Career Exploration Workbook
Introduction:
Do you have questions about what careers are best suited to you and your unique personality? Are you uncertain about your career options? If YES, then you are not alone! Did you know that close to 60% of students change their program or major while at university? (Campbell, Ungar, & Dutton, 2008). As deciding on a career is not as simple as just matching you and your program of study to an occupation, the objective of this workbook is to help you reflect on your personality, interests, values and skills and other factors instrumental to making career decisions. Career exploration is a journey that can often take you on a roller-coaster ride before your desired career goal is reached. Today career paths are rarely linear, and it is likely that you will be taking different directions, turns and breaks while exploring new and often more exciting opportunities.

Today's Career Paths are Jungle Gyms, Not Ladders!
In the past people started in an entry level positions with a single employer, and climbed up a structured ladder all the way to the top. Today, career paths could more easily be compared to a Jungle Gym that allows much more flexibility and lateral movements before reaching the desired career objectives. Hence today's professionals rarely stay with the same organization long enough to reach the top in a conventional way. Rather than moving upwards they move sideways into different roles, trying out new opportunities that eventually may take them where they want to go.

Decision Making:
Making career decisions can be a stressful and often overwhelming process. The Making Career Decisions Model featured below was developed by the York University Career Centre to help students understand the different stages of making informed career decisions and empower them to make choices aligned with who they really are.
The model above is meant to underline that making career decisions is a conscious and reflective process that people make throughout their lives while deciding on the next steps. This process incorporates both *internal clarification* and *inspired exploration* which leads toward the next step.

**My Past**
This is your rich history and everything that has brought you to the present moment. It includes your early years, education, experiences, and transition moments. This development has been influenced by your roles in life and how other people have influenced the way you see the world, and how you approach work. For example, let’s say your childhood dream job was to become an astronaut. From the moment you saw the first man walking on the Moon, you wanted to do the same. As a child you were always drawing spaceships and imagining yourself flying them. To achieve your goal you decided to enroll in a Space Engineering program.

**Where I Am**
Some time later, you are an engineering student doing well in your program but unfortunately you don’t seem to like direction you are heading in. At this point of your life that childhood dream may
not be as obvious or as tangible as it used to be. You find yourself confused and unsure. This would be the starting point for further self-reflection at which point you may ask yourself, “what next?”

INTERNAL CLARIFICATION
The next step is a reflective process, leading to increased self-awareness, often called Internal Clarification. There are three components to this internal clarification – *Who I Am, Other People and Other Factors, and Career Curiosities.*

*Who I Am*
This is the profile of four components that are relevant to career decision making. William Bridges (in Creating You & Co) uses the acronym D.A.T.A. which stands for Desire, Abilities, Temperament and Assets. Desires are what you want and what’s important to you (these are often expressed as values). Abilities are the skills and competencies you have and most like to use, especially transferable ones. Temperament is your personality, character and personal preferences. Assets can include university degree(s), specific knowledge, demonstrated interests and anything else that you have accumulated, experienced or learned.

*Career Curiosities*
These are the career options you are the most curious about – that you are motivated to explore in order to find out if, indeed, you would enjoy them.

*Other People and Other Factors*
Other people often play a large role in decision making. These other people can be parents, friends, or role models like Steve Jobs or Nelson Mandela or other influential persons from your life. Other factors may include, for example, your financial or family situation, your health or how much education you wish to undertake in the future.

INSPIRED EXPLORATION
Inspired Exploration is the “forward movement” into the external world, which leads you to find your own unique “next steps”. There are three components that inform and inspire this forward movement: *Taking Action, Opportunities, and My Thoughts and Feelings.*

*Taking Action*
These are the actions that you carry out to move forward. These actions are usually taken in the direction of your curiosities such as exploring career options through informational interviews, volunteering, job shadowing, or attending events and services offered by the Career Centre or other networking activities.

*Opportunities*
Some opportunities can be specifically planned by you based on your interest in a specific field. For example, contacting a representative of an organization or a company you are interested in and asking for an informational interview would be a planned and conscious step on your part as you decide whether such a direction is for you. Other opportunities are “unplanned” but often occur because of one’s engagement and action. For example, you just happen to be at an engagement where you meet someone who has an unintended but positive impact on your career direction.
Thoughts and Feelings
This component is a reflection on your emotions, thoughts, and beliefs. It is an awareness of how you feel and think with regards to your development and possible future options. By considering your thoughts and feelings you can begin to better understand your next step(s) towards achieving your career objectives.

Where I’m Going
This is the outcome of the whole process - of the journey through Internal Clarification and Inspired Exploration - it is the decision you make about your next step, whether this is enrollment in an educational program, a choice of a major, or a choice of your career path.

My Future
This is the unknown, but more informed future that you will create. It is a future of hope and possibility and a future that you will construct for yourself. The future often looks brighter as a result of going through this process.
My Personality:
Think about the type of person you are. The secret is to match who you are with what you might love to do as a career. According to Carl Jung’s Theory of Personality Type many of the valuable differences between individuals are a result of natural inborn preferences like ways of gathering energy, taking in information or making decisions and dealing with the outside world. Understanding these natural preferences can help people find career happiness and satisfaction.

Circle the adjectives that best describe you and how you work:

I am...

- Quiet
- Serious
- Dependable
- Practical
- Realistic
- Responsible
- Logical
- Orderly
- Organized
- Friendly
- Conscientious
- Committed
- Thorough
- Accurate
- Loyal
- Considerate
- Sensitive
- Thoughtful
- Active
- Involved
- Outgoing
- Fun
- Imaginative
- Appreciative
- Supportive
- Visionary
- Decisive
- Motivator
- Original
- Driven
- Goal-oriented
- Theoretical
- Skeptical
- Independent
- Competent
- Performer
- Dramatic
- Adventurous
- Tolerant
- Flexible
- Observer
- Analyzer
- Efficient
- Kind
- Respectful
- Idealistic
- Moral
- Curious
- Open-minded
- Understanding
- Accepting
- Theoretical
- Adaptable
- Focused
- Problem-solver
- Critical
- Conceptual
- Energetic
- Spontaneous
- Well-spoken
- Outspoken
- Resourceful
- Strategic
- Systematic
- Forceful
- Warm
- Inspiring
- Negotiator
- Cooperative
- Determined
- Empathetic
- Sociable
- Knowledgeable
- Risk-taker
- Confident
- Innovative
- People-oriented
- Persevere
- Insightful
- Abstract
- Assertive
What is your Type Preference?
The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a self-report questionnaire based on Jung’s theory of psychological types. It identifies your preferences on four scales, each consisting of two opposite poles. According to Jung, everyone has a natural preference for one of the two sides of the dichotomy.

For example:
People who prefer Extraversion receive their energy from external events, experiences and interactions with others, whereas people who prefer Introversion tend to focus on their own inner world and receive energy from their internal thoughts, feelings and reflections.

People who prefer Sensing like to take in information using their eyes, ears and other senses to find out what is actually happening. Individuals who prefer Intuition, on the other hand, are future oriented and focus on the big picture.

Persons who prefer Thinking, lean towards looking at the logical consequences of their decisions. Persons who prefer to use Feeling in decision making tend to mentally place themselves in a situation and identify with the people involved so they can make decisions based on person-centered values.

People who prefer to use a Perceiving process in dealing with the outer world are usually more flexible, and spontaneous and they prefer to stay open to last minutes options. Finally, those who prefer using a Judging process in dealing with the outside world lean towards living in a planned, organized and structured environment.

It is important to note that people have characteristics of every dichotomy and are not “one or the other.” Instead, we fall somewhere on the spectrum between the two dichotomies. For example, you may have characteristics of both sensing and intuition, but you know you rely much more on your intuition and thus would be closer to the “Intuitive” end of the spectrum.

Exercise:
Look at the different MBTI dichotomies and place an “x” on the line where you think you might fall on the spectrum between each of the two dichotomies. Do you associate very strongly with one dichotomy in each pair or are you somewhere closer to the middle?
How do I gather energy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extraversion</th>
<th>Introversion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am energized by outer world</td>
<td>I am energized by inner world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do I gather information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensing</th>
<th>Intuition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I work with known facts</td>
<td>I look for future possibilities and focus on the “big picture”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do I make decisions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I base decisions on impersonal analysis and logic</td>
<td>I base decisions on personal values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do I deal with the outside world?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judging</th>
<th>Perceiving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I prefer a planned, decided, orderly way of life</td>
<td>I prefer a flexible, spontaneous way of life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimated Type | E or I | S or N | T of F | J or P |
---|---|---|---|---|

Important note: We recommend that you complete the official Myers Briggs Type Indicator online at http://www.myersbriggs.org/ (go to “My MBTI Personality Type”) and see a career counsellor in order to verify your type.

My Interests:
Identifying and analyzing your interests, and what you enjoy about them, requires thought and effort. But it can improve your understanding of your own personality, values and skills, and provide knowledge of the things and the types of roles you enjoy. This knowledge will be crucial when you are considering career options.

Holland Interest Themes Exercise
Holland’s theory is centered on the concept that most people fit into one of the six interest categories. Read each of the six theme descriptions of human interests and put check marks besides those that interest you. Then, in the spaces on the bottom write the names of the three themes that describe you the best, second best, and third best.
R - Realistic (Technical, Doers)
People who have athletic or mechanical ability, prefer to work with objects, machines, tools, plants, or animals, or to be outdoors.

Interests include:
- Being athletic, working outdoors and/or being physical
- Being practical
- Working with things rather than with people
- Being mechanically inclined
- Solving problems by doing something physical
- Producing tangible results or achieving concrete and observable rewards
- Building, assembling, fixing and producing things
- Being active rather than sitting for long periods of time
- Working with straightforward examples and expectations
- Being with co-workers who have a concrete approach to problem solving

I - Investigative (Science, Thinkers)
People who like to observe, learn, investigate, analyze, evaluate, or solve problems.

Interests include:
- Pursuing ideas and scholarly activities
- Having strong scientific or technical orientation
- Seeking to achieve expertise and knowledge
- Working on independent projects
- Performing ambiguous or abstract tasks
- Solving problems through thinking
- Conducting research or analysis
- Observing, collecting and organizing data
- Doing scientific or laboratory work
- Questioning why things happen or work the way they do

A - Artistic (Arts, Creators)
People who have artistic, innovative or intuitive abilities and like to work in unstructured environments, using their imagination or creativity. People who enjoy expressing ideas and feelings through dance, music, art, design, writing, acting, film, and other outlets.

Interests include:
- Participating in musical or theatrical performances
- Composing music
- Writing stories and articles
- Creating artwork, projects and new ideas
- Working independently
- Playing musical instruments
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- Seeing possibilities and expressing them in creative ways
- Decorating and designing
- Reading books
- Coming up with ideas or different points of view

S – Social (Social Services/Education, Helpers)
People who like to work with people to inform, enlighten, help, train, develop or cure them, or are skilled with words.
Interests include:
- Teaching, explaining
- Enlightening, guiding, coaching
- Helping or serving others
- Selecting, training and supervising others
- Solving problems through interaction and leading discussions
- Counselling
- Healing/treating people with illnesses
- Communicating ideas, concepts or knowledge
- Exploring spiritual concerns
- Making a difference in other people’s lives

E – Enterprising (Business Contact, Persuaders)
People who like to work with other people influencing, persuading, leading or managing with the aim of attaining organizational goals or for economic gain. Interests include:
- Leading and managing people, committees, projects, organizations or companies
- Solving problems by taking risks
- Achieving financial goals
- Influencing others
- Communicating
- Selling and purchasing
- Giving talks, speeches and presentations
- Promoting products or services
- Taking on competitive and challenging projects or people
- Politically maneuvering or persuading

C – Conventional (Business Operation, Organizers)
People who like to work with data, have clerical or numerical ability, carrying things out in detail or following through on others’ instructions.
Interests include:
- Organizing complex accounting, computer, office or production systems
- Developing production procedures
- Streamlining operations and increasing efficiency
- Writing business reports and/or making charts and graphs
- Solving problems using a logical or systematic approach
- Keeping accurate records, financial books and/or budgeting
- Creating structure out of chaos
- Understanding bureaucratic systems and functioning well within them
- Handling logistics, scheduling and monitoring
- Utilizing talent for working with data and details


My Abilities:
Ability is the quality of being able to do something, either due to natural talent or through practice and acquired skill.

My natural talents
Natural talents and gifts are the things that you do well or which come naturally to you. For example, you may be naturally good with your hands, or you may be more technologically inclined.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.

My Skills:
Skills are things that may not have come naturally to you and that you had to learn in order to master them. These are things that you do well and feel comfortable doing. They often evolve from interests rather than the other way around; as people don’t usually develop skills in things they are not interested in.

1. Place a check next to the skills you possess
2. Circle those skills which you enjoy using and would like to use in your career/job

Verbal Communication
- Perform and entertain before groups
- Speak well in public appearances
- Confront and express opinions without offending
- Interview people to obtain information
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- Resolve concerns in person or over phone
- Present ideas effectively in speeches or lectures
- Persuade/influence others to a certain point of view
- Sell ideas, products or services
- Debate ideas with others
- Participate in group discussions and teams

Nonverbal Communication
- Listen carefully and attentively
- Convey a positive self-image
- Use body language that makes others comfortable
- Develop rapport easily with groups of people
- Establish a culture to support learning
- Express feelings through body language
- Promote concepts through a variety of media
- Respond to non-verbal cues
- Model behavior or concepts for others

Written Communication
- Write technical language, reports, manuals
- Write poetry, fiction, plays
- Write grant proposals
- Prepare and write logically written reports
- Write for sales and advertising
- Edit and proofread written material
- Prepare revisions of written material
- Utilize all forms of technology for writing
- Write case studies and treatment plans
- Demonstrate expertise in grammar and style

Train/Consult
- Teach, advise, coach, empower
- Use a variety of media for presentation
- Develop educational curriculum and materials
- Create and administer an evaluation plan
- Facilitate a group
- Explain difficult ideas or complex topics
- Assess learning styles and respond accordingly
- Consult and recommend solutions
- Write well organized and documented reports
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Analyze

- Study data or behaviour for meaning and solutions
- Analyze quantitative, physical and/or scientific data
- Write analysis of study and research
- Compare and evaluate information
- Systematize information and results
- Apply curiosity
- Investigate clues
- Formulate insightful and relevant questions
- Use technology for statistical analysis

Research

- Identify appropriate information sources
- Search written, oral and technological information
- Interview primary sources
- Hypothesize and test for results
- Compile numerical and statistical data
- Classify and sort information into categories
- Gather information from a number of sources
- Patiently search for hard-to-find information
- Utilize electronic search methods

Plan and Organize

- Identify and organize tasks or information
- Coordinate people, activities and details
- Develop a plan and set objectives
- Set up and keep time schedules
- Anticipate problems and respond with solutions
- Develop realistic goals and actions to attain them
- Arrange correct sequence of information and actions
- Create guidelines for implementing an action
- Create efficient systems

Counsel and Serve

- Counsel, advise, consult, guide others
- Care for and serve people; rehabilitate, heal
- Demonstrate empathy, sensitivity and patience
- Help people make their own decisions
- Help others improve health and welfare
- Listen empathically and with objectivity
- Coach, guide, encourage individuals to achieve goals
- Mediate peace between conflicting parties
• Facilitate self-awareness in others

Interpersonal Relations
• Convey a sense of humor
• Anticipate people's needs and reactions
• Express feelings in a healthy manner
• Process human interactions, understand others
• Encourage, empower, advocate for people
• Create a positive, hospitable environment
• Adjust plans for the unexpected
• Facilitate conflict management
• Communicate well with diverse groups
• Listen carefully

Leadership
• Envision the future and lead change
• Set goals and determine courses of action
• Motivate/inspire others to achieve common goals
• Create innovative solutions to complex problems
• Communicate well with all levels of the organization
• Develop and mentor talent
• Negotiate terms and conditions
• Take risks, make hard decisions, be decisive

Management
• Manage personnel, projects and time
• Foster a sense of ownership in employees
• Delegate responsibility and review performance
• Increase productivity and efficiency to achieve goals
• Develop and facilitate work teams
• Provide training for development of staff
• Adjust plans/procedures for the unexpected
• Facilitate conflict management
• Communicate well with diverse groups

Financial
• Calculate, perform mathematical computations
• Work with precision with numerical data
• Keep accurate and complete financial records
• Perform accounting functions and procedures
• Compile data and apply statistical analysis
• Create computer generated charts for presentation
Use computer software for records and analysis
Forecast, estimate expenses and income
Create and justify an organization's budget to others

Administrative
- Communicate well with key people in an organization
- Identify and purchase necessary resource materials
- Utilize computer software and equipment
- Organize, improve, adapt office systems
- Track progress of projects and troubleshoot
- Achieve goals within budget and time schedule
- Hire and supervise temporary personnel as needed
- Demonstrate flexibility during a crisis
- Oversee communication, email and telephones

Create and Innovate
- Visualize concepts and results
- Intuit strategies and solutions
- Brainstorm and make use of group synergy
- Invent products through experimentation
- Express ideas through art forms
- Utilize accurate spatial memory
- Create images through, sketches, sculpture, etc.
- Utilize computer software for artistic creations

Construct and Operate
- Assemble and install technical equipment
- Build a structure, follow proper sequence
- Understand blueprints and architectural specifications
- Repair machines
- Analyze and correct plumbing or electrical problems
- Use tools and machines
- Landscape and farm
- Drive and operate vehicles

(Adapted from the Transferable Skills Checklist/University of Virginia)
Skill Development Action Plan:

Using the information you gathered above regarding the skills you have/most enjoy using, complete the exercises below.

My key strengths or “preferred skills” are:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Skills I want to develop (areas for personal and professional development) are:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Five things I plan on doing to build the skills I want to develop are:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Now take time to reflect on your experiences and make a list of your most memorable or proudest moments, your successes, and the challenges you were able to overcome. This is your “pride list”:
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10.
My Values:
Your values are those elements of your life which you find personally important. They are core beliefs which guide you on how to conduct your life in a way that is meaningful and satisfying for you. Your values can help you to understand where you might find a role in society, and they are often a strong factor while exploring your future career path.

Step 1: What I Value Most...
This exercise is designed to help you reach a better understanding of your most significant values. From this list of values (both work and personal), select the ten that are most important to you as guides for how to behave, or as components of a valued way of life. Feel free to add any values of your own to this list.

Achievement  Effectiveness  Physical challenge
Advancement  Freedom  Pleasure
Adventure  Fame  Power and authority
Affection  Friendship  Privacy
Arts  Growth  Public service
Balance  Having a family  Purity
Challenging problems  Helping other people  Quality of what I take part in
Change and variety  Helping society  Quality relationships
Close relationships  Honesty  Recognition
Community  Independence  Religion
Competence  Influencing others  Reputation
Competition  Inner harmony  Responsibility
Cooperation  Integrity  Security
Country  Intellectual status  Self-Respect
Creativity  Involvement  Serenity
Decisiveness  Job tranquility  Sophistication
Democracy  Knowledge  Stability
Ecological awareness  Leadership  Status
Economic security  Location  Time freedom
Efficiency  Loyalty  Truth
Ethical practice  Meaningful work  Wealth
Excellence  Merit  Wisdom
Excitement  Nature  Work with others
Fast living  Order  Work alone
Financial gain  Personal development  Work under pressure
Now out of the ten values, please identify the top five that are the strongest for you.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

**My Career Curiosities:**
These are the career options you are the most curious about - that you are motivated to explore and find out if, indeed, you would enjoy them.

Careers/Occupations/Job Titles I am curious about and wish to know more:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Now that you are aware of your personality type and the interests and skills that you would like to implement, use the Career Satisfaction Model below to reflect on whether the careers that you are curious about would personally satisfy you (enjoyment) and fulfill your needs of being who you want to be (meaning). It will, further, help you answer questions as "do I have the skills needed to pursue that career", and (if not) "what do I need to do to acquire these skills?"

**Career Satisfaction Model**
This model illustrates that to be satisfied at your work it involves doing something that you are capable of doing (skills), you like (enjoyment) and you respect (it has meaning) (John Clark, From Career Angst to Bliss: An Explorer’s Tale - Winter 1999-2000 Career Planning and Adult Development Journal)

For example: You have successfully completed a marketing program and are currently working as a marketing specialist with a start up company. You have the skill-set necessary to perform your work at a high level (you are in the S circle) and most of the time you enjoy what you are doing (you are in the zone where S meets E). However, you find yourself feeling dissatisfied because you don’t believe in your company’s product and you were discouraged that your superiors would not listen to your suggestions on how to improve certain product deficiencies. In a sense, your work lacks meaning. According to the model, to find true work happiness, you would have to be in the small zone, where all three circles interlock (the area where S, M and E overlap), allowing for optimal enjoyment, meaning and the proper use of your aptitudes.

**Setting My Career Goals:**
While setting career goals it is useful to remember that Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and, Timebound goals have greater potential to be reached. The SMART Principle is a helpful tool for identifying goals that we want to achieve and ones that we are capable of achieving. People who set goals achieve more than those who do not!

Write down your long term career goals: Five years from now I would like to:

1. Own a small catering business
2. Write a cook book
3.
4.
5.

Write down your short term goals (next steps) that would allow you to achieve your long term career goals:

1. Meet with a Career Counsellor to discuss a strategy to achieve your goals
2. Learn how to develop a business plan
3.
4.
5.
Steps I can take to get there:

1. Take some business courses
2. Participate in job shadowing
3.

What’s stopping me? How can I overcome my weakness?

1. To increase self-confidence, attend career exploration workshops (i.e. “Suit Yourself – Personality and Career Choice”)
2.
3.

How can I effectively use my strengths in achieving my career objectives?

1. Volunteer
2. Join a student club
3.

What can I do next month?

1. Conduct an informational interview with the owner of a fast food restaurant
2. Apply for a summer job at a local bistro bar
3.

What can I do this week?

1. Sign up for the TASTE Program
2. Attend a Resume writing workshop
3.
References


Briggs Myers, Isabel Revised by Linda K. Kirby & Katharine D. Myers Introduction to Type. 5th Edition


