



Workshop 5 Career Exploration II - Making Your Choice

Student Summary

This workshop will seek to provide you with the following:

- Review of the chosen occupation, its educational and financial requirements and job description, and how these relate to student aptitudes and interests, academic potential and financial requirements.
- Highlight areas of current achievement and areas of concern in meeting your objectives.
- Identify strategies to either overcome areas of concern or strategies to explore career alternatives if the areas of concern are overwhelming.
- Provide tools to monitor achievements and areas of improvement towards meeting goals.

At the end of this workshop you will take with you:

1. A written assessment to track the practical requirements for your chosen career.
2. A written tool to monitor your achievements (goal setting tool).



Workshop 5 Career Exploration II - Making Your Choice

Introduction

If you're in this workshop:

- You should have a strong idea of who you are and what's important to you and what you want to do.
- You've narrowed your career choices down to about three.
- You've researched at least two careers, probably in Workshop 4, but you still need a bit more information to plan your career path and narrow down your choices.

OH1 Overview

At this stage of the career planning process, we're going to **take the information you gathered to the next level** and we're going to piece together:

Information about you

- Skills, interests, values and traits
- Academic potential
- Financial requirements

WITH

Information on your chosen career

- educational requirements
- financial requirements
- job descriptions

By answering these questions, we're going to:

- See how these pieces fit into the big picture of your life
- See if the two areas match
- Learn to make decisions, set goals and take action

Some things to keep in mind:

- Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success
- It is hard to fail, but it is worse never to have tried to succeed
- Happiness is not a destination, it's a method of life
- You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do
- If you want to improve your odds, then improve yourself



Workshop 5 Career Exploration II - Making Your Choice

Setting the Context

This process we're going to go through will help you confirm that you're on the right path, or highlight that you may need to tweak your career choices. It's **totally okay** to discover that the career you've been thinking about is not the one for you. It's better to discover this now, when you can still make adjustments, rather than when you're in school, have paid your tuition and are already invested. By the way, if this does happen for you, all you need to do is go back to the occupational research information and choose another one to focus on, and start this process again, or figure out if there's a related occupation that may suit you better.

<http://www.alis.gov.ab.ca/pdf/cshop/CareerPlanner.pdf>

This Web site provides an overview of the career planning and goal setting process for a number of profiled students. This may be of benefit for you to see how it applies to others.

You want to make sure that all the elements are in place so when you jump into your studies or training, things go as smoothly as possible and you don't experience unexpected challenges.

OH2A Diagram of Career Planning Process

So moving from exploring possibilities covered in workshop 5, to **making it happen** is crucial.

Stage 3 Making it happen

Here you:

- Start to think about **long-term goals** and look at current events and how it will impact your future.
- Make **choices** e.g. what kind of post-secondary education or training after high school to pursue.
- Start to really ascertain the **resources** you have at your disposal-parents, funding, mentors, experience.
- Feel the **impact of reality** on their choices.
- Continue to explore.
- Make tentative occupational choices.

This process is an ongoing cycle, which you will **repeat a few times in your life**.

OH2B – Career Development Stages

Remember to get some help with all this, talk with your parents, teachers, mentors and those people you trust!



Workshop 5 Career Exploration II - Making Your Choice

Having a Life Vision and Doing a Reality Check

Your life vision includes all the aspects of who you are (not just your career) and outlines what you want for yourself in the future, maybe 15 years from now, when you're about 30 – 35 years old.

OH3 Your Life Vision

Your life vision includes:

- Your career-related activities (what you're doing for work, the setting in which you work, etc.).
- Relationships and the people around you (husband, wife, kids, parents, extended family, friends).
- What you do for fun (hobbies, travel).
- Where you live (in BC, other part of Canada or abroad; in the country or city) and what you live in (house, condo, houseboat).

Activity:

Visioning (5 minutes):

- Think about the main topics covered in the overhead.
- Jot down your life vision in point form.

It is important that you can see yourself in the future. Your future self represents the reality of who and where you want to be. To know how to get where you want to go you need to be able to truly visualize and know your destination.

Activity:

Reality Check

It is important to do a **reality check** and find out if the occupation you've chosen is realistic for you at this point in your life and if it's going to help you meet your long-term life vision for yourself.

To help you with the reality check, you're going to think about all the **details** to consider when making career plans. **Why are these details important?** If you don't read between the lines of the occupation you're pursuing, you'll miss getting a lot of important information that will impact your life.

For Example: Becoming a doctor seems appealing if you look at how much money they make, the importance of helping people get better and the prestige that comes with the career. If you dig a bit further, you'll also learn that doctors work under a lot of pressure and they must be able to handle stress well. Many also accumulate huge debt to go to school, and the job requires them to sacrifice time with friends and family. If you didn't know this info, you may feel overwhelmed going into med school and discovering all these details, especially if you didn't want a stressful career, or if family was your number one priority.



Workshop 5

Career Exploration II - Making Your Choice

OH4 So You Wanna be a Basketball Player?

The next step is to use the information from your life vision and your career profile from workshop 4 to do a reality check for you.

HO1 Reality Check Questions

Instructions:

- Working on your own, go through the checklist provided and answer all the questions. This is a good list to re-visit every six months or so, as you work toward your chosen occupation. These questions are a bit challenging and will push you to be honest with yourself and think critically about your chosen occupation.
- The Group Leaders are here to assist you with this process and will be circling the room and helping you answer the questions.
- If you can't answer some of the questions, it indicates that you may need to do more research. The computers are available for you to conduct research while you're here, if needed (if computers are not available focus on your action plan for research).
- If you finish all the questions, start filling out the Next Step part, but if you don't get to it, that's okay, we'll be dealing with that in the last workshop activity.
- You can also start setting goals using the goals sheets provided to you in other workshops, to set action plans together for yourself.

Through this activity you've probably identified whether your chosen occupation is the right one for you or not. You were also identifying what your assets are (what you already have going for you), and what areas you may need to work on, which we will address in the goal-setting activity.

Education

Education choices play a large part in your plan. You should refer to workshops 8-11 for information to help you with understanding how education plays a role.

Making a decision about your career path

So, after you have all this info about your chosen occupation, required education and desired lifestyle, what comes next? Evaluating your options and making a decision about the career you want to pursue.

OH5 Making a Decision About Your Career Path



Workshop 5 Career Exploration II - Making Your Choice

It's important to remember that:

- Very few decisions can't be changed. **You can always change your mind** about things and make new decisions, nothing's set in stone.
- Interesting stat: about 60% of students **change their majors** at least once!
- There are no right or wrong decisions, so try to make the **best possible decision** for you right now.

Decision-making will involve:

- **Repeating** this activity with the other careers you identified and see if they match you or not.
- Re-visiting the **visioning** process and imagining yourself living one of your careers. Where are you? Who's with you? What are you doing? How do you feel? Are you still interested and excited about this career? Go through the visioning process for each career.
- **Comparing** your options and exploring the **positives** and **negatives** of each career.
- Giving yourself **time** to think about your choices and **discussing** them with family and friends to see how you really feel about your options.
- Choosing what "**feels right**" for you!

Remember, knowing yourself is very important, and is an ongoing process. Individually you will want to develop your own mantra, success creed, personal goal statement or whatever you want to call it. It should speak to what is important to you. When a tough decision presents itself, making the choice that best reflects your values, the values you've written in your success creed/personal goal statement or mantra if you like, will in almost every case prove to be the best choice for you.

OH6 Sample Career Plan

Developing a plan is crucial to your success. So develop your career goal and then plan the steps to get there. We have provided you with a sample career plan. There can be a lot more detail but this will get you started!

Action Plans and Goal Setting

Students are also referred to Workshop 8, 10, and 11 which includes assistance on planning your current courses and activities to support your future choices.

Goal setting is not rocket science, but there is a method to it. Goals are about change, planning, success, and moving through our lives with deliberation and the ability to adapt. They are ways we can keep on track and measure how we are doing, make sure where we are going is where we want to, and to help us get there faster.

If you write down a goal you are 50% more likely to achieve it!

HO2 – Goal Setting Form



Workshop 5 Career Exploration II - Making Your Choice

There are a number of theories behind goal setting. There is the SMART model (see handout) and there are others. We have provided you with two. Use the one that works for you. It is crucial that you develop an action plan, that there be goals, activities that are specific and measurable to support achievement of those goals, check in points, and regular review and maintenance of the goals to keep them relevant. Finally your goals have to mean something to you, otherwise you will not care about them and they will slide off your radar screen.

Keep in mind that as your life changes, your career choices will change, so you'll need to go through this planning and goal setting process a few times in your life. It's important to remember that even though you may have the perfect plan and have made all your decisions, **life happens** and you may encounter setbacks that require you to be flexible and open to altering your plans if necessary. You may also encounter **new opportunities**, and being open to exploring them may enhance your career in the end. So, it's important to think outside the box and not just be prepared to follow a linear career path.

Remember a career path is not always a straight line and can twist and turn along the way. Review the career paths overhead.

OH7 Career Paths

Review the following overheads to learn about goal setting.

OH8 Goal Setting Diagram

OH9 SMART Goal Setting

Activity:

Setting Career Goals

Instructions: (you can work on this on your own or with a friend)

- Refer to the Reality Check questions list. On your own, read your answers and write down one strength or weakness relating to your career choice and vision.
- Using the **Goal Setting Form** provided, and working with your partner, set one goal around this strength or weakness. Include action items and timelines. Make sure each partner sets at least one goal.
- Next, how will you know that you achieved that goal? Write down the things you know will measure your success.
- Individually you will want to develop your own mantra, success creed, personal goal statement or whatever you want to call it. It should speak to what is important to you, why you want it, and that you deserve to have it.

Example: If your objective is to become an executive director of an international financial aid organization, then you would have a goal for a post-secondary education. To achieve this you would have to be able to get into school and be successful. If your weakness was low grades in math and accounting, a goal could be to increase your marks, then you would outline the action steps and timelines to do it.



Workshop 5 Career Exploration II - Making Your Choice

HO3 – Goal Setting Tutorial

Remember success is not a 9-5 Job use these self talk questions:

- What is the most important thing I could do right now?
- What should I be doing at this moment to increase my prospects for success?
- What can I do today to ensure I meet my short and long term goals?
- How can I become a _____ by my ___ birthday?
- Who should I talk to today that will help me learn something more about _____?
- Who should I talk to that can help me increase my chance of success after my education?
- Who can I talk to that can help me find employment in my chosen field now/in the future?
- What will make me happy and how do I get there?

There are more Success Questions that you can develop on your own that fit for you. Remember ask them regularly, keep them with you and in mind. They will help to motivate you and keep you on track.

Now you have the foundation to start setting goals. Since most of you are at the end of the research stage before you make some major decisions, it will help to set goals that are relevant to where you are at and your next steps. Once you make your decision about your chosen occupation, you will then add onto those goals and accomplishments and the goal setting cycle will continue to repeat throughout school, etc. Use the blank goal-setting form in your booklet for future goal setting.

Key Points and Next Steps

Key Points of Career Planning II: Making the Best Choice workshop

- The career planning process is one you'll repeat many times in your life, as you get older and your life changes.
- Your career is a big investment of time, money and energy; make sure you choose one that fits who you are and what your life's all about.
- Having a vision for yourself will help bring your career plans to life.
- Think about all the little details when making career decisions and do reality checks to avoid surprises or making assumptions.
- There are no right or wrong career decisions; simply choose the career that's right for you at this point in your life.
- Take your career to the next stage by setting goals and creating an action plan to make it happen.
- Be open to other opportunities as you pursue your career, they may enhance your career and life in the end.



Workshop 5

Career Exploration II - Making Your Choice

Next steps:

- Finish filling out the strengths and weaknesses info in the Reality Check list.
- Share this information with your family, let them know what you're thinking around your possible occupations and get their thoughts.
- Review all the handouts and booklet info.
- Set two or three goals around narrowing down your occupation choices. Example goals: do information interview with someone in my chosen occupation, look into school in my province/territory, get involved in extra-curricular activities related to my career.
- Begin narrowing down your choices and use the processes outlined to start creating an action plan!

Remember to get to know yourself, change is constant and don't forget to involve your allies!