A2. Exploring Career Options

Introduction
This lesson will help guide students’ thinking about the types of careers or jobs they might want to pursue, what they might need to do in order to reach their objectives, and how college might help them achieve their goals. The lesson begins by identifying student interests and the different types of careers that are related to those interests. It culminates with a research project on specific careers and career clusters.

When talking to students about careers or jobs it is important to stress options. Today most people change careers as well as jobs many times during their working lives. Consequently, the ability to learn new skills (or adaptability) is vital if students are to be successful. People with more education enjoy more job opportunities, more on-the-job training and more promotional opportunities, according to research. In short, more education means more career options.

Learning Goals
• To explore individual interests and see how those interests connect to a career or job.
• To understand the array of careers available, the training necessary for those careers, and the benefits and drawbacks of the careers and jobs the students select.
• To begin connecting life goals with educational goals.
• To use the Internet to conduct research on topics of interest.

Target Audience
Students grades 7 through 10.

Timing
90–120 minutes. Lesson may be extended over two to three days.

Materials Needed
• Large Post-It Notes or butcher paper
• Handout: Career Interest Survey
• Handout: Career Research Worksheet
• Handout: Career Clusters and College Majors
• Internet access or classified employment ads from several Sunday editions of local or national newspapers.

Activities
Part 1: Career Interest Survey (10 minutes)
1. Distribute the handout Career Interest Survey and instruct students to complete Section A only. Explain that this survey is not a test, but an opportunity for them to reflect on their interests, what they are good at, and who they are. There are no right or wrong answers and their information will be shared only with a small group of other students.

2. After the students complete Section A, have them put it aside.

Part 2: Team Brainstorming on Careers and Jobs (10 minutes)
1. Divide class into teams of four students, and have each team come up with a college name to represent their team. Give each team several three-by-five-inch Post-It Notes.

2. Have each team generate a list of 10 specific jobs that they know about or have heard of from family members, friends, other adults, people they’ve seen on television or in the movies, or from other such sources. Instruct students to be specific (e.g., a “teacher” is a job or a career, “education” is not).

3. Ask each team to choose eight of the jobs/careers they have identified, writing each job or career on a Post-It Note, and then putting the jobs/careers on the board under their team (college) name. Have one student write the ideas on the Post-Its and have another student put them up on the board.
4. Have one student from each team read aloud the careers or jobs identified by their group.

Part 3: Career Clusters (10 minutes)

1. Select one volunteer from the class to be the “Post-It Master” and have that student come up to the board.

2. Have the rest of the students identify jobs/careers from the different teams that are exactly the same, and have the Post-It Master stick them on top of each other.

3. Have students identify jobs/careers that are similar (such as nurse-doctor), and have the Post-It Master put those jobs/careers next to each other. Encourage students to group as many of the jobs/careers as possible. Use the handout Career Clusters and College Majors for guidance.

4. When all the jobs/careers have been grouped, the Post-It Master can sit down. Students now look at each group of jobs/careers and create a cluster name for each (e.g., construction, health, education). If necessary add the job/career name from the handout next to the name the class has used. Students do not need to identify all career clusters used in the handout.

Part 4: Interest Survey, Section B (10 minutes)

1. Leave the jobs/careers that the class has identified on the board and ask the students to return to their small groups. Students now look at each group of jobs/careers and create a cluster name for each (e.g., construction, health, education). If necessary add the job/career name from the handout next to the name the class has used. Students do not need to identify all career clusters used in the handout.

2. Have students fill out Section B of the Career Interest Survey, using the jobs/careers listed on the board as a guide. Ask students to try to make a connection between their answers in Section A with the jobs/careers that they find the most interesting (Section B). If students struggle with this activity, provide an example such as, “I like to work with my hands and my favorite subject is math. So, three jobs I find interesting are: carpenter, architect and electrician.”

3. Have students share their answers to Section B with their small groups. If they had any trouble answering any of the questions, encourage the other members of the group to make suggestions.

Part 5: Career Research (40–50 minutes)

Distribute the handout Career Research Worksheet. Using the Internet or newspaper want ads, ask students to research the three jobs/careers they identified in Section B of the Career Interest Survey. Students may either complete the Career Research Worksheet individually, or if Internet access is limited, they may work in small teams with each team member selecting one job/career to research. (In the small-group situation, the team may complete a single Career Research Worksheet.)

Sample websites for conducting the Internet research are listed in the References and Websites section below.

Part 6: Discussion (15 minutes)

1. Ask for two or three volunteers to share what they found in their research.

2. Lead a class discussion with the following questions:
   • Are there any jobs that don't require some education or training?
   • Which careers require the most education?
   • What was one thing you learned about a job?
   • How do you think people get into the jobs they have?
   • Which jobs are you no longer interested in after researching them? Why?
Part 7: Optional Writing Assignment (homework)

1. Choose one of the jobs/careers researched. In three to five paragraphs, describe the career or job in detail. For example, explain what type of people do this job, what training and skills are needed, etc. Explain what was learned by the research. Questions might include: Did learning about this job make you more or less interested in pursuing it as a career option? What present skills can you build upon to make yourself ready for this type of career in the future?

Extensions

1. After completing the job-research activity, have students go to employment sites on the Internet or use the local newspaper want ads to find openings for jobs/careers like the ones they have been researching. Have them report on the qualifications needed and salary. Ask if the research matches the openings they found for actual jobs. If not, what might account for differences (e.g., location, change in market conditions such as unemployment or business cycle, whether information on the Internet is up-to-date).

2. Have students interview someone who has a career/job they find interesting to find out how their interview subject got to be where they are in their job/career. A questionnaire could be developed by the class with questions designed to determine what the interview subjects like about their job/career; what they do not like about it; what kind of education is required; what type of on-going training is needed; and if the interview subject could choose another career, what would it be.

3. Invite a panel of college students and recent graduates who are pursuing different careers to come and talk to the class about how they made their career decision and what advice they would offer younger students.

4. Have students create a poster or collage, or a Power Point presentation that describes the job they are interested in and then give a class presentation about what they have learned.

References and Websites

Recommended websites for researching careers and jobs:
- Career Explorations: http://www.cbia.com/ed/STC/career_explorations/career_explor_info/career_home.htm
- College Grad: http://collegegrad.com/careers/indexes.html

Recommended websites for job searches
- Craigslist (job listings for most major cities) www.craigslist.org
- Monster.com www.monster.com
- Also, most local newspapers have on-line classified ads.

This lesson was adapted with permission from the Ford Motor Company’s Partnership for Advanced Studies (Ford PAS) Curriculum, Module 4: Careers, Communities and Companies.
CURRICULUM AND SKILL STANDARDS

STANDARDS FOR THE ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association
www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the work place; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

12. Students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information). Writing Type: Problem Solution Essay

NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

International Society for Technology in Education
http://cnets.iste.org/students/s_stands.html

Technology Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Tools: Students use technology resources for solving problems and making informed decisions. Students employ technology in the development of strategies for solving problems in the real world. Students use technology resources for solving problems and making informed decisions. Students employ technology in the development of strategies for solving problems in the real world.

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS

National Council for the Social Studies
www.ncss.org/standards/

IV. Individual Development and Identity: Grades 6–8: Issues of personal identity are refocused as the individual begins to explain self in relation to others in the society and culture. Grades 9–12: Students need to encounter multiple opportunities to examine contemporary patterns of human behavior, using methods from the behavioral sciences to apply core concepts drawn from psychology, social psychology, sociology and anthropology as they apply to individuals, societies and cultures.
Career Interest Survey
Answer the following questions as best as you can.

Section A

1. What activities do you like to do outside of school?

2. What do you watch on TV and in the movies?

3. What is one book you enjoyed reading?

4. What are your favorite classes?

5. Do you like to spend time alone or with lots of people?

6. Who are the people you admire? What do they do for a living?

7. What makes you proud about yourself?

8. Do you prefer doing things that involve using your hands or things that require using your head?
Section B

1. List the three careers or jobs that interest you the most:
   a. __________________________________________
   b. __________________________________________
   c. __________________________________________

2. List the career cluster that you are most interested in: ______________________
   __________________________________________

3. What do you find interesting about this career cluster?____________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

4. What are the connections between your interests in Section A and the careers you chose in Section B?____________________
   __________________________________________
Career Research Worksheet

Answer the following questions for each of the three jobs you chose on the Interest Survey.

**JOB #1:** (describe): _____________________________________________

a. This job is part of which career cluster? __________________________

b. What do people in this job/career do? ____________________________

c. What education/training is needed? ______________________________

d. How much money does a person in this career/job earn annually? ______

e. Are there many openings for this type of job/career? ________________

f. What two skills are required of someone who does this kind of work?
   1. __________________________
   2. __________________________

**JOB #2:** (describe): _____________________________________________

a. This job is part of which career cluster? __________________________

b. What do people in this job/career do? ____________________________

c. What education/training is needed? ______________________________

d. How much money does a person in this career/job earn annually? ______

e. Are there many openings for this type of job/career? ________________

f. What two skills are required of someone who does this kind of work?
   1. __________________________
   2. __________________________
Career Research Worksheet

JOB #3: (describe): ____________________________________________________________

a. This job is part of which career cluster? ________________________________

b. What do people in this job/career do? ________________________________

c. What education/training is needed? ________________________________

d. How much money does a person in this career/job earn annually? ________

e. Are there many openings for this type of job/career? ________________

f. What two skills are required of someone who does this kind of work?
1. _________________________________________________________________
2. _________________________________________________________________
# Career Clusters and College Majors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Cluster</th>
<th>Careers/Jobs</th>
<th>College Majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Arts and Humanities** – Singing, Dancing, Acting, Expressive arts | Actor or Actress, Photographer, Musician, Author, Artist, Cartoonist, Comedian | • Art  
• Music  
• Dance  
• Theater and Performing Arts |
| **Agriculture** – Nature, Animals, Farming | Veterinarian, Farmer, Park Ranger, Horse Trainer, Marine Biologist, Ecologist | • Agriculture, Plant Sciences  
• Environmental Studies  
• Marine Biology, Earth Sciences  
• Pre-Veterinary  
• Biology, zoology |
| **Business and Marketing** – Sales, Banking, Real Estate | Banker, Business Owner, Office Manager, Stock Broker, Real Estate Agent | • Business Administration  
• Economics  
• Finance |
| **Communications** – Radio, TV, Newspaper | Newscaster, Writer, Disc Jockey, Film Editor, Journalist | • Communication  
• Broadcasting and Journalism |
| **Computer and Math** – Programming, Graphic Design, Animation, Data Manipulation | Programmer, Software Developer, Network Administrator, Animator for Games and Film, Web Page Developer | • Multimedia, Digital Media  
• Computer Engineering  
• Computer Science  
• Graphic Design |
| **Construction** – Building, Using Tools, Woodworking | Architect, Carpenter, Plumber, Electrician, Roofer | • Architecture  
• Construction Technology  
• Computer Aided Drafting  
• Project Management |
| **Education** – Teaching, Working with Children | Teacher, Principal, Librarian, Guidance Counselor, College Professor, Day Care Worker, Coach | • Early Childhood Education  
• Elementary/Secondary Education  
• Special Education  
• Educational Counseling |
| **Health** – Wellness, Nutrition | Dental Assistant, Nurse, Doctor, Physical Therapist, X-Ray Technician, EMT, Athletic Trainer, Chiropractor, Surgeon | • Dental Hygiene  
• Nursing  
• Pre-Med, Pre-Dental |
| **Human Services** – Cooking, Cleaning, Styling Hair, Fashion | Caterer, Restaurant Manager, Beautician, Barber, Fashion Designer, Hotel Manager, Travel Agent | • Culinary Arts  
• Cosmetology  
• Apparel Design and Merchandising  
• Hotel, Restaurant, Tourism Management |
| **Manufacturing** – Tools, Machines, Making and Repairing Things | Mechanic, Welder, Electrical Engineer, Chemical Engineer, Assembly Line Worker | • Manufacturing Technology, Welding  
• Engineering  
• Industrial Maintenance Technology |
| **Mining** – Rocks, Minerals, Heavy Equipment, Exploring Caves | Mining Engineer, Surveyor, Heavy Equipment Operator, Blaster/Explosives Technician, Oil Driller | • Mining and Mining Engineering  
• Mining and Petroleum Technology  
• Geology |
| **Public Service** – Helping in Emergencies, Keeping People Safe, Community Services | Firefighter, Police, Attorney, Judge, Paralegal, Court Clerk, Jailer, Detective, Utilities, Military, Mail Carrier | • Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement  
• Pre-Law  
• Public Administration |
| **Science, and Math** – Biology, Chemistry, Astronomy, Weather, Experiments, Problem-Solving | Accountant, Chemist, Meteorologist, Biologist, Statistician, Researcher, Data Processor, Computer Systems Analyst, Astronomer, Meteorologist | • Biology, Chemistry  
• Astronomy  
• Meteorology  
• Mathematics and Accounting  
• Computer Science and Engineering |
| **Social Sciences** – Psychology, World Languages, Museums, Religion | Psychologist, Anthropologist, Archeologist, Clergy, Politician, Sociologist, Social Worker | • Psychology  
• Sociology  
• Anthropology  
• Political Science, Community Studies, Public Administration  
• Religious Studies, Theology, Philosophy |
| **Transportation** – Driving/Working on Cars, Trucks, Airplanes, Ships, Vehicles | Truck Driver, Flight Attendant, Pilot, Captain, Air Traffic Controller, Mechanic, Bus Driver | • Automotive Technology  
• Mechanical Engineering  
• Aviation  
• Transportation and Logistics |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Cluster</th>
<th>Careers/Jobs</th>
<th>College Majors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can you think of more Career Clusters? If so, fill in the blanks above.