



RED RIVER COLLEGE

OF APPLIED ARTS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Career Exploration Workbook

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CAREER EXPLORATION WORKBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The Career path you choose to embark upon will affect your life and your future in many ways. You may have already selected the career path you wish to pursue. This workbook will help you begin to ensure that this path meets your needs and desires. Perhaps you are having difficulty choosing between several different careers that appear interesting, but are unclear about which one to select. Or perhaps you are feeling confused about making career choices and have no idea where to start. This workbook will take you through some of the important initial steps necessary when making a career decision.

Good career decisions and planning usually take into consideration knowledge of personal characteristics and knowledge of career. This workbook was developed to assist you in exploring these areas in more depth. Use this workbook as a resource you can refer back to when you require career information. As you progress along your career path you can add information that you've collected and add it to your "career portfolio."

The three main objectives of this workbook are:

- to explore the process of career decision making
- to begin participating in career exploration exercises and activities
- to inform you of career resources including career testing options

Remember, making a career decision can be both a challenging and rewarding process. Be patient with yourself. By allowing yourself time to work through the various activities in this workbook you will begin to develop greater confidence about your career path.

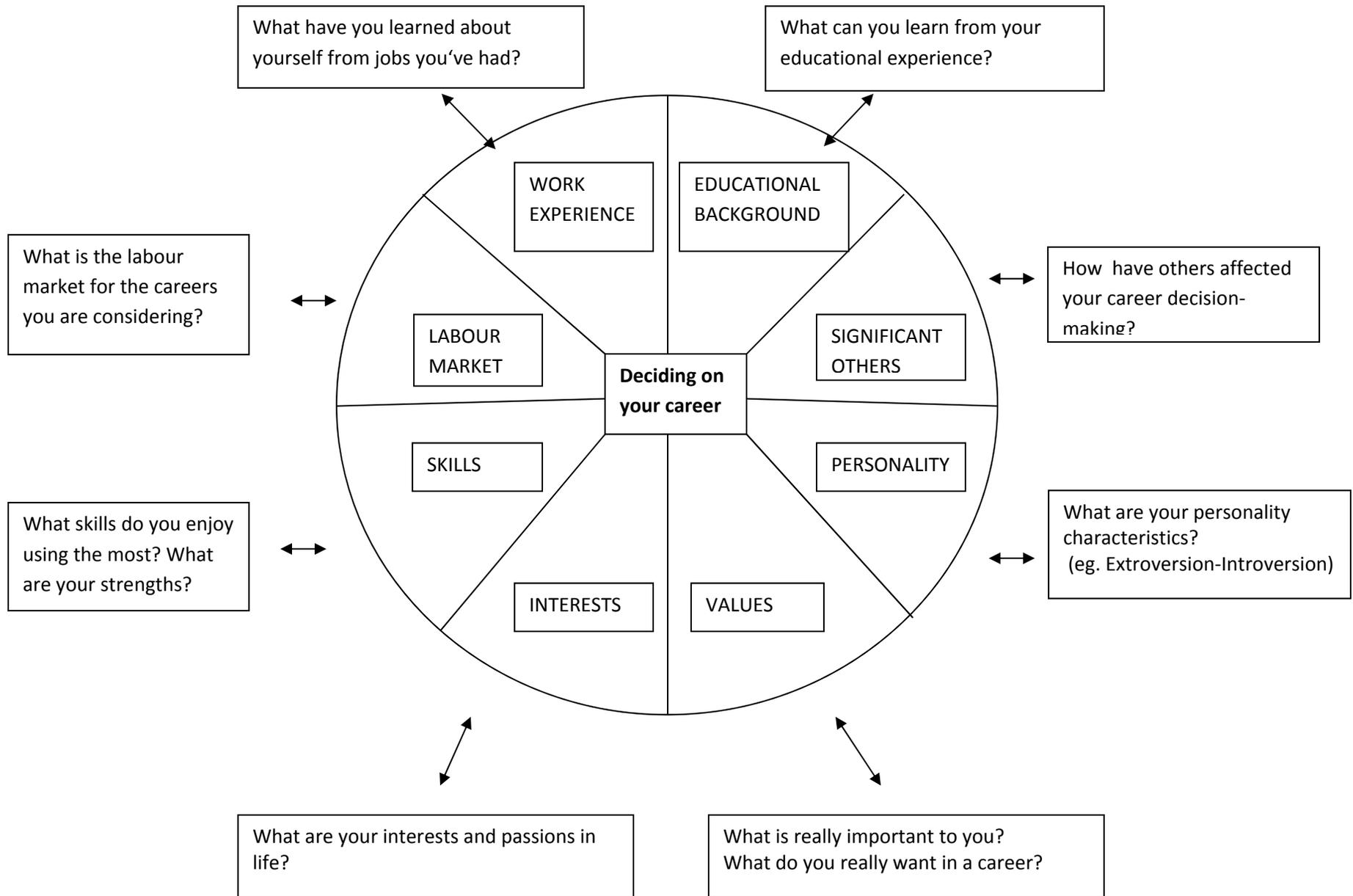
KNOW YOURSELF

The biggest challenge for anyone in this process is the first step: **Knowing yourself.**

After you have more awareness of yourself, you can begin to identify careers that fit with this knowledge. You can then research these careers options and the potential paths that will take you there.

The following exercises will assist you in gaining a better understanding of your interests, personality traits, skills and abilities and also help you to clarify your values.

THE WHEEL OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS



INTERESTS EXERCISE

Chances are, you've already ruled out many occupations and careers. In this exercise, circle occupations that you are most interested in.

Art Therapist, Counsellor, Cruise Director, Flying Instructor, Fund Raiser, Hairstylist, High School Teacher, Librarian, Midwife, Occupational Therapist, Probation Officer, Recreation Director, Speech-language Pathologist, Park Naturalist, Religious Education Director, Social Worker, Athletics Coach, Recruiter, Naturopath, Home Economist, Bartender, Family Services Worker, Agriculture Representative, Foreign Service Officer, Sign Language Interpreter, Human Resource Manager, Physical Therapist	S
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Actor, Advertising Manager, Architect, Cartoonist, Costumer, Dance Instructor, Dance Therapist, English Teacher, Fashion Designer, Film Editor, Furniture Designer, Illustrator, Interior Designer, Journalist, Landscape Architect, Model, Motion Picture Camera Operator, Music teacher, Package Designer, Photographer, Playwright, Poet, Set Designer, Writer, Song Writer, Screenwriter, Computer Animator, Web Designer, Book Editor, Dramatic Arts Teacher, Public Relations Representative, Musician	A
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Auctioneer, Bank Manager, Buyer, Credit Manger, Financial Planner, Hospital Administrator, Motion Picture Director, Funeral Director, Hotel Manager, Industrial Engineer, Industrial Psychologist, Insurance Agent, Lawyer, Office Manager, Personal Shopper, Private Investigator, Producer, Production Manager, Real Estate Agent, Retail Store Manager, Stockbroker, Urban Planner, Publisher, Entrepreneur, Politician, Theatre Manager, Food Service Supervisor, Newscaster, Reporter, Financial Planner	E
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Aircraft Mechanic, Airline Pilot, Architectural Drafter, Chef, Computer Engineer, Conservation Officer, Corrections Officer, Diver, Electrical Engineer, Emergency Medical Technician, Farmer, Firefighter, Forester, Athletic Therapist, Helicopter Pilot, Jeweler, Mechanical Engineer, Police Officer, Landscape Technician, Prosthetic -Orthotist	R
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Archaeologist, Actuary, Anthropologist, Botanist, Coroner, Curator, Chemist, Chiropractor, Civil Engineer, Computer Programmer, Dentist, Economist, Geographer, Horticulturist, Land Surveyor, Market Research Analyst, Medical Laboratory Technologist, Dietitian, Air Traffic Controller, Marine Engineer, Meteorologist, Nurse, Pediatrician, Pharmacist, Psychologist, Public Health Inspector, Food Scientist, Medical Microbiologist, Seismologist, Statistician, Translator, Veterinarian, Entomologist, Respiratory Therapist, Optometrist, Paleontologist, Safety Engineer	I
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Accountant, Accounting Clerk, Flight Attendant, Travel Agent, Dental Hygienist, Building Inspector, Court Reporter, Credit Officer, Customs Inspector, Kindergarten Teacher, Legal Secretary, Library Assistant, Medical Records Technician, Receptionist, Proofreader, Secretary, Administrative Assistant, Legal Assistant, Underwriter	C
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THREE POSSIBLE OCCUPATIONS FOR ME

Write down the three occupations that interest you the most and, for each job, one reason why it interests you. Please add any job that you're considering that is not on the list.

1. Occupation: _____

Why it interests me: _____

2. Occupation: _____

Why it interests me: _____

3. Occupation: _____

Why it interests me: _____

Finally, Return to the previous page and identify the box that contains the greatest number of occupations circled. Read the corresponding description below for the lettered box. Does the description describe you? Circle the words that are most descriptive of you.

R= Realistic rugged, practical, good motor co-ordination, good motor skills, mechanically inclined, stable, persistent,

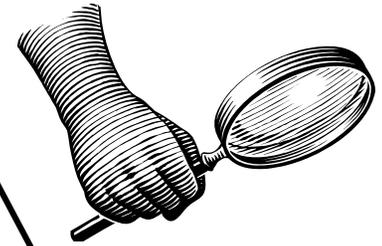
I=Investigative solve problems by thinking, work independently, enjoy ambiguous tasks, analytical, curious, reserved, dislike repetitive tasks, understanding is important

A=Artistic prefer unstructured situations, self-expressive, impulsive, creative, change oriented, intuitive, nonconforming, independent

S= Social sociable, responsible, humanistic, like to work in groups, good verbal and interpersonal skills, enjoy helping others in a variety of ways

E= Enterprising strong verbal skills, leader, assertive, popular, self-confident, cheerful, high-energy level, like to work for organization, strong personal goals

C=Conventional conscientious, efficient, calm, orderly, practical, conforming, perfectionist, precise, accurate



Realistic

Investigative

People with mechanical and athletic abilities; like working outdoors with tools and objects; prefer dealing with things rather than people.

People with math and science abilities; like working alone and solving complex problems; like dealing with ideas rather than people or things.

Conventional

People with clerical and math ability; prefer working indoors and organizing things; like to deal with words and numbers rather than people or ideas.

People with artistic ability and imagination; enjoy creating original work, like dealing with ideas rather than things.

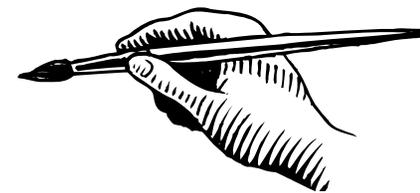
Artistic

People with leadership and speaking abilities; like to be influential; interested in politics and economics; like to deal with people and ideas rather than things.

People with social skills; interested in social relationships and helping others solve problems; likes dealing with people rather than things.

Enterprising

Social



PERSONALITY (WHO ARE YOU?)

This exercise will help you begin to develop an awareness of your personality traits. Read through the following personality traits and circle those that you feel you possess or that you describe you. *TIP: Think of how others would describe you.* You can also give this list to others and ask them to describe you for more information.

Accurate	Decisive	Introverted	Reliable
Active	Dignified	Inventive	Resourceful
Adaptable	Dominant	Likeable	Self-confident
Adventurous	Easy going	Logical	Self-Controlled
Aggressive	Efficient	Loving	Sensitive
Alert	Energetic	Mature	Serious
Ambitious	Enthusiastic	Methodical	Sociable
Analytical	Extroverted	Modest	Strong-minded
Assertive	Flexible	Motivated	Strong-willed
Broad-minded	Forgiving	Open-minded	Supportive
Calm	Frank	Optimistic	Teachable
Capable	Fun	Organized	Tolerant
Cautious	Generous	Original	Understanding
Cheerful	Genuine	Outgoing	Uninhibited
Clear-thinking	Helpful	Patient	Verbal
Competent	Honest	Perfectionistic	Versatile
Competitive	Humorous	Persevering	Warm
Confident	Impulsive	Poised	
Cooperative	Independent	Practical	
Curious	Industrious	Purposeful	
Creative	Intelligent	Rational	

Review the words you circled and write your ten most descriptive traits on the next page.

WHO ARE YOU?

Ten words that describe my personality are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

VALUES CLARIFICATION

Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the statements listed below using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree

It is important for me to have a job.....

that allows me to set my own schedule, work at my own pace and make my own decisions (Independence) _____

where I will be compared with and tested against others (Competition) _____

where work is frequently changing and different (Variety) _____

that will get me respect, approval, status and recognition from other (Social Recognition and Prestige) _____

where I will lead and direct other people (Leadership) _____

where I can make the world a better place (Help Society) _____

that requires a great deal of mental activity, thinking and/or learning (Intellectual Stimulation) _____

where I will work closely with others, possibly as a member of a team (Working with others) _____

where I can be innovative, original, expressive, imaginative or artistic (Creativity) _____

where I will travel frequently (e.g. absent from home for a least one night each week) (Travel) _____

where I will be required to work in an organized, precise and careful, manner (Structure/Precision) _____

where I will help others with their problems (Fast Pace) _____

with a strong job market in which work is easy to find (Security) _____

with flexible work hours that allows me to fit my work schedule to my life (e.g. for childcare, recreational pursuits, etc.) (Flexibility) _____

where I will be able to earn a large sum of money and be able to buy pretty much anything I want (High Income) _____

SKILLS (ABILITIES OR TALENTS)

Each of you have unique abilities or talents that are related to your current success and your future aspiration. Of the many skills questions you could address while developing your career plan, two are particularly important. **First, what are your academic and career skills strengths?** For example, are you strong in mathematics or detailed work? **Second, what skills do you want to develop and use in your work?** Your answer to this latter question will depend in part on your interests, personality, and other personal characteristics. The following exercise can also help you begin to identify the skills you would like to use in your career. Scan the list of skills below and circle those you would most like to use in your occupation. Write the top five on the next page.

PEOPLE

Communication	(Speak, write, listen, question)
Teaching/ Training	(design program, lead, demonstrate, motivate)
Influencing/Persuading	(collaborate, resolve conflict, bargain, negotiate)
Counselling/Consulting	(care for others, help to solve people's problems)
Managing/ Supervising	(organize people, team building, set goals)

INFORMATION

Learning	(find & interpret information, enjoy learning)
Thinking	(evaluate, reason, use logic, create, interpret)
Problem Solving/Decision Making	(clarify problems, evaluate options, generate and test ideas)
Organizing & Planning	(set goals, manage time, choose direction, prioritize)
Computing	(manage and interpret information, program)

THINGS

Technical	(follow instructions, understand specifications, do precision work)
Athletic	(compete, build endurance, study health issues)
Nature	(study plants or animals, focus on environment)
Artistic	(create, perform, design)
Mechanical	(operate, repair, maintain, assemble, equipment)

OTHER:

SKILLS

Five abilities I would like to use in my occupation are:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

VALUES:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

INTERESTS/ACTIVITIES:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What would your 'ideal job' look like based on these characteristics?

Be Creative:

Your 'ideal job' may be a long-term goal. What job options would fit your education and experience at this point (short-term goal) and also relate to your long-term goal.

IDENTIFY CAREER OPTIONS

There are many tools that you can use to help you assess your career interests. Please see the list of resources at the end of this workbook for online resources that includes a variety of interest tests that can assist you in identifying which career pathway will be interesting, valuable, and compatible with your personality.

RESEARCH CAREER OPTIONS

It is recommended that you gain as much information about the careers that you are interested in. Conducting information interviews, gaining volunteer experience or job shadowing are ways of gaining exposure in terms of what are the demands of the various careers you are interest in.

Informational Interviewing

What is informational interviewing?

How can you prepare for a career conversation?

A few interviewing guidelines.....

What is informational interviewing?

Informational interviewing is the process of having conversations with individuals (generally referred to here as career advisors) about their work as a method of career exploration and network building. It encompasses a range of interactions, from a face to face conversation at the career advisor's workplace to an in-depth telephone conversation, correspondence, to a brief exchange about a specific issue. Informational interviewing is not job seeking or job interviewing.

Career conversations provide opportunities to:

- Gather career-related information and advice about an organization, job, and professional concerns that are not available from written sources.
- Create contacts and build relationships with people in your career field. The personal and evaluative information you gain from talking to people on the job enhance the factual knowledge available from other sources. With each informational interview, your understanding of the many ways that individuals develop their career will increase.

By having talked with professionals in a career, you will be better informed and have a chance to learn the vocabulary of that field-knowledge that will help you to prove yourself more effectively in job interviews. (A primary complaint of employment interviewers is that job candidates are not well informed about their field of interest).

Optimal Outcomes.....

1. You learn enough about the field to know that it is or is not for you.
2. You can get new ideas for possible careers and/or jobs in this or a related field, or in a different field. If you visit your contact's workplace, you gain a firsthand impression of their work environment. If you have already decided on a career field, you get practical ideas and insight about how to enter that field, i.e., job-hunting strategies, ways to research a job or informed guesswork about where the best jobs might be.
3. You get the names of other people in your field of interest who can give you information.
4. You develop and maintain friendly relationships with your contacts over time that may alert you to future job opportunities.

Preparing for a career conversation – Do your research

Find out as much as possible about the individuals you plan to contact and their organizations and career field. Read career literature, trade publications, and collect information, and conduct research using the internet.

Think carefully about what you hope to learn and the kinds of questions that will get information.

Most people are willing to answer questions that require them to reflect on their work accomplishments. Evaluative questions are often an effective way to start the conversation, and the phrasing of your questions will depend on your own style and the flow of the conversations.

Write down a list of possible questions or topics you can explore with your advisers:

- **What the job/work is like:** the challenges, frustrations, rewards encountered; kinds of decisions required, problems solved, how time is spent, etc.
- **Desirable skills, education, and experience:** required training or preparation
- Career paths and advancement
- **Lifestyle implications of the work:** salary/benefits, family policy, travel, flexibility, security, etc.
- **Work environment:** Physical setting, people (colleagues and clients), organizational structure and culture
- **Needs:** the greatest needs of the position/department/organization/industry current issues in the industry
- **Ways to get more information:** journals. Professional organization, other possible internship opportunities
- Start with your least intimidating contacts first

A few Interviewing Guidelines

Be clear and direct about the goal of your interview (information, not jobs) and commitment (suggest 30-40 minutes) when writing or calling to request the interview. Always cite your referral/source when introducing yourself by phone or letter. Meet with them at their workplace at their convenience, but be prepared to settle graciously for a phone interview, even on the spot if necessary (...so have your list of questions ready).

Act professionally, as you would for any interview. Call to confirm a day and time, and arrive a little early so that you can experience the work environment and then relax before your appointment.

Listen attentively and gear your questions to the flow of conversation. Jot down any special point, clarify any terms you don't know or anything you don't understand, and keep track of any referrals or suggestions. Finish writing down what you have learned immediately after the interview while your memory is still fresh.

Ask for additional referrals from your contact. Expand your network of contacts.

Stay within your time limit.

Resources

www.careerzone.ny.gov

- provides information that supplements this workbook

www.labourmarketinformation.ca

- provides regional and local labour market information

www.workingincanada.gc.ca

- presents information from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada through a single portal.

www.careersintrades.ca

- provides information about careers in the trades

www.gov.mb.ca/wd/apprenticeship/

- this is the homepage for the Apprenticeship Branch of Manitoba

www.jobhuntersbible.com

- this is the official “What Colour is your Parachute?” site which includes information on this best selling book, online career and personality tests and an interactive job search and resume writing feature

www.personalitypathways.com/type_inventory.html

- provides information and ideas on Myers Briggs psychological type, Keirsey and Berens temperament theory and other systems of personality development as they may relate to career choice

CONCLUSION

After working through the Career Explorations Workbook you are not expected to have a clear career path. It is a process that involves knowing your interests, personality, values, skills and abilities. It is about gaining self awareness to make the best choices.

If these exercises have been successful, this workbook has nudged you to be open to exploring several career options that are available to you.

GOOD LUCK!

The tools and information in this workbook are a compilation of our own work as well as resources gathered from various sources, and have been used in different forms for several years in the delivery of free career exploration workshops at Red River College. At the time of printing of this workbook we were unable to track original sources. If you feel any of your own work or information is represented in this workbook, please contact us as would like to properly cite your work, or remove it at your request.