



FOCUS

CAREER AND EDUCATION PLANNING SOLUTIONS

Planning your Future Career & Education

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This TUTORIAL discusses the importance of career and education planning in your college years and explains how to explore career fields and make career decisions. The TUTORIAL also introduces you to the FOCUS 2, Online Career and Education Planning System. FOCUS 2 will help you explore career paths based on your interests, your personality, your talents and your values and help you to plan the education/training you will need to attain your career aspirations.

Why Career Planning is Necessary

In today's rapidly changing world, new career paths are constantly unfolding, traditional ones are being changed and shifts are taking place in occupation skills and educational requirements. These changes are a result of new technology, changes in organizational design and the trend towards global business operations. With all these changes, you might ask "What is the point of planning ahead by developing a career plan?" The point is to develop a set of career goals, strategy and options based on your interests, personality, values and skills. Once you have a plan, you will be equipped to self-manage your career and take advantage of changes in the economy and job market rather than becoming a victim of change.

Who is Responsible for Your Career?

Your career is totally your responsibility. It is up to you to do the planning and take the necessary actions to obtain the education and training that will support your career plans. However, you can get help. For example, your career advisor or counselor can advise you about

- ◆ your career planning strategy
- ◆ how to find information you need
- ◆ how to get around obstacles
- ◆ how to go about planning your current and long term education and training

Keep in mind, throughout your life, you are the one who must make all the decisions about your career and you must produce the results that support your goals. **It's up to you to control and navigate your own destiny.**

The Importance of Self-Assessment



Understanding yourself is a critical aspect of career and educational exploration and planning. The more you know about your career related interests, values, skills, personality type and preferences, the better equipped you will be to identify the career fields, major areas of study and training programs, and education pathways that are compatible with your personal attributes. The FOCUS 2 system will help you develop an accurate self-assessment of your personal qualities:

Your Work Interests are a reflection of the kinds of work related activities and tasks you most enjoy doing.

Your Values are a description of what is most important to you in your life. For example, you might value earning a lot of money, helping other people, being creative and artistic, having a secure and steady job, etc.

Your Skills are a reflection of your talents and the types of things you easily learn and perform well.

Your Personality Type is a description of how you react to certain situations and people, how you make decisions, how you organize information and go about solving problems.

Your Leisure Time Interests are a reflection of the kinds of leisure related activities you most enjoy doing.

The Big Picture: Your Life Plan



It is a good idea to plan your career based on the big picture, that is, **your life plan**. You must ask yourself, what kind of life do you want to lead? As you can imagine, your career decisions will dramatically impact your lifestyle. Your occupation will determine where you live, your income, your work hours, your travels, job security, your choice of work associates and friends, and how you spend your leisure time.

Questions you need to ask yourself about your life plan are:

What principles am I committed to as a person? i.e. family, security, prestige, accomplishments, etc.

What kinds of experiences do I want in my life? i.e. travel, adventure, cultural, etc.

What personal talents do I want to develop? i.e. music, art, language, communication, intellectual, etc.

How do I like to spend my leisure time? i.e. community services, recreation and sports, travel, etc.

Finally, you must ask yourself whether the **occupational goals and educational avenues** you are considering will be supportive of your **life plan**.

Roles You Play In Your Life

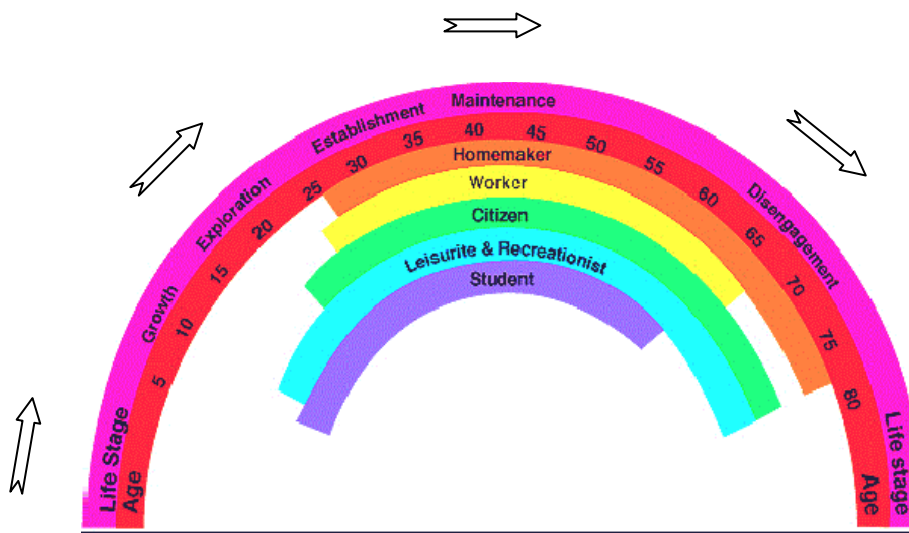


Throughout your entire life, your role as a worker will be interconnected with other roles you play. Examples of roles you might engage in that are affected by your career could include being a homemaker, a community citizen, a student, a recreationist. Your career reaches beyond your role as a wage earner in your chosen occupation. For example, an easy way to see how your career and choice of an occupation affects your future roles is to consider the following scenario. If you were to assume the roles of wage earner, homemaker, and student clearly your occupational income must be sufficient to pay for the expenses incurred in these other roles. Most persons are primarily involved with two or three roles at a given point in time. Which roles you are focusing on depends upon your age and life stage. For example, if you are in college, your principal roles may be as student and recreationist. Later on in life your principle roles may be as worker and homemaker. The point is that throughout your life you will play a combination of work, leisure, study, homemaking and citizen roles that are intermixed. It stands to reason therefore that when you make decisions about your career and your work, you should take into consideration the effect of these career decisions on your other roles.

The Life-Career Rainbow

Refer to the Life-Career Rainbow Chart below to get a better picture of the kind of roles you may play at various Ages and Stages of your career and life.

The two outer arcs of the Life-Career Rainbow show you the Life Stages you may move through during your career and life, and your approximate age in each of these Life Stages. The lower arcs of the Life-Career Rainbow show you the different Roles you may engage in while in different Life Stages and Ages of your career and life.



The Life - Career Rainbow

Source: Super, D. E. & Minor, F. J., (1987) *Career Development Planning in Organizations*. In B. Bass & P. Drenth (Eds.) *Advances in Organizational Psychology, International Review* (pp., 83-98) Sage Press, Beverly Hills, CA. Reproduced by permission of Sage Publications, Inc.

Summing It All Up

Here is how to take the 'Big Picture' into consideration when making career and education plans:

- ◆ **First**, whenever you are making a decision about your choice of an occupation or job, think about which of your options will most likely provide you with self-fulfillment in all your roles, not only in the present, but in the future.
- ◆ **Second**, periodically dust off your career plans, take stock of yourself and what's happening in your life, and then make adjustments in your career as needed. For example, changes in your career field may require that you learn new skills, or changes in your personal interests or values or social or family situations may affect your career aspirations, etc.

Getting Started with Your Career Exploration with the FOCUS 2 System



The FOCUS 2 System guides you through an interactive process enabling you to:

- ◆ Self-Assess your career related Work Interests, Values, Skills, Personality Type and Leisure Time Interests.
- ◆ Broaden your career horizon and discover career fields matching your personal attributes.
- ◆ Decide which career field and majors/training programs are best for you.
- ◆ Plan the career and educational pathway that will support your goals and personal needs.

Why Use the FOCUS 2 System To Plan Your Career?

The FOCUS 2 System is designed for students like you--students who are in the process of making decisions about their future career goals, major area of study, and education. Right now you may be asking yourself questions like these: "What career field is best for me?", "What major area of study should I pursue?", "What level of education should I pursue?" The FOCUS 2 system will help you answer these questions based on your personal attributes, aspirations, needs and preferences. Remember, your career is totally your responsibility. It is up to you to do the planning, take action, self-manage your career and reap the benefits.

Consequences of Not Having a Career Plan

If you choose your major area of study before deciding upon your career goals, you may end up in an educational pathway that does not support your career aspirations. This means you may have to change majors or customize a study program that will support your career goals. In any case, such changes usually result in extra semesters or years in college and extra costs. You can avoid these problems with advance planning with the FOCUS 2 System.

Using FOCUS 2

- Use FOCUS 2 on the Internet on any PC or MAC computer anywhere, anytime of the day.
- Login to FOCUS 2. First time users, complete the self registration page to create a username and password. Continue using that same username and password each time you login to use FOCUS 2.
- FOCUS 2 always saves your results. You can reuse FOCUS 2 as often as you like. You can change your mind about earlier choices and explore new options
- Summary reports of your results are always available.
- Use FOCUS 2 for an hour or more, think about the results, make comparisons, discuss your ideas with others, and then come back and use FOCUS 2 again. You can use FOCUS 2 throughout your college years and as an alumnus.

As a prospective, 1st or 2nd year student: FOCUS 2 will help you select your major and consolidate your career and education goals and plans.

As a Junior, Senior or Alumnus: FOCUS 2 will help you map out your future education needs and employment plans.

Overview of FOCUS 2 for Students

The FOCUS 2 Career & Education Planning System is designed for use by college students. FOCUS 2 is web-based, flexible, interactive and provides valid and reliable research-based career planning services.

On the FOCUS 2 Main Menu

Step 1: Career Readiness:

- ✓ The “**Career Planning Status**” feature will assess your involvement in activities supporting your career and education decision-making.

Step 2: Self-Assessment: FOCUS 2 assesses your interests, values, skills and personality through a series of reliable and valid self assessment instruments.

- ✓ The self assessments will help you to learn about yourself and match your personal strengths and attributes to occupations.
- ✓ Use **Narrow and Refine your Results: See Your Top Career Choices** to:
 - view a refined list of occupations based on a combination of your self assessments
 - see which majors at this college will support your preferred occupations and career path.

Step 3: Career Exploration: Further explore the occupations that match your self-assessments. The extensive FOCUS 2 database includes detailed information on 1200+ different occupations and the educational paths that can lead to those careers. This exploratory process helps you broaden your career horizons. Additional tools enable you to narrow down your options, make decisions about your career and education goals and summarize your results.

- ✓ Use **What Can I Do with a Major In...?** to learn about which occupations will be supported by a major area of study.
- ✓ Compare any 2 occupations side by side.
- ✓ Save, record your questions and rank order the occupations and major choices that appeal most to you.

FOCUS 2 Portfolio: The dynamic FOCUS 2 online portfolio builder automatically summarizes your personal assessment results, your career goals, and education plans. It also consolidates and summarizes your personal achievements and accomplishments. Descriptions of your self assessment results and how

your natural strengths fit into the world of work may be helpful when writing cover letters and preparing for interviews.

Recommended Websites and Resources:

- ✓ Use **Explore the Job Market** to search for jobs and internship opportunities utilizing job boards in various categories including national, state, military, government, industry specific areas and specialty areas

Seeking Expert Advice: Career Counseling



During and also after your usage of the FOCUS 2 Career and Educational Planning System, you may want to meet with a career counselor, coach or advisor.

Be prepared to summarize and ask questions concerning:

- ✓ Your career related interests, values, personality and abilities.
- ✓ Your present occupational, educational and college/training goals and plans.
- ✓ Responsibilities or obstacles that are interfering with your career and college/training decision making.
- ✓ Your life plan, life style desires and your strategy to achieve your goals.

In turn, your career advisor can give you ideas and information to help you:

- ✓ Verify the rationale of your career decisions and education plans.
- ✓ Help your long term educational pathway.
- ✓ Pinpoint your personal development needs that will help you achieve your goals.
- ✓ Formulate strategies and action plans to achieve your career and educational objectives.
- ✓ Suggest ways to get around any obstacles that are interfering with you decision making and planning.



Remember, career exploration and planning involves thinking about which educational and occupational paths will provide you with satisfaction and self fulfillment in all aspects of your life, not only in the present, but in the future.