WHAT CAREER MIGHT BE BEST FOR ME?

It is very difficult and often overwhelming to evaluate your own unique characteristics and find where they fit in with the thirty thousand careers available in today’s workforce. Even adults who have been in the workforce for years may not have discovered the exact job that provides adequate enjoyment, challenge, and satisfaction. It is extremely important to spend some time thinking about yourself, specifically what you like, what you’re good at, and what’s important to you

in a job. These areas can also be referred to as your interests, skills, and values. It is also critical to spend time exploring the numerous career areas in the world of work and learn about how to get into the ones that interest you.

The following pages will help guide you through these thought processes and hopefully leave you with a general idea of what career direction you might like to take. Please talk to your parents, teachers, School Counselors, and employers as you work on the following pages. These people may be able to offer valuable advice from their own career experience or the experiences of people they know. Career exploration is a life-long process and it is important not to stop once you have

My Interests and Abilities

➲ Please give these questions careful thought and write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. People have told me that I am very good at…

2. The hours seem to fly by when I am doing...

3. When I was young, I always dreamed I would be...

4. I think my greatest talent is...

5. If I could make money doing whatever I wanted, I would...

6. When I look at the magazine wall in a bookstore, I am drawn to magazines about...

7. If I could start out as an intern in any business right now, it would be…

8. I think I know more about than anyone else I know.

9. If I had a choice between working with people, working with things, or working with numbers I would choose...

10. I have always had a natural ability to...

11. If I had a choice between a job using my hands, a job that required me to think through complex problems, or a job that required me to communicate with numerous people all day, I would choose.

12. Of all the adults I know, the one who is doing the most interesting job is…

and the job he or she does is…

VALUES CHECKLIST

DIRECTIONS: To the left of each value, place an X in the box representing the importance of the value to you. Answer as you feel now, not as you think you should feel or will feel at some time in the future.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Very  Important | Important | So-So | Not Too  Important | Not Important At All |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Achievement: A sense of well-being from doing a job |
|  |  |  |  |  | well. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Adequate Income: Receiving enough money to take care of one’s needs. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Adventure: Doing exciting things sometimes involving |
|  |  |  |  |  | risk, danger, or the unknown. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Artistic-Aesthetic Expression: Designing, working |
|  |  |  |  |  | with, or producing pleasing or beautiful things. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Creativity: Inventing, designing, or developing new ideas or things. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Independence: Being free to plan one’s work and |
|  |  |  |  |  | move at one’s own speed. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Intellectual Satisfaction: Using mental ability to solve |
|  |  |  |  |  | problems. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Leadership: Planning, mapping out, managing, or influencing the work of others. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Location/Geography: Being able to live and work in a |
|  |  |  |  |  | pleasant town/city/state. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Recognition: Being known by people, being given |
|  |  |  |  |  | respect or having prestige. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Satisfactory Co-Workers: Working with people you |
|  |  |  |  |  | like. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Satisfactory Working Conditions: Having pleasant |
|  |  |  |  |  | work surroundings. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Security: Having steady work. |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  | Social Services: Helping others and being concerned for their interests. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Solitude: Working alone or not very closely with others. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Stability: Working with familiar things and situations, having routine and order. |
|  |  |  |  |  | Variety: Having the chance to do different tasks and activities. |

Adapted from: Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., Activities for Exploring Career Decision-Making (Bloomington, IL: McKnight, 1978).

INTEREST AND SKILL AREAS

DIRECTIONS: As you read through the list, place checks in the “Interest” boxes next to any areas that just naturally attract you. Then read though the list again and place a check in the “Skill” boxes next to ones in which you feel you already have some skill.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Interest** | **Skills** |  | **Interest** | **Skills** |  |
|  |  | Adventure |  |  | Law Enforcement |
|  |  | Advertising/Marketing |  |  | Leadership |
|  |  | Agriculture |  |  | Management |
|  |  | Animal Care |  |  | Mathematics |
|  |  | Architecture |  |  | Mechanical Activities |
|  |  | Art/Design |  |  | Medicine |
|  |  | Athletics/Physical Fitness |  |  | Research Medicine |
|  |  | Biology |  |  | Practice Medicine |
|  |  | Business |  |  | Military |
|  |  | Business Management |  |  | Music, Performing |
|  |  | Coaching |  |  | Music Education |
|  |  | Computer Science |  |  | Office Work |
|  |  | Cooking |  |  | Outdoor Work |
|  |  | Counseling |  |  | Performing |
|  |  | Crafts/Trades |  |  | Physical Education |
|  |  | Creating |  |  | Physical Sciences |
|  |  | Data Management |  |  | Planning |
|  |  | Drama |  |  | Plants or Gardens |
|  |  | Economics |  |  | Politics |
|  |  | Engineering |  |  | Psychology |
|  |  | Aeronautical Engineering |  |  | Psychology Research |
|  |  | Chemical Engineering |  |  | Psychology Practice |
|  |  | Civil Engineering |  |  | Public Speaking |
|  |  | Electrical Engineering |  |  | Reading |
|  |  | Mechanical Engineering |  |  | Sales |
|  |  | English |  |  | Social Sciences |
|  |  | Farming |  |  | Religious/Spiritual Activities |
|  |  | Fashion |  |  | Sociology |
|  |  | Finance |  |  | Supervision |
|  |  | Foreign Languages |  |  | Teaching |
|  |  | Forestry |  |  | Teaching Elementary |
|  |  | Group Work or Activities |  |  | Teaching High School |
|  |  | Healing |  |  | Teaching University |
|  |  | Home Economics |  |  | Technology |
|  |  | Humanities |  |  | Training |
|  |  | International Activities |  |  | Woodworking |
|  |  | Inventing |  |  | Writing |
|  |  | Lawyer |  |  | Other |

Adapted from Charles Martin, Looking At Type and Careers (Gainesville, FL: Center for Applications of Psychological Type, Inc., 1995) 11.

BRAINSTORMING CAREERS

Now it’s time to pull together all the information you have so far. Please refer to the three associated handouts to complete the following section:

1. I am naturally good at and naturally interested in

.

2. My dream job(s) would be .

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| My Top 5 Values:  1. | My Top 5 Interests:  1. | My Top 5 Skills:  1. |
| 2. | 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. | 5. |

Educational Level Desired: Career fields usually contain occupations ranging from high responsibility and high difficulty to jobs with low responsibility and low difficulty. In most cases, the higher the difficulty of the job, the more education and training required to be hired for that job. It is also safe to assume that most of the more difficult jobs requiring more training have the higher salaries. Remember: the more you learn, the more you earn! Out of the following choices, circle the highest educational level you would like to obtain.

1. High school diploma

2. One year program after high school (Certificate)

3. Military training

4. Two-year college degree (Associate)

5. Four-year college degree (Bachelor’s)

6. Bachelors degree + two more years of college (Masters)

7. Bachelors degree + approximately four more years of college (Ph.D.)

Now, go to the list of occupations taken from the Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH). As you see careers that interest you, think about whether they would allow you to use your top five interests, skills, and values. Would they require an educational level that matches your desired level? If the answers are “yes,” write them in the spaces below. You may want to look through your school’s copy of the OOH (or go online at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>) to research the skills and education needed for these careers. Feel free to add any other interesting careers in the spaces below, even if you don’t see them on the OOH list.

Do you notice any trends or patterns in your choices of careers? Do the majority of your choices have a common characteristic or two? For example, you may see that the majority of your careers involve working with people, require working outdoors, or are mostly in the health care field, etc. Please look at the list of careers you’ve chosen. In the spaces below, write down common trends.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | The careers I’ve listed seem to meet my values for | . |
| 2. | The careers I’ve listed seem to match my interests in | . |
| 3. | The careers I’ve listed seem to use my skills in | . |

4. The careers I’ve listed seem to require the following level of education \_\_\_\_ .

This next step involves reducing your list of career choices to a manageable number. This does not mean that you can never consider careers that you weed out. You can always go back at a later date to explore them. For now, take a look at your list and try to prioritize the choices. Imagine yourself in these jobs and think more about whether they match up with your interests, skills, and values. Are you willing to obtain the level of education these jobs require? Are these careers available in your geographic area or will you have to move? Are you willing to relocate if necessary? The state and federal Departments of Labor have projections about which career fields are expected to grow, be stable, or decline (see <http://www.bls.gov/emp/>). Do your choices fall into the growth or stable lists? These are all questions to think about as you prioritize your choices. Discuss your list with your parents, friends, teachers, and School Counselors. They can help you make the best choices.

My Top 5 Career Choices:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| 4. |  |
| 5. |  |

Now that you have narrowed your list, think about the courses you are currently taking or will take

later in high school. Which ones will help you get the skills and knowledge most closely related to your specific career choices or general career themes? This is a great time to go to your School Counselor to discuss your high school courses, the level of education you need to pursue each career, and which colleges or universities have the appropriate programs of study. These are the high school courses I should consider to prepare me for my top career choices:

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have just completed the hardest part of the process. However, you will probably want to go back many times to review your choices. The more we learn about careers and the more job experiences we have, the more we may change our minds about who we are as individuals and what we want for

a career. While you may feel unsure and frustrated if you change your mind, it is a very natural part of the process.

**EXECUTIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND MANAGERIAL OCCUPATIONS**

Accountants and auditors Hotel managers and assistants

Administrative services managers Industrial production managers

Budget analysts

Construction and building inspectors

Inspectors and compliance officers (other than

construction)

Construction contractors and managers Loan officers and counselors

Cost estimators Management analysts and consultants

Education administrators Marketing, advertising, and public relations managers

Employment interviewers Personnel, training, and labor relations specialists and managers

Engineering, science, and data processing managers

Property and real estate managers

Financial managers Purchasers and buyers

Funeral directors Restaurant and food service managers

General managers and top executives Retail managers Government chief executives and legislators Underwriters Health services managers

**PROFESSIONAL SPECIALITY OCCUPATIONS**

**Engineers Life Scientists**

Aerospace engineers Agricultural scientists

Chemical engineers Biological scientists

Electrical and electronics engineers Foresters and conservation scientists

Industrial engineers **Physical Scientist**

Mechanical engineers Chemists

Metallurgical, ceramic, and materials engineers Geologists and geophysicists

Mining engineers Meteorologists

Nuclear engineers Physicists and astronomers

Petroleum engineers **Lawyers and Judges**

**Architects and Surveyors** **Social Scientists and Urban Planners** Architects Economists and marketing research analysts Landscape architects Psychologists

Surveyors Sociologists

**Computer, Mathematical, and Operations**

**Research Occupations**

Social workers

Actuaries **Religious Workers**

Computer scientists and systems analysts Protestant ministers

Mathematicians Rabbis

**Teachers, Librarians, and Counselors** Roman Catholic priests

Adult education teachers **Health Practitioners**

Archivists and curators Chiropractors

College and university faculty Dentists Counselors

Librarians Optometrists

School teachers – elementary, secondary Physicians

Podiatrists

Veterinarians

**Health Assessment and Treatment Occupations**

Dietitians and nutritionists **Communications Occupations**

Occupational therapists Public relations specialists

Pharmacists Radio and television announcers and newscasters

**Visual Arts Occupations** Reporters and correspondence

Designers Writers and editors

Photographers and camera operators **Performing Arts Occupations**

Visual artists Actors, directors, and producers Dancers and choreographers Musicians

**TECHNICIANS AND RELATED SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS**

**Health Technologists and Technicians** **Technologists (Other than Health)**

Cardiovascular technologists and technicians Aircraft pilots

Clinical laboratory technologists and technicians Air traffic controllers Dental hygienists Broadcast technicians Dispensing opticians Computer programmers EEG technologists Drafters

Emergency medical technicians (EMT) Engineering technicians Licensed practical nurses Library technicians Medical record technicians Paralegals

Nuclear medicine technologists Science technicians

Radiological technologists

Surgical technicians

**MARKETING AND SALES OCCUPATIONS**

Cashiers Retail sales workers

Counter and rental clerks

Insurance agents and brokers

Securities and financial services sales representative

Manufacturers’ and wholesale sales representatives Services sales representatives

Real estate agents, brokers, and appraisers Travel agents

**ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OCCUPATIONS (INCLUDING CLERICAL)**

Adjusters, investigators, and collectors Postal clerks and mail carriers

Bank tellers Records clerks

Clerical supervisors and managers Billing clerks

Computer and peripheral equipment operators Bookkeeping, accounting, & auditing clerks

Credit clerks and authorizers File clerks

General office clerks Library assistants and bookmobile drivers

Information clerks Order clerks

Hotel and motel clerks Payroll and timekeeping clerks

Receptionists Personnel clerks

Reservation and transportation ticket agents and travel clerks

Secretaries

Stenographers and court reporters

Mail clerks and messengers Teachers’ aides

Dispatchers Telephone operators

Stock clerks Typists, word processors, and data entry clerks

Traffic and shipping and receiving clerks

**SERVICE OCCUPATIONS**

**Personal Service and Building Grounds**

**Service Occupations**

**Food and Beverage Preparation and ServiceOccupations**

Animal caretakers (other than farm) Chefs, cooks, and other kitchen workers

Barbers and cosmetologists Food and beverage service workers

Preschool workers Health Service Occupations

Flight attendants Dental assistants

Gardeners and grounds keepers Medical assistants

Homemaker Nursing aides and psychiatric aides

Home health aides Protective Service Occupations

Janitors and cleaners Corrections officer

Private household workers Firefighters

Security guards

Police, detectives, and special agents

**AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING, AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS**

Farm operators and managers Foresters and loggers

Fishers, hunters, and trappers

**MECHANICS, INSTALLERS, AND REPAIRERS**

Aircraft mechanics and engine specialists Elevator installers and repairers Auto-body repairers Farm equipment mechanics Automotive mechanics General maintenance mechanics

Diesel mechanics Heating, air-conditioning, and refrigeration technicians

Electronic equipment repairers Home appliance and power tool repairers

Commercial and industrial electronic equipment repairers

Industrial machinery repairers

Line installers and cable splicers

Communications equipment repairers Millwrights

Computer and office machine repairers Mobile heavy equipment mechanics

Electronic home entertainment equipment repairers

Telephone installers and repairers

Musical instrument repairers and tuners

Vending machine servicers and repairers

**CONSTRUCTION TRADES AND EXTRACTIVE OCCUPATIONS**

Bricklayers and stonemasons Plasterers

Carpenters Plumbing and pipefitters

Carpet installers Roofers

Concrete masons and terrazzo workers Roustabouts

Drywall workers and lathers Sheet metal workers

Electricians Structural and reinforcing ironworkers

Insulation workers Tilesetters

Painters and paperhangers

**PRODUCTION OCCUPATIONS**

**Assemblers**  **Food Processing Occupations**

Precision assemblers Butchers and meat, poultry, and fish cutters

Blue-collar worker supervisors

**Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, Metalworking & Plastics-Working Occupations**

**Weighers**  **Plant and Systems Operators** Boilermakers

Jewelers

Power plant operators, distributors, and dispatchers Machinists and tool programmers

Stationary engineers & boiler operators Metalworking and plastics-working machine operators

Water and wastewater treatment plant operators Tool and die makers

**Printing Occupations** Welders, cutters, and welding machine operators

Pre-press workers **Textile, Apparel, and Furnishing Occupations**

Printing press operators Apparel workers

Bindery workers Shoe and leather workers and repairers

**Woodworking Occupations** Textile machinery operators

**Miscellaneous Production Occupations** Upholesters

Dental laboratory technicians Ophthalmic laboratory technicians Painting and coating machine operators Photographic process workers

**TRANSPORTATION AND MATERIAL-MOVING OCCUPATONS**

Bus drivers Taxi drivers and chauffeurs

Material-moving equipment operators Truck drivers

Rail transportation workers Water transportation workers

Adapted from: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1994 – 95 ed. (Indianapolis: JIST Works, Inc., 1994) ix - xi.

Career Exploration…NEXT STEPS!

You now know more about yourself and what general career fields you would want to explore further. The next step is to learn more about these occupational areas. There

are resources and ideas available to help you in this effort, many of which are easy, free, and can be found in your community. The following material is only a partial collection of resources and ideas commonly used to explore careers. Please use your own creativity as well to get the information you need to make informed career decisions for yourself.

➲ Find a summer job working with people in the field.

➲ Volunteer for a person or business in the occupation.

➲ Call a person in the occupation and interview him or her. This is called an

informational interview.

➲ Call a person in the occupation and ask to spend an hour (or a morning, a day,

etc.) observing. This is called a job shadow.

➲ Ask parents, teachers, School Counselors, employers, etc., what they know

about a particular profession. These people will be valuable to you in networking for future part-time, summer, or full-time jobs.

➲ Read about the field.

 Explore the computer program called Naviance in the Student Services office or library at your school.

 Research books, videos, magazines, computer programs/CD-ROMs, and the internet in your school or town library.

 Look through the Occupational Outlook Handbook. Ask your School Counselor or librarian, or look online at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>.

 Contact professional organizations in the field (see addresses in the

Occupational Outlook Handbook).

➲ Explore the programs that may be available at your school for career

exploration/work experience. Opportunities include:

 Naviance

 Tech Prep courses that lead to college credit at a technical college

 Vocational school programs

 Pre-apprenticeship work experiences

 What’s Next Illinois

 Summer opportunities on School Website <http://www.rbhs208.net/subsite/dist/page/summer-opportunities-1584>

The more information you gather, the better your decisions will be when you think of educational or work options after high school. Knowing what you want to do after high school will help you know what courses to take and experiences to get while you are still in high school.

Reference

www.ccd.**me.**edu/**career**prep/**Career**PrepCurriculum\_LP-1A.p