



The Paradox of Choice

Helping Students get Unstuck

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Founder & Program Director





**3 students walk into
student services...**

Paradox of Choice

**We have almost infinite choice
today**

**“All this choice makes it
possible for us to DO BETTER.**

But, we often FEEL WORSE.”



Barry Schwartz, Ph.D

Paradox of Choice

- **Paralysis by Analysis**
- **More options = more likely to regret choice (less satisfied)**



expectations

=



disappointment



Barry Schwartz, Ph.D

Paradox of Choice

“People have experiences that are disappointing because their standards are so high, and then when they have to explain these experiences to themselves, they are at fault.”



Barry Schwartz, Ph.D

Paradox of Choice

“Some choice is better than none, but it DOES NOT FOLLOW that more choice is better than some choice.”



Barry Schwartz, Ph.D

BREAKOUTS: PARALYSIS BY ANALYSIS

Discuss in pairs:

- Do you see many students who seem overwhelmed by the number of options?
- How have you tried to help them engage and make a good decision?



How to Make Choosing Easier

- **Modern day problem: choice overload**

Grocery store: 348 types of jam

Large ON universities: 300+ programs



Sheena Iyengar, Ph.D

How to Make Choosing Easier

Experiment: 24 jams vs 6 jams

- 24 = higher % sampled
- 6 = higher % bought

**More choices = more likely to
choose NOT TO CHOOSE**



Sheena Iyengar, Ph.D

How to Make Choosing Easier

“When we have too many options, we choose NOT TO CHOOSE even when it goes against our best interest.”



Sheena Iyengar, Ph.D

How to Make Choosing Easier

Choice overload reduces:

- 1. Engagement**
- 2. Decision quality**
- 3. Satisfaction**



Sheena Iyengar, Ph.D

How to Make Choosing Easier

Four techniques:

1. Cut
2. Concretization
3. Categorization
4. Condition for complexity

Master chess players: consider fewer options



Sheena Iyengar, Ph.D



WALMART VS COSTCO

Departments = schools

Categories = faculties

Products = programs



Condition for complexity:

General arts/ science admissions

BREAKOUTS: CREATING A COSTCO EXPERIENCE

Discuss in pairs:

- What practical ideas do you have to help students cut, concretize, categorize and condition for complexity?





A Purposeful Gap Year: Shopping at Costco

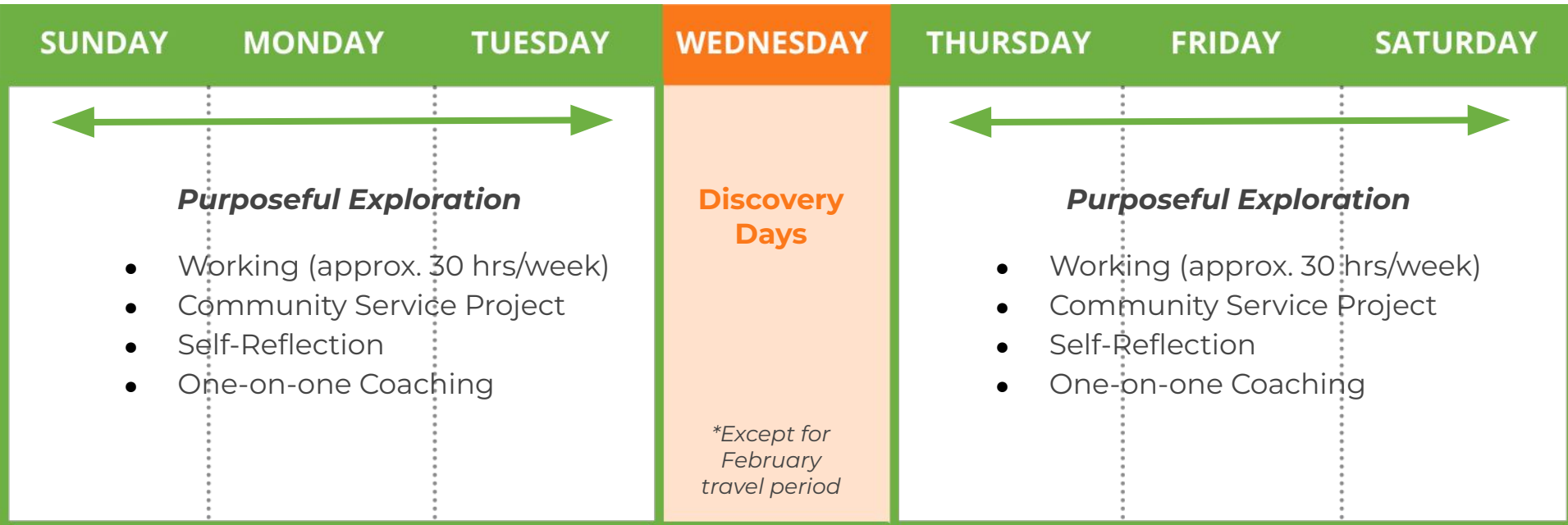


WHAT IS DISCOVER YEAR?

Discover Year is a one-year life and career skills program that helps young adults better understand what they want in life **and build the skills they need to go out and get it.**

A WEEK AT DISCOVER YEAR:

1 day of dynamic learning | 6 days of purposeful exploration



DYNAMIC, STUDENT-CENTRED EDUCATION



**Job, life and leadership
skills workshops**



Life and Career Coaching



Experiential Outings

GOOD LIFE CONVERSATIONS



**ABENEZER
ABEBE**
Software
Engineer at
Spotify



EMILY BEEKMANS
Photographer and
Founder of Emily
Beeks Creative



NATALIE ROWE
Assistant
Director at the
Canada Revenue
Agency



**BILLY
ANDERSON**
Founder of
The Courage
Crusade



RYAN VAN ASTEN
Director of Sports
Performance at the
Calgary Flames
Hockey Club

PURPOSEFUL EXPLORATION



Work



Travel



Community Service



SELF-AWARENESS



CONFIDENCE



**COMMUNICATION
SKILLS**



RESILIENCE



How DY helps

1. Confidence: changing paths is OK
2. Low-stakes (no grades)
3. High psychological safety
4. Learn – apply – reflect

UPCOMING EVENTS:

DY Info Sessions:

- Nov 18 - OTT
- Jan 22 - Online

MyBlueprint Career Launch:

- Dec. 2



Paradox of Choice

TED Talk



Barry Schwartz, Ph.D

How to Make Choosing Easier

TED Talk



Sheena Iyengar, Ph.D



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THANK YOU!

DISCOVER YEAR