Fifth Edition

YOUR CAREER

Choices • Chances • Changes
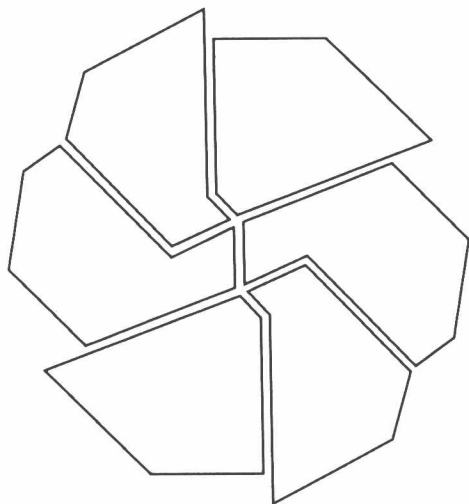
David C. Borchard   John J. Kelly   Nancy Pat K. Weaver

YOUR CAREER
Choices, Chances, Changes

Fifth Edition

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Prince George's Community College

COURSE CALENDAR AND ASSIGNMENTS

SESSION	TOPICS	IN CLASS ACTIVITIES	READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS
ONE	Course and assignment overview Career decision making	Introduction by interview Career Fantasy	
TWO	Self-assessment: Skills/ Achievements	Complete cd, 1d, 2d, 2e, 2f in class Share achievements in small groups Complete MBTI Inventory	Read Chapter 2 (pp 15-19) Complete exercises 2b (pp 20,21,23), and 2c (pp 30-33) Turn in journal entry #1
THREE	Self-assessment: Interests/ Personality	Explain Holland Personality Types Tour of Career Library Review Majors handout and Library Information Project	Read Chapter 4, pp.65-77 Complete exercises 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d (pp 67-77) Turn in proposed Library Information Project Turn in journal entry #2 or 7f
FOUR Sept 15	Majors and careers: Brainstorming	Interpret MBTI scores Share occupational / major ideas with small groups through brainstorming	Turn in journal entry #3 (4f responses, p 83) Read through Majors handout and table 9 (pp 102-104) and circle majors and occupations that correspond to your SDS code
FIVE 22	Majors and careers: Research	Mock Information Interviews Share Library Info Projects	Library Information Project due Turn in journal entry #4 5
SIX R	Decision making: The role of values	Goals Auction Process exercises Complete 6A in class	Read Chapter 6 Complete exercises 6c, 6d, 6e, 6f (pp 117-126) Turn in journal entry #2 4
SEVEN Oct 9	Action and reality testing	Group sharing of Information Interview and Personal Career Profile Resume development Cover Letter Development	Information Interview due Personal Career Profile due Read and bring to class the Resume and Cover Letter handout Entry #5
EIGHT ten	Marketing self: Resumes and interviewing	Continue Resume and Cover Letter Development Interview triads Class evaluations	Bring your Resume and Cover Letter to class

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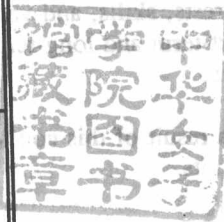
EDUCATION F400
PLANNING A MAJOR / CHOOSING A CAREER

Instructor: Andrea Vanderbush
Phone: 272-5546 or 274-6801 (messages only)
Office Hours: Before and after class or by appointment

COURSE RATIONALE:

Every aspect of our lives entails decision making. Regardless of whether we are choosing an academic major, a career, or what to do on Saturday night, we are forced to make choices daily. The dilemma which many students encounter, is not knowing the best method for making these choices. Many students have not consciously developed a plan that takes into account their skills, values, and interests. By examining these factors systematically, students can effectively determine the suitability of an academic major and career options.

This course is designed for individuals who desire to learn effective methods for choosing a major and making career-related decisions. Students will learn how to set goals and formulate plans which will bring their targets to reality. We begin the process by focusing on skills which you currently possess as well as those you desire to acquire. You will learn to identify interests, skills, and values in order to effectively explore academic and professional options. You will learn how to plan for short-term and long-term goals involved in academic major and career choices, and learn necessary steps to implement these plans.

As a result of this course you will gain the necessary tools to assist you in making positive choices about educational and career pursuits.

GOALS:

As a result of active participation in this class, the students will be able:

> To identify interests, personal values and skills based upon self-assessment exercises.

> To locate resources and utilize a variety of occupational information related to academic majors and careers.

> To develop and implement a plan of action targeting an academic major(s) and career alternatives through integration of self-assessment and researched information.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

* Read the required textbook assignments.
* Actively participate in class activities and shared readings.
* Attend classes regularly and be punctual.
* Adhere to due dates for weekly assignments.
* Turn in weekly journal entries.

GRADING SYSTEM:

> This is a Satisfactory/Fail course. All the assignments must be completed on due dates for a passing grade. The assignments are developed in a sequential order. At the beginning of the class period each assignment will be collected. The grade will be based upon the completion of 7 assignments, the journal entries, and attendance.

Contributor

Mary M. Greene

Acknowledgments

Illustrations

Introduction for Career Choosers

Searching for a satisfying career may very well be a source of frustration. You may long for a change, but simultaneously feel overwhelmed by the career-choice process.

Your Career: Choices, Chances, Changes offers a solution to this common dilemma. Using a simple but thorough decision-making model, we show you how to take charge of your life and career. You will progress through the chapters, taking small manageable steps supported by explanation, examples, and practical exercises. You will be examining not only your attitudes toward choosing a career, but also your natural talents, values, personality style, wants, and needs in relation to your career choice. You will be exploring the world of work, developing alternatives, setting goals, and making plans while learning an effective, reusable decision-making process. The exercises will give you a chance to personalize the process, making it relevant to your unique life.

You are likely to find this process helpful if you include yourself in any of the following groups:

1. People entering college who need to clarify their career objectives before choosing their academic program.
2. College students who have become disenchanted with their current academic program and career goals.
3. Women preparing to make a transition from homemaker to college student and/or salaried employee.
4. People preparing for a first career.
5. People dissatisfied with their present type of work or career who wish to make a change for the better.
6. Midlife career changers seeking more satisfaction in their careers.

This workbook is not intended for people under pressure to make an immediate job or career change. You need to be willing to commit a significant amount of time, energy, introspection, and effort to career planning and decision making.

We've selected a workbook format to make this material more readily understandable. Please don't just read the book from cover to cover like a novel. Feel free to make notes in it. For best results, do only a small amount in the workbook at any one sitting. Give yourself plenty of time to think about both the material and yourself. Read some, do some exercises, put it down for awhile, and then come back to it later. Take whatever amount of time you feel is necessary to complete the process and reach decisions that make sense for you.

The workbook may be used by individuals either working alone or working together in a career course or support group. However, we believe that you will obtain maximum benefit from doing the work with others. Many of the exercises work best when they are discussed with others so that you have the opportunity to obtain feedback. If you are unable to join a course, consider starting your own group. Of course, doing the workbook on your own is preferable to doing nothing at all, especially if you are highly motivated.

The primary outcomes you will achieve by completing this workbook are:

1. Gaining familiarity and practice with the skills essential in career/life decision making.
2. Discovering your most fulfilling natural talents and understanding how these are transferable to the world of work.
3. Identifying what it takes for you individually to experience satisfaction in your career.
4. Assessing in general terms, where in the world of work you would most like to contribute your unique natural talents and skills.
5. Becoming familiar with the primary sources of occupational information and knowing how to use these resources to develop and assess your career alternatives.

6. Developing lifestyle goals with which to guide your career and learning plans.
7. Learning how to develop action plans for achieving your career objectives.
8. Becoming a more perceptive and skillful problem solver in matters affecting your career over the years.

The following additional resources will be helpful as you complete the workbook:

The Self-Directed Search (SDS) by John L. Holland

or

The Strong Interest Inventory (SII).

and a college career center or public library.

The SDS or SII can be obtained from most college career centers, and both sources add worthwhile information to the chapter on personality styles. A college career center and/or a public library contain occupational resources helpful in developing your list of alternatives and researching careers.

Completing this workbook will not automatically get you a job. But you will become a far more effective job seeker by learning how to make decisions, set goals, and make plans. Although the material is presented in the context of a career decision, you can apply much of what you learn to life situations in general.

Introduction for Facilitators, Instructors, or Counselors

While this workbook was developed especially for the one-semester course at Prince George's Community College, it is easily modified to other timeframes and formats. We have found that individual sessions lasting less than 75 minutes are too short. The best structure seems to be 15 to 20 sessions, each three hours long.

Even more important than the time format is the training and preparation of the facilitator/instructor/counselor. This taking-charge process is best facilitated by individuals with good counseling skills. They should be empathetic listeners who will simultaneously offer support while encouraging independence. They should be effective role models for the career-choice process as well. In addition to these skills, adequate training and preparation are absolute essentials. The two-week Life/Work Planning course, conducted each summer by Richard N. Bolles* of the National Career Development Project is especially helpful as preparatory training for potential career-development instructors and counselors. We also highly recommend that, in addition to taking a career-development course, you complete this workbook process entirely before using it to counsel or teach others.

We developed the rational decision-making process in this workbook over several semesters. Most people agree that a rational decision-making process is preferable to random choice. However, many people have attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and biases that undermine their rational thinking. Many individuals resist introspection and find making changes in their lives threatening. For this reason, the course or group facilitator should be prepared to deal with people's emotions as an integral part of the rational decision-making process. Specifically, we suggest allowing time during sessions for participants to share their feelings in an open, accepting environment. In addition, meeting with individual participants outside the regular sessions is helpful. With these supports, the resistance, fear, and confusion characterizing the process of change can be overcome. Observing participants overcome these obstacles and triumphantly take charge of their lives has been our greatest reward.
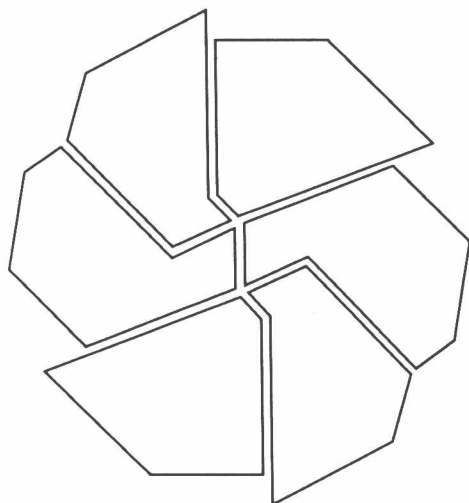

*For further information, contact:

Richard N. Bolles
National Career
Development Project
P.O. Box 379
Walnut Creek, California 94596

Contents

Chapter 1

Making Decisions About Life and Career

What most people want out of life, more than anything else, is the opportunity to make choices.
David P. Campbell, *If You Don't Know Where You're Going, You'll Probably End Up Somewhere Else*

- Do you know people who don't know how or refuse to make decisions?
- Do you know people who make small decisions easily but panic over those that affect their careers or lives?
- Do you know people who have gotten into their careers more by accident than by planning and preparation?
- Do you know people who hang onto jobs they hate just for "security"?

If so, you know people who have settled for less freedom and a lower quality of life either because they didn't know how to make decisions or because they were unwilling to make difficult choices.

Why Work?

Would you work if you didn't have to? Many people asked this question say something like . . ."Of course not, do you think I'm crazy or something?" Where do we get our attitudes about work, and why are they often negative? Is work really the curse of original sin, or can there be other more positive justifications for it? And if work is a burden, why do so many actually love their jobs? Since this is a career-planning rather than a philosophy textbook, we won't dwell on these questions in depth. We do think it is important, however, to examine deeply rooted beliefs about work at the outset of your career-planning process. Seeing work in a negative light will adversely affect how you go about the decision making process. Can you really get very excited about choosing something that you aren't optimistic about? If, on the other hand, you are excited about your options and the opportunities they can bring to your life, you are going to be much more invested in the decision making process.

We feel confident that by the time you finish this book you are going to be very optimistic about the role that work can play in your life. We suggest that you think of work as providing golden opportunities in your life. Work might, for example, provide you with an opportunity to test yourself in the world, to grow and develop in the way you have only dared to dream about, to make a contribution, or to use your talents in productive ways. There are many different kinds of work available, and people work for many different reasons. Friedman and Havighurst have identified five basic roles that work fills in peoples lives:

1. *Income*—maintaining a minimum sustenance level and achieving some higher standard of living.
2. *Expenditure of time and energy*—providing something to do or a way of passing time.
3. *Identity and status*—a source of self-respect and a way of achieving recognition from others.

4. *Association*— a way of having friendships, peer group relations, and authority relationships.
5. *A source of meaning in life*—a way of obtaining purpose and meaning in life through service to others, creativity, self-expression, and having new experiences.[1]

While Friedman and Havighurst certainly have not covered all the reasons for why people work, they do show that we work for a variety of motivations. It is important to realize that while there are kinds of work that each of us would dislike and/or not do well, there are also kinds of work that we could fully enjoy and even thrive in. The kind of work that fits us depends upon who we are. We are all different. We have different finger prints and different interests. We are also uniquely talented. Fortunately, there are many different kinds of work available now, and there will be even more in the future.

Your challenge is to discover exactly how you are uniquely gifted and what kinds of work match your particular talents. That is what this book is all about. This is a book about career planning and decision making. It is about helping you become an excellent personal decision maker because the decisions you make about your career and your life are going to determine the quality of your future. We want everyone who picks up this book to know themselves, to become aware of the many interesting opportunities available to them, and to make life-satisfying decisions. We want you to have a great future and to contribute your energies and talents to a bright future for planet Earth.

Exercise 1–A How Would You Spend Your Time If You Didn't Have to Work?

Although many people say they work only because they have to, most of us work for other reasons as well. In fact, most people would work even if they didn't have to. To test that assumption for yourself, do the following exercise.

Because fantasy can be a very beneficial process to help clarify your work and career objectives, this exercise requires that you draw upon your imagination. At the time of this writing, the largest state lottery winning that we are aware of was for seventy million dollars. Your task is to imagine that you just won that amount. Now that you are an imaginary millionaire, consider what you would spend your time doing:

The first day:

The first week:

The first month:

The first year:

The first five years:

The first ten years:

What are some of the really important things you would do with your life?

What role, if any, would work have in your life if you did not have to do it for a living? Would being a millionaire change your view about work?

What Is Career Planning?

Many people equate career planning with choosing a major in school, getting a job, or getting into a different occupation. After that decision, they hope that the rest of their work lives will just fall into place. Others see career planning as basically a strategy leading to the best paying job, regardless of what that job is.

Career planning is actually a proven step-by-step process to help you identify and pursue your most personally fulfilling career possibilities. Keep in mind that even though economic changes and geographical location may appear to narrow your options, the world of work is huge and ever changing. Whether you are motivated by material success or by entirely different values, your best approach is to find the work you enjoy the most and can perform the best.

Your career planning begins by learning about yourself, particularly those traits and skills that relate directly to career selection. Once you have accomplished this, it is relatively easy to translate the structured self-knowledge into a few appropriate work options. And that is what this workbook is designed to help you accomplish. Before jumping directly into the career decision-making process itself, let's consider what a career is.

What Is a Career?

How do you think of a career? Perhaps the idea of career brings a role model to mind. Is there someone who comes to mind when you think about having a career? Is identification with that person primarily a positive or a negative one? Perhaps your career role model is that of a parent, a spouse, or someone you greatly admire. One of the authors of this text thinks of Swiss psychiatrist Dr. Carl Jung as an ideal career pattern while another thinks of the poet Robert Frost and the third identifies with opera singer Harolyn Blackwell.

Career is a term often misunderstood. Ask ten different people to define *career,* and you'll probably get ten different answers. Many people think the term *career* and *job* are synonymous. We don't. Your *career* is broader and more general than your job. A job is a specific agreement with an employer to perform assigned tasks for pay. Having a career, on the other hand, implies that you have prepared for and are building a job history in a particular field. Your career determines what kinds of work you will do and not do as well as what kinds of jobs you will seek, accept, and be qualified for.

Most dictionaries define *career* as something like "one's progress through life, or one's advancement or achievement in a particular vocation." In this broad sense, your career begins at birth, could possibly end with retirement, but is over only at death. From your earliest days, you get career-related messages from your family and environment. As a child you begin developing behavior patterns, personality styles, attitudes, interest patterns, and skills that strongly shape the course of your career. While these experiences influence the early stages of your career, they do not determine it for the rest of your life. People change as they get older. With development, people undergo physical and psychological changes that influence their needs and career goals. These personal changes, combined with shifts in the economy, often lead to unanticipated career changes.

Career and Self-Concept

As we develop, we acquire an image of ourselves, a self-concept. Most of us are not even consciously aware of our self-concept, but it is reflected in our actions. Accordingly, we try to seek jobs and build careers that are compatible with this image. For example, people who see themselves as being neat, well-organized, and good with numbers may seek careers as accountants. Others who see themselves as intellectuals are apt to seek professions that feature mental concentration. Those who enjoy nurturing may seek careers as parents, social workers, or counselors.

This method of essentially unconscious career selection seems to work fine for a few but, unfortunately, not for most of us. The problem is that our self-concept may be an inaccurate reflection of our real preferences and skills, or we may lack self-confidence. From an early age, our self-concepts begin developing in response to what we hear our parents and elders say about us, such as "Isn't she just the perfect little mother," or "He's precise just like his father" (when Father is a lawyer), or "He's going to be a super athlete," or "She has a mind like a wizard." People who make such biased observations, either negative or positive, may have excessive influence in shaping our self-image.
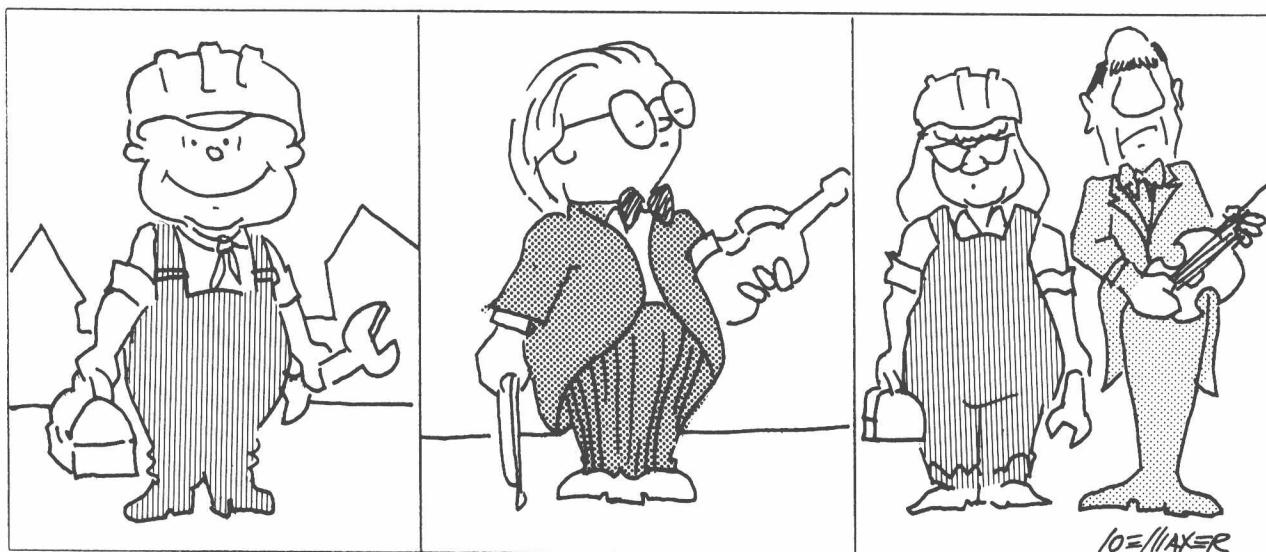
How Seymore's father saw him   How Seymore's mother saw him   Seymore's mother and father

Fortunately, your self-concept can change over time. By taking a more deliberate systematic approach to determining your skills, personal traits, preferences, needs, and values, you can bring your self-image into line with your true abilities and desires. You can also greatly enhance your self-confidence by knowing what you are particularly good at and what you can achieve with your talents and abilities. The payoff for an accurate self-concept can be tremendous. It can guide you through appropriate job and career changes, make you more resilient in dealing with life's frustrations, and guide you to authentic success, security in yourself, and satisfaction with your life and work.

1. In almost every high-school scene, you can observe numerous unofficial groupings of students, such as the athletes (jocks), the scholars (brains), the leaders, the losers, the punks, the preppies, the squares, the hippies, the neat dressers, etc. Make a listing of all of the groups you can recall from your own high-school days, using your own labels.

2. It is possible to see the various types of self-concepts in a high-school setting by observing the differences in these unofficial groupings of students. Describe some of the attributes that you remember from three or four of the groupings you identified in item 1.

Group   *Attributes*

3. Which group from item 1 did you most identify with? Describe the attributes (self-concepts) of that group as fully as you can.

4. Which of these attributes you identified in item 3 do you see as being similar to your view of yourself? If you are aware of any other individual attributes, add these to the list.

5. Review the attributes of your self-concept above. Can you see any ways in which your self-concept might have influenced your life or choices so far?