## **User Guide**

# IN SEARCH OF A COLLEGE MAJOR AND CAREER DIRECTION



## By Susan B. Posluszny, MA, NCC

© 2010 by Susan B. Posluszny, MA, NCC. Published by JIST Works, an imprint of JIST Publishing, Inc., 7321 Shadeland Station, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46256-3923. Phone: 800-648-JIST, Fax: 800-JIST-FAX, E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@jist.com">info@jist.com</a>. Web site: <a href="www.jist.com">www.jist.com</a>. All rights reserved. Duplication of this document is permitted for internal distribution to staff using In Search of a College Major and Career Direction. No other use is permitted without written permission from the publisher. For other career-related videos, assessments, and books, request a JIST catalog by calling 800-648-JIST or visiting www.jist.com.

## To the teens and young adults going through this program:

Before viewing the DVD, print a copy of this user guide and have it in front of you, along with a pen or pencil, so you can follow the video one segment at a time. This user guide contains highlights from each segment along with activities for you to complete. Use the pause button on your media player to stop the video and complete the activities as directed. I suggest going through the program two or three segments at a time and completing the full program within one week.



#### IN SEARCH OF A COLLEGE MAJOR AND CAREER DIRECTION

Through the DVD's main menu, you can go directly to a specific video segment or stop and replay or restart a segment. The DVD segments will play in the following order:

- 1. Introduction
- 2. You've Got the Power
- 3. Major Decisions
- 4. The College Major and Career Connection
- 5. Major Myths and Tips
- 6. Rate the College Career Center

There's an exciting world of college major and career possibilities out there. My goal in developing this program is to guide you in making decisions that are right for you and your future.

When you're ready, pop in the DVD and let's get started!

#### 1 – INTRODUCTION

Our ever-changing high-tech world offers a wide variety of exciting career possibilities to students as they prepare to enter the work force. The same is true with college majors—the choices seem endless. With so many options, how do you even begin to make your way?

When you don't know where you are headed, resources like a map or compass help you make your way. This program will take you through a step-by-step process so you can create your own personal road map to guide you as you move forward.



#### AS A RESULT OF GOING THROUGH THIS PROGRAM...

- ... you will be able to identify your interests, questions, and needs related to choice of a college major and career direction.
- ... you will learn about the college major and career decision-making process.
- ...you will get information and tools to support you in taking action towards a direction of your own choosing.

#### 2 - YOU'VE GOT THE POWER

What things are you doing when you lose track of time or you're 'in the zone'?



- What are you doing when you feel that life is good?
- What do you enjoy learning about?
- Describe what you have enjoyed most about the following (be specific):
  - > Jobs
  - Sports
  - Volunteer activities
  - School-related clubs and activities
  - Community and church organizations
  - > Favorite free time activities.
- If you could do any job imaginable, with nothing holding you back, what would you pick (and why)?

•	Fill in the blank: "I absolutely love to doif I could have a job related to this passion!"	It would be really cool
	WHAT GIVES YOU A POWER BOOST? Did any interests pop up again and again?	
•	Which interests are you most passionate about?	
•	How many career possibilities can you name that relate to List ideas below or on a blank sheet of paper. You can include Brainstorming Results:	<del>7</del>
For a writter activiti hobbid the black	ER BOOST LOG certain period of time—say, for one week—pay attention to a summary of what you are doing when you are enjoying you lies from any part of your day, including those done at a job, es, and free time. You can also keep track of what gives you ank space below to start your Power Boost Log or, better ye to keep track of what gives you a Power Boost and a Power	urself most. This can include volunteer experiences, a Power Drain. You can use t, get a small notebook and
Suria	ay	
Mond	ay	
Tueso	day	
Wedn	esday	
Thurs	sday	
Frida	y	
Satur	day	



#### 3 - MAJOR DECISIONS

Read the statement below and circle whether you think the statement is true or false. The correct answer will be revealed in the video.

Someone who has decided on a college major is also career focused.

True or False?

Research studies show...

- Up to 80 percent of entering college students say they're not certain about their choice of a college major even if they initially declared a major.
- Up to 50 percent of college students change their major at least once prior to graduation, with some changing their major more than once.

Based on research conducted by Penn State and other institutions as reported by Penn State.

There are many ways to approach selecting a college major. Here are three to get you started.

#### . WHY AM I GOING TO COLLEGE?

What are your reasons for going to college? Usually, there's more than one reason why students go to college. List all that are true for you.

What are you looking to get out of your college experience? List all the thoughts that come to you.

How might your answers impact your choice of a college major? If you're not sure, you can talk this through with a friend, relative, or concerned adult for input.

### II. WHAT ARE MY TOP FAVORITE COLLEGE MAJORS?

Look over the following list of college majors and mark a number in front of each one as follows:

- 1 = High-interest majors
- 2 = Medium-interest majors Low- or no-interest majors (leave blank)

You can also try using two colored highlighters to mark each career interest—one color for high-interest majors and a second color for medium-interest majors.

One final thing before you start: If you think of a subject or major that interests you but you can't find it on this list; feel free to add it.

Accounting	Advertising
Agriculture	Animal Science
Animation	Archeology
Architecture	Art
Art History	Art Therapy
Atmospheric Science	Automotive
Aviation	Biochemistry
Biology	Business Administration
Chemistry	Chiropractic
Computer Science	Construction (and Building Technology)
Counseling	Crafts and Artisanry
Criminal Justice	Culinary Arts
Dance	Dental Hygienist/Dental Assistant
Earth Science	Economics
Education	Engineering
English	Entertainment
Environmental Science	Fashion Design/Merchandising
Finance	Fire Protection and Security
Foreign Languages	Forestry
Geography	Geology
Graphic Design	Health Administration
Health Information Management	History
Hospitality	Human Resource Management
Information Technology	Interior Design
Journalism	Library Science
Management	Marketing/Sales
Mass Communications	Mathematics
Media Production	Medical Assistant
Medical Technology	Ministry and Church Administration
Multicultural/Ethnic Studies	Music
Nursing	Nutrition and Dietetics
Occupational Therapy	Oceanography
Paralegal	Peace and Conflict Studies
Pharmacy	Philosophy
Photography	Physical Health/Fitness
Physical Therapy	Physics
Plant and Soil Science	Political Science and Government
Pre-Dental	Pre-Law
Pre-Med	Pre-Vet
Production or Business Production	Psychology
Radio, TV, and Film	Recreation Therapy
Religious Studies/Theology	Social Work
Sociology	Speech/Language Pathology and Audiology
Sports Management	Sports Science
Sports, Recreation, and Leisure	Statistics

<ul><li>Surveying and Mapping</li><li>Transportation</li><li>Web Design and Development</li><li>Writing</li></ul>	Theatre Travel and Tourism Women's Studies Zoology
out of this group. Next, list these top five	th a number one and select your top five majors majors in order from most to least favorite. When d give special consideration to these top five st Power Boost.
FAVORITE COLLEGE MAJORS	
1.	
2.	
<u>3.</u>	
<u>4.</u>	
<u>5.</u>	
III. WHAT ARE MY TOP FAVORITE	CAREER INTERESTS?
	ities and place either the number 1 or number 2 in front jors. (Again, you can also use highlighters if that works nk)
list, feel free to add them to this list, including	have some career interests that you can't find on this go ideas that came to you through the Power Boost hat you really want even if you're not sure you can do it
<ul> <li>Accountant/Auditor</li> <li>Acupuncturist</li> <li>Administrative Services Manager</li> <li>Air Conditioning Mechanic</li> <li>Air Traffic Controller</li> <li>Anesthesiologist</li> <li>Anthropologist</li> <li>Appraiser, Real Estate</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Actor</li> <li>Administrative Assistant</li> <li>Advertising and Promotion Manager</li> <li>Aircraft Engine Mechanic</li> <li>Alternative Energy Specialist</li> <li>Animal Trainer</li> <li>Antique Expert or Dealer</li> <li>Architect</li> </ul>

Art Director	Art, Drama, or Music Teacher
Artist	Art Restorer
Astronomer	Athletic Trainer
Auctioneer	Automobile Sales Worker
Automotive, Body, or Engine Worker	Baker
Barber/Hairdresser	Bartender
Benefits Manager	Biological Scientist
Brickmason	Broadcast News Analyst
Budget Analyst	Building Inspector
Business Owner	Buyer
Camera Operator—TV, Video, Movie	Career Counselor
Carpenter	Cartographer
Cartoonist	Casting Director
Chef	Chemist
Chiropractor	Choreographer
City Manager	Civil Engineer
Clinical Laboratory Technologist	Coach
College Professor	Comedian
Composer	Computer Fraud Investigator
Computer Game Designer	Computer Operator
Computer Programmer	Computer Software Designer
Computer Support Specialist	Conservation Scientist
Construction Manager	Consultant
Copy Writer	Cosmetologist
Cost Estimator	Counselor/Therapist
Court Reporter	Creative Writer
Critic	Cruise Director
Customer Service Representative	Customs Inspector
Dancer	Database Administrator
Data Entry and Information Processing	Data Processing Equipment Repairer
Dental Assistant	Dental Hygienist
Dentist	Designer
Dietician	Dining Room/Cafeteria Attendant
Director, Performing Arts	Dispatcher, Police, Fire, Ambulance
Editor, Book	Editor, News (Reporter)
Education Administrator (School/College)	
Electrical and Electronic Assembler	Electrical Power-Line Repairer
Electrician	Emergency Medical Technician
Engineer	Entertainer
Environmental Scientist and Geoscientist	Event Planner
Executive	Farmer
Farm Manager	Fashion Designer
Film/Video Producer	Financial Manager
Financial Planner	
	Fire Fighter
Fire Fighting and Prevention Supervisor Florist	Flight Attendant
<del></del>	Food Service Manager
Forensic Specialist	Fundraiser
Funeral Director	Geographer
Geologist	Graphic Designer
Hazardous Waste Technician	Health Services Manager
Historian	Horticulturist

_	Hospital Administrator		Hotel Manager
	Housekeeping Supervisor		Housing Director
	Insurance Adjuster, Examiner, Investigator		Insurance Underwriter
	Intelligence Agent		Interior Designer
	Interpreter and Translator		Inventor
	Investigator		Investment Broker
_	Jeweler		Journalist
_	Judge		Laboratory Technician
_	Landscape Specialist		Lawn Service Manager
-	Lawyer		Librarian
-	Loan Officer		Lyricist
-	Machinist		Management Analyst
-	Management Consultant		Manufacturing Production Supervisor
	Manufacturing Production Worker		Marketing, Advertising Manager
	Mathematician		Math Teacher
	Media Production Specialist		Mediator/Conflict Resolution
-	Medical and Health Service Manager		Medical Assistant
-	Medical Records Technician		Midwife
-	Military Personnel		Mind/Body Health Practitioner
-	Model		Museum Curator
-	Musical Instrument Repairer and Tuner		Music Arranger and Orchestrator
-	Musician		Nurse
-	Nurse Practitioner		Nutritionist
-	Occupational Therapist		Office Manager
-	Optician		Paralegal
-	Park Naturalist	_	Personnel Recruiter
-	Pharmacist		Photographer
	Physical Therapist		Physician
	Physician Assistant		Playwright
-	Plumber		Poet
-	Police Officer/Detective		Politician
-	Probation and Parole Officer		Professional Athlete
-	Program Designer		Psychiatrist
-	Psychologist		Public Relations Specialist
-	Purchasing Agent		Purchasing Manager
-	Radiological Technologist or Technician	_	Real Estate Appraiser
-	Real Estate Developer		Recreational Therapist
-	Registered Nurse		Rehabilitation Worker
-	Reporter		Research Analyst
-	Respiratory Therapist	_	Restaurant Manager/Owner
-	Retail Store Manager	_	Roofer
-	Netall Store Manager Safety Inspector		Sales Manager
-	Sales Representative		Security Guard
-	<ul><li>Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Coordinato</li></ul>	-	
-	Social Worker		Special Projects Developer
-	Social Worker Speech-Language Pathologist		Spiritual/Religious Leader
-	Speech-Language Famologist Statistician		Strategic Planner
-	Statistician Surgeon		Surgical Technologist
-	Surveyor		Systems Analyst
-	Surveyor Talent Director		_ Systems Analyst _ Tax Accountant
-	Talent Director Tax Examiner		Teachers' Assistant
_	I an Lnaiiiiidi		i cacilcia Maalatatt

#### **Compare Results from All Completed Activities**

Compare your top ten career interests to your top five favorite majors and to your Power Boost results. Do you notice any interests popping up over and over again or do your interests seem to lean towards certain areas?

#### 4 - THE COLLEGE MAJOR AND CAREER CONNECTION

Read the multiple-choice questions below and circle your answer for each one. The correct answers will be revealed in the video.

- 1. To obtain work as a Registered Nurse, you should major in:
  - a. Biology
  - b. Nursing
  - c. English
  - d. Any of the above
- 2. To obtain work as a Sportscaster, you should major in:
  - a. Communications
  - b. History
  - c. Psychology
  - d. Any of the above

#### **Required or Flexible Choices?**

To decide on the best college major for you that's in line with your favorite career interests, you will want to answer the following question:

Is a specific college major required for any of my top favorite career interests, or do I have flexibility with choice of a college major?

Doing some digging to answer this question can get tricky, so be sure to get some support when you need it (from a school counselor, career professional, or other concerned adult).

#### The Big Picture and Building a Bridge

Here's a quote that will help you think of the big picture when making career planning decisions.

The average college grad changes jobs once every three years and changes career fields two to three times in a lifetime.

The United States Department of Labor



When you've chosen your top career interest, your next step will be to figure out the answers to these questions:

- Where am I now when it comes to my number one favorite career interest?
- What will it take to get me actually working in this career?
- What's going to help me build a bridge to take me from where I am now to where I want to be?

#### **BUILDING A BRIDGE**

Students can use a combination of academic coursework, study abroad, service learning, volunteer experiences, extracurricular activities, internships, co-ops, and employment experiences to help them simultaneously explore and prepare for their top areas of interest.

You don't have to pick just one career interest. Keeping in mind the Department of Labor quote, you might decide that you would like to experiment with more than one career interest and build two or three bridges instead of one.

#### THE CAREER AND COLLEGE MAJOR DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- 1. First, gain more self-knowledge about your interests, skills, personality, and values.
- 2. Next, identify, explore, and experience top career areas of interest.
- 3. Determine entrance requirements (including college major requirements) for your top career interests.

## PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER: WHAT'S YOUR CURRENT COLLEGE MAJOR AND CAREER STATUS?

#### College Major

•	Which of the following best describes your current situation for deciding on a college major?
	I am certain about my chosen college major, which is
	I have a few ideas, but need more time and/or help understanding my options.
	I keep changing my mind about choice of college major.
	I am totally confused about my college major choice.

 What questions do you have related to choosing a college major or what would you like to know about college majors that you don't yet know?

#### **Career Direction**

•	What career possibilities interest you most? (List them here and include ideas that came from
	the activities you've completed through this program.)

- Is a specific college major required for any of your top career interests, or do you have flexibility with choice of a college major?
- What questions do you have about your career interest areas? What are some examples of things you could do to build one or more bridges toward your career interests—to experiment with them by experiencing them directly?

#### **College Major and Career Needs**

- Based on what you've written on this form, what are your current career development needs?
  - □ I need help deciding on a college major
  - ☐ I need help figuring out or narrowing my career interests
  - □ I need help learning about and experiencing my career interests
  - ☐ I need help figuring out how to overcome obstacle(s) to my career interest(s)
- Have you ever completed any career assessments or worked with a career counselor/advisor (not including this program)? Yes

If yes, do you still have copies of the materials and handouts received? You can store these results in a folder along with materials from this program and bring all these materials with you to future meetings with a counselor/career professional at your school or elsewhere.



## 5 - Major Myths and Tips

Myth or Fact?

Read the statements below and decide whether you think each one is a myth or a fact (circle your answer for each). Follow along with the video and the correct answer for each statement will be revealed.

1. In today's economy, a college degree is the ticket to a great job.

MYTH OR FACT?

2. There are many ways to approach picking a college major. An approach to avoid is selecting a major because of high job market demand.

**MYTH OR FACT?** 

3. Exploring the connection between college majors and careers reveals that picking a major and picking a career are the same thing.

**MYTH OR FACT?** 

4. It's important to take your time when picking a college major because the major you pick now will determine your lifelong career.

**MYTH OR FACT?** 

5. Campus activities, including social and recreational activities, count as experience for future career development.

**MYTH OR FACT?** 

6. For added insurance against a tight job market, earn a double (or triple) major to make you more marketable.

**MYTH OR FACT?** 

#### **MAJOR TIPS**

Here are some college major selection tips. Circle and follow the tips that will support you.

✓ "If I'm uncertain about what major to select, I can enter college without declaring a major."

It's perfectly acceptable to list your major as "To be declared" when entering college. Many colleges offer special programs for students who are still deciding about a college major. The next and final segment of this program will introduce you to college and university career centers so you can match your needs to services offered, including support with choosing a college major.

✓ "So I don't feel rushed to make a decision, I can find out if there's a deadline for declaring any of the majors that interest me."

It's common for college students to have until sophomore year to declare a college major. Exceptions would be majors that are jam-packed with course requirements and prerequisites. Check with a college career professional or academic advisor about deadlines for declaring the majors you're considering.

✓ "Until I declare a major, I can take core academic requirements."

It's common for colleges and universities to have course requirements that all students must take. You can begin with core requirements and then take additional classes to explore majors you're considering.

✓ "I can check out the option of a double major or a minor to give me a strong background in a second area of study."

There may be a possibility (depending on the majors you're considering) that you can select a double major or a minor in a second area of study. Some college majors are packed with course requirements, so there may be little or no room for a second major or a minor. If you are debating between two majors, you may be able to major in both or major in one area and minor in the second area of interest.

- ✓ "I will find out if any of my top career interests require a strict academic major."

  Once you have identified your top favorite career interests, you can do some digging to find out whether or not your interests have strict college major requirements. I reviewed this topic earlier in this program, so you may have already figured this out. This type of research can get really tricky, so be sure to get support if you need it.
- ✓ "I will explore and prepare for my career interests beyond the classroom."

  There are many ways to explore your career interests, including through reading, through speaking with those employed in areas of interest to you, and through related hands-on experiences. One more time (it did sink in, right?!): You can use a combination of coursework, service learning, volunteer experiences, extracurricular activities, job shadowing, co-ops, internships, and part-time or summer employment experiences to simultaneously learn about and prepare for your top career areas of interest. Do not expect or rely on your college to take care of this bridge-building for you. Believe me—you have what it takes to pursue and obtain these experiences for yourself!
- ✓ "I will select some college activities just for the fun of it!"

  Career development is also about striking a balance between work and fun. Taking time away from school and work is important for your health and attitude, so check out the campus student activities schedule and have a blast!

#### 6 - RATE THE COLLEGE CAREER CENTER

College and university career centers have way more to offer than most people realize. (The same is true of high school career services and career centers in general.) Here's the scoop:

- College career centers are valuable.
- Services vary from one campus to another.
- Services are for ALL years: freshman through senior.
- Services are for ALL majors: business, engineering, nursing, art, history, psychology, and so on.
  - They do not place you in jobs.



#### **BOTTOM LINE**

No one will take care of your career or college major needs for you. It's up to you to check out what a campus career center has to offer and to take advantage of their services.

#### **How Do You Rate a Career Center?**

You can use the questions in this section to evaluate a college career center, or any career center, for that matter. (Note: The focus here is on college and university career centers; however, you can use these questions with other organizations that provide career services, including high schools.) Use it to determine which career services or resources will best meet your needs.

Print one copy of the evaluation for each career center you check out. You can make notes about what you learn on each copy.

#### RATING A CAREER CENTER

HOW WILL YOU CONTACT OR LEARN ABOUT THE CAREER CENTER?

#### THROUGH THEIR WEB SITE (Center's Web address):

**Note:** The Career Center's Web site is linked from the main site for the school/organization. If you have difficulty finding it, seek support from counselors, teachers, or relatives.)

BY PHONE (Center's phone number):

TODAY'S DATE:

NAME OF THE SCHOOL OR CAREER PROGRAM:

#### QUESTIONS TO GET ANSWERED DEPENDING ON YOUR NEEDS:

#### I need help deciding on a college major.

□ Do you offer any special programs or services for students who have not yet decided on a college major? If the answer is yes, ask the person about the programs and services.

I need help fi	guring out or narrowing my career interests.
	Do you offer any of the following career assessments for students? (Circle those offered.)
	<ul> <li>Career interest assessment (to help me figure out what I like)?</li> <li>Personality type test (to help me figure out my natural preferences)?</li> <li>Skills assessment (to help me figure out what activities I enjoy)?</li> <li>Values clarification activity (to help me figure out what is important to me)?</li> <li>Other?</li> <li>Which of the following do you offer? (Circle those offered.)</li> <li>Individual career counseling sessions where a student meets directly with a member of your staff</li> <li>A workshop to support a group of students at one time</li> <li>A career development course for credit</li> </ul>
	Online career development support (with or without career staff support)
I need help le	Other:  earning about and experiencing my career interests.  Do you have a career library with books on a wide variety of career interest areas?  Does your center's Web site offer links to help students learn about their career interests?  List links:
	What services do you offer to support hands-on learning (internships, co-ops, or volunteer or paid work positions related to student career interests)? Do students need to arrange their own hands-on experiences, or do you provide support with this? If you provide support, do you contact employers to arrange interviews and placement in these positions, or do students have to contact employers on their own?
051	
GEN	<b>ERAL QUESTIONS FOR A CAREER CENTER</b> Do you have a brochure or Web page that lists all the career services you offer your students?
	Can you recommend other Web sites that might be helpful? List links to check out.
	What services do you provide related to job search practices (resume/cover letter development support, interview skills training, job search strategy training, job fairs, and so on)? Describe.
	Do you offer individual career counseling sessions (or any other services) to help students explore how to overcome obstacles to their career interests? What are some examples of obstacles that your students face?

What did you like least about what they offered?

In Search of a College Major and Career Direction User Guide

On a scale of 1–5, with 1 being great and 5 being poor, rate this career center.

(CIRCLE YOUR SCORE)

1 2 3 4

## YOU DID IT! You've completed this program. Great job!!

You can go back and review all or part of this program over the coming months until you no longer need it. Hold on to this completed guide for future reference. Bring it to future meetings with a school counselor or career professional.

#### AS A RESULT OF COMPLETING THIS PROGRAM

- You have identified your interests, questions, and needs related to choice of a college major and career direction.
- You have learned about the college major and career decision-making process.
- You have obtained information and tools to support you in taking action toward a direction of your own choosing.

# Don't forget to have fun while you build those bridges! ENJOY THE RIDE!!

