care about yourself. We need YOU because you have a strong desire to create lasting change. We need YOU to take a stand, pick a fight, and endure the pain and suffering when you speak up. And we need YOU to share your gifts, love, and passion with the world. We need your GREATNESS!

The most significant question YOU must answer is not “What should I do with my life?” but “How will I profoundly serve?” – then just do it. This journey will be intriguing, exciting, challenging, and rewarding. The time to start is NOW...and the clock is ticking.

Let’s Do This...Together!

### **For More Information...**

If you want to join me on the Life Design Catalyst adventure, contact me at:

#### Contact Information

William H Johnson Jr (“Bill” or “The Dream Dean”)

Student Success Navigator, Life Design Catalyst Facilitator/Coach, and Instructor

School of Health and Human Sciences

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Phone: 336-207-6795

E-mail: [whjohnso@uncg.edu](mailto:whjohnso@uncg.edu)

Blog: <https://thedreamdean.com/>

Web Site: <https://lifedesigninstitute.org/>

Training Site: <https://lifedesigninstitute.org/trainings/>