

Teacher's Guide for DVD Program

In Search of a College Major and Career Direction

(one to two sessions, 2–4 hours of class time)

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The DVD program *In Search of a College Major and Career Direction* can be used in a variety of ways to facilitate students' career planning and exploration efforts. It can be used by students on an individual basis as a self-study tool or it can be used in a group format with this lesson plan as a guide. A recommended place to start is to determine your reasons and goals for delivering this education program along with the video segments you would like your participants to complete. Depending on your training goals and skills, you may choose to add additional career assessments or have students research and explore their career interests with a special emphasis on helping them to determine whether there are strict college major or academic requirements for entry into their area(s) of career interest. This Teacher's Guide is meant to inspire you. Modify it, as needed, to suit the population you serve and your time constraints. The lesson plan that follows is set up for two sessions (each approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours long), but you can cut back or expand on the group activities as warranted.

Topic

Strategies for choosing a college major with an optional career exploration component.

Group Size and Setting

Up to 24 student participants. An open room set up with round tables and chairs if possible, to facilitate large-group and small-group work.

Note: While 24 or fewer participants are optimal, you can also use this lesson plan with larger numbers of participants as needed.

Time Required

Up to two sessions, each two hours long. Number of sessions/total time could be expanded to include added assessments and/or career exploration support.

Materials

- ▶ *In Search of a College Major and Career Direction* DVD
- ▶ Copies of the User Guide (a separate PDF) so each participant can follow along.
- ▶ DVD player
- ▶ Supplemental handouts (included here)
- ▶ Pen or pencil for each participant
- ▶ Sheets of easel pad paper and markers for group work
- ▶ Masking tape (or self-stick easel pad paper)
- ▶ Tables or setup that facilitates small group discussion and activities
- ▶ Candy, chocolate, or small prizes as rewards for brainstorming activity

Session I

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

(10–20 minutes)

As participants arrive, distribute the word scramble activity (supplemental handout). The correct message will read, “**What gives you a power boost?**”. Note that you choose to monitor progress with this activity and ask those who get the message correct to turn their sheets over so that the other participants can continue to work out the correct answer. As an optional activity, you might also ask students, once they have the correct answer, what they think this message has to do with college major and career exploration. The answer to this question will be revealed through completion of the second video segment, “You’ve Got the Power,” so be sure to only include this particular icebreaker if you plan to have students complete this segment. Be aware that you can choose to have students both view video segment 2 and complete the corresponding portion of the User Guide, or, if time is limited, you can skip the video for segment 2 and have them complete the section of the User Guide.

Welcome

There’s a wide variety of college major options available to students these days. While having so many choices can be exciting, it can also be confusing. To make the most of your college experience and financial investment, you want to be sure you’re making informed decisions that are right for you and your goals. Today’s program will support you in doing just that.

- Introduce yourself.
- Explore reactions to the icebreaker activity. See if anyone was able to guess what was meant by the correct answer, “What gives you a power boost?”. If you plan to show the video for segment 2, you can leave this discussion open-ended without discussing the definition of a ‘power boost’ as described in the video. The point here is to get students thinking and wondering what will come next.

DVD VIEWING AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

Show Part 1 of the DVD, THE INTRODUCTION

(10 minutes)

Introduce the DVD by saying that it was developed by a career counselor who worked for 18 years as a college career center director.

Pause the DVD after the Introduction is complete. See if there are any comments, but keep discussion brief.

Show Part 2 of the DVD, YOU’VE GOT THE POWER

(40–50 minutes, 10 minutes to show video and 30–40 minutes for individual and group activities)

Distribute copies of the User Guides to each student participant. Have everyone turn to the “You’ve Got the Power” section of the User Guide.

Individual Activity

Play Segment 2 of the video until the first Pause button appears on the screen. Pause the video and allow time for students to answer the Power Boost questions. Resume showing the video until the second Pause button appears. Pause the video and have

participants complete the first two bullets at the beginning of the “So... What Gives You a Power Boost?” section as individuals.

Group Activity

Students can support each other with brainstorming of career possibilities that relate to a student’s Power Boost results. The goal is to generate ideas and not to censor possibilities that seem impractical at first glance. An offbeat idea may have merit, or it could provide inspiration for another idea that is feasible. Here’s a guide to facilitating Power Boost–related brainstorming activities with your group.

1. As a large group, have one volunteer offer an example of what gives him/her a power boost. Please note that this should be a subject or topic of interest—in other words, a noun. On the board/flip chart, write

It would be really amazing (cool, sweet, sick, or whatever other popular buzzword you wish to use) ***if I could get a job related to my interest in _____ (noun).***

Examples:

“It would be really sweet if I could have a career related to my love of soccer.”

“It would be really cool if I could do work related to my passion for horses.”

2. Break the group into small groups (3–5 participants per group) and give each team a sheet of easel pad paper and a marker. Ask them to brainstorm career possibilities related to the chosen power boost interest (for example, soccer). To help engage students, you could make this a team competition to see which team comes up with the most answers. (Be aware that they might try to cheat by listening to other teams!) Allow about 5 minutes for brainstorming and then have the teams post the answers on the walls in the classroom. You can ask a representative from each group to review the answers offered or you can review them. Make special note of answers that are unique to one group. After all the groups have shared their answers, point out the wide variety of possibilities related to just this one interest.
3. Next, have a student name an activity that’s enjoyable or suggest a few sample functional skills. Functional skills are verbs.
In the same small groups (give each group a new sheet of paper), have students brainstorm career options that combine the interest with this functional skill.

It would be really amazing if I could combine my interest in _____ (noun) with the activity _____ (verb).

Examples:

“It would be really amazing if I could combine my interest in soccer with the activity of designing.”

“It would be really amazing if I could combine my interest in horses with the activity of writing.”

Follow the same steps as before for processing results. Make sure that all the examples offered **only** include the chosen functional skill.

4. Next, do the same activity, but this time have them choose a different functional skill to go with the same interest. The goal here is to get them to see how your career options change when you emphasize one functional skill over another. Most people tend to focus only on interests when considering career options, yet functional skills dictate what you will be doing all day on the job. There's wide variability in the types of skills that you can use relative to your interests and, of course, your level of work satisfaction is closely tied not just to your interests but also to how much you enjoy using the skills that are required for the position.

Show the remainder of Segment 2. (Note: The Power Boost Log can be completed as a take-home activity if you choose. This would depend on the number of sessions you lead and how they are spaced out.)

Show Part 3 of the DVD, MAJOR DECISIONS

(20 minutes—5 minutes to show video and 15 minutes for small-group and large-group activities)

Have everyone turn to the “Major Decisions” section of the User Guide.

Before you begin showing the video, have participants review the True/False question at the beginning of the “Major Decisions” section and circle the choice that they consider to be correct. Poll them to see how many think the answer is True and how many think it’s False. The video will provide the correct answer. Play Segment 3 of the video until you get to the first Pause button on the screen and pause the video. (This will be at the end of the first approach to choosing a college major by considering “Why Am I Going to College?”)

Group activity

With the same groups of 3–5 members, direct each group to answer the three questions related to “Why Am I Going to College?” They can answer as they think others would, not necessarily as they would respond. Allow time for small-group discussion and brainstorming of answers. Then have one person represent each group to share answers with the large group. Allow up to 15 minutes for small-group work and large-group sharing.

Continue with Part 3 of the DVD, MAJOR DECISIONS, until the second Pause button

(10 minutes, 2 minutes for video and 8 minutes to work on individual activity)

Individual activity

Have participants begin working on the “What Are My Top Favorite College Majors?” list in the User Guide. Have them focus on enjoyment when making selections. Participants should be able to complete this activity in the time allowed, but be prepared to move on if some move too slowly. (Ranking could be completed at home if need be.)

Continue with Part 3 of the DVD, MAJOR DECISIONS, until the third Pause button

(10 minutes, 1 ½ minutes for video and 8 ½ minutes to work on individual activity)

Individual activity

Have participants begin working on the “What Are My Top Favorite Careers?” list in the User Guide. Again, they may be able to complete this activity in the time allowed, but those that do not can do so at home. Remind students to focus on enjoyment when making selections and encourage them to add in personal career interests if they don’t see their interests on the list that’s provided.

Session I of this two-part program ends here. Assign the Power Boost Log as a take-home activity. (This assignment could be related to a job, volunteer position, or a position held in a student club/organization.) Students can also be directed to continue with the brainstorming activity by getting additional input from friends and relatives. Finally, have them complete any activities that they were not able to finish during the session at home, such as the ranking activities.

Session II

Note: If you choose to expand this program to include more career assessments (such as the Holland Interest Assessment, a career cluster assessment, a personality type assessment, and so on), this would be the time to do so. For example, you might choose to administer a number of assessments as an alternate Session II and then follow them up with the remainder of this program as described. Career interests from other assessments could then be ranked and compared to the ranking of career interests from Segment 3 of the DVD. Participants can keep the career ranking results separate or prepare one final ranking of their top 10 career interests (incorporating interests from all assessments, including the DVD). Whichever way you proceed with ranking, make sure to encourage participants to notice any career interests that pop up repeatedly. This repetition offers valuable clues related to dominant interests and values and can point to key industries or career fields to explore.

As participants arrive, distribute the “Myth or Fact?” warmup activity for them to work on while they wait for others to arrive and for the program to begin.

Before moving on with the second session, check in with everyone to see how they did with the take-home activities. Ask if anyone is willing to share observations from the Power Boost Log activity or their additional brainstorming experiences. As an incentive, you could have prizes for those who are willing to share. Purchase enough rewards to offer incentives for both sessions. These can be special rewards that go to the first five or so participants who share their experiences.

Show Part 4 of the DVD, THE COLLEGE MAJOR AND CAREER CONNECTION, as directed.

(35 minutes, 10 minutes for the video, 5 minutes for the individual activity, and 20 minutes for the group activities)

Now we’re going to take a look at the connection between college majors and careers. There can be some confusion about this connection, so we’re going to take a closer look at what’s accurate. (Have participants turn to the “College Major and Career Connection” section in the User Guide).

Before you start the video, have participants review the two multiple-choice questions at the beginning of the section and circle the choices they consider to be correct. As before, poll them to see how they answered each question prior to having the video reveal the correct answers.

Now you can show part 4 of the DVD, “The College Major and Career Connection.”

Individual activity

Have each participant turn to the “Career and College Major Decision-Making Process” section in the User Guide. You can tell them that this activity will help them to determine their questions and needs related to choice of a college major and career interests. You can give them a few minutes to work on it, but they may need time to think this through back home at a slower pace.

This would be another good time to check in with everyone to see how they’re doing. How did they react to Segment 4? What surprised them? What are some key points they learned?

Group activity

In Segment 4, viewers are encouraged to answer the following question to support them with choosing a college major:

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?

Have participants pretend that they know a student with the following career interest from the DVD career list activity: **Computer Game Designer**. In the same small groups as before, have students brainstorm how they could learn more about this career area, including getting the answer to the question just posed. Have small groups use easel pad paper (one sheet per group) and markers to record their answers and, when they’ve finished brainstorming, they can tape their ideas up on the wall. As before, one member from each small group can review his or her answers with the large group or, if time becomes limited, you can read out group answers yourself.

Answers should fall into one of the following categories. You can share these categories with students **after** all groups have shared their ideas.

Your ideas pretty much fall into one of the following categories:

- Exploring through **READING** (books, Internet, magazines, and so on)
- Exploring through **SPEAKING WITH THOSE IN THE KNOW** (informational interviewing, keyword searches online for how-to guides)
- Exploring through **OBSERVING** (job shadowing)
- Exploring through **DOING** (volunteering, service learning, internships, paid employment, and so on)
- Exploring with support from **Career Center Staff** (high school or college) or with support from other adult mentors, including librarians

You can wrap up this activity by asking participants whether they think there’s a required college major for entry into the Computer Game Designer career. If they think a major is required, ask them what they think the required major is. **The answer is no, there is no college major requirement for entry into this career area.** Research shows that there are suggested course subjects, based on area of specialty within the computer game design field (which is broken down into design, artistic, programming, production, and testing), but there are no strict degree requirements. A handful of designers profiled through online career planning guides for this field had majors that included Graphic

Design, Electronic Media Arts/Communications, English, Economics, and History. Research revealed that employers in this industry place a high value on hands-on related experience, confirming the importance of building a bridge toward your career interests. (Refer to the “Exploring Your Career Interests: Research Notes” section as needed for a review of the research that was conducted to obtain this information.)

OCCUPATIONAL RESEARCH

If it's a goal for your program, you can choose to guide students in conducting research on their career areas of interest, beginning with online research as described in the Research Notes section. This would require access to the Internet to do in class. A key goal of this research would be to play detective to see if they can figure out whether a specific college major is required for a given career interest. I must emphasize that this type of research can get confusing. You could also choose to have students conduct informational interviews with multiple people who are employed in their area of career interest. It's important to have students speak with more than one person as they may find that each person gives different career or academic advice. A list of informational interview questions can be easily obtained by doing an online search on the topic of informational interviewing.

Show Part 5 of the DVD, MAJOR MYTHS AND TIPS

You can show Part 5 of the DVD or use the answer sheet to review students' answers to see how well they did.

WRAPUP and EVALUATION

Show Part 6 of the DVD

As a wrapup, introduce and review the final pages of the User Guide that will help students get remaining needs met. This portion of the User Guide helps participants understand career center services (both at the high school level and in college) and how they can use these services to get their needs met.

You can end the workshop with an inspirational quote for student participants. (You can write this quote on an easel pad or chalkboard.) One of my favorites is from Marcia Sinatar: **“I have what it takes to GET REAL!”**

Emphasize their ability to get their identified needs met and to be proactive as they move forward. Stress the importance of the exploration activities that were brainstormed as well as using the final pages in the User Guide to get ongoing support from counseling staff at their school.

In Search of a College Major and Career Direction

Unscramble the words and read the message...

egsiv tboso a roepw uyo hwta

————— ————— ————— — ————— ————— ?

**While you wait for our program to begin,
please complete the following...**

Myth or Fact?

Read the following statements and decide whether you think each one is a myth or a fact. Circle your answer for each.

**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?**

Myth or Fact Activity: Answer Sheet

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

This statement is a myth.

A college degree alone does not guarantee a great job. There are many good reasons for going to college and numerous benefits to gain from having earned a college degree. Remember, however, that employers are looking for more than a degree alone, so combine your college education with hands-on experiences related to your favorite career interests.

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.

This statement is a fact.

It can be helpful to consider what's in demand, but the job market has its up and down cycles. Majors and jobs that are in high demand now might not be in the future. For the best insurance, pick a college major that you enjoy and that relates to your talents. While you're at it, keep up on trends in areas of interest to you and be sure to gain related career experiences.

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

This is a myth.

Some majors directly relate to a career field (such as education or accounting), but most do not. Liberal arts majors, for example, have a broad application. (Examples include English, history, political science, and philosophy). Liberal arts majors can gain experience related to their career interests in order to meet the needs of employers they target. Also, many employers are simply looking for college graduates to fill their entry-level positions. For them, the specific major doesn't matter as much as the fact that the candidate has a degree.

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

This is a myth.

There's between a 50 and 70 percent chance that your first job out of college will relate to your major. After that, chances are you'll end up in a job totally unrelated to your college major.

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

This is a fact.

Campus activities help students develop skills that are valuable to employers. Examples include leadership skills, teamwork, program planning and follow through, and so on. Campus activities may also offer career-related exposure (for example, a journalism major could work for the school paper). Activities outside of school (through your community or your church, hobbies, and so on) also count as experience for future career development.

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

This is a myth.

A college degree won't guarantee you a great job when you graduate—even if you have two or three college majors. Instead, look closely at your choice of a college major combined with a minor (a second area of study that requires fewer credits). You might even be able to fit in a double major and still graduate in four years. This must be sinking in, but here it is one more time: Look to your coursework combined with other career-related experiences to help make you more marketable to employers and to offer you greater job security.

EXPLORING YOUR CAREER INTERESTS

Research Notes

There are four key ways to explore your favorite career interests.

They include

- ▶ Exploring through **READING**

This includes using resources like the Internet, books, magazines, etc.

- ▶ Exploring through **SPEAKING WITH THOSE IN THE KNOW**

This is referred to as informational interviewing. You can do a keyword search online for “informational interviewing” to find how-to guides.

- ▶ Exploring through **OBSERVING**

This is often referred to as job shadowing, where you spend time with someone who’s doing work of interest to you. You follow them around and “shadow” them as they go about their work activities.

- ▶ Exploring through **DOING**

This includes a wide variety of hands-on activities related to your career interests, including volunteer work, service learning, internships, co-ops, and part-time or full-time paid employment.)

Getting started

Here’s an example of how you’d get started with the **READING** approach to exploration. We’ll use the career interest **Computer Game Designer** as an example. The goal would be to learn as much as possible about what this career field involves, but there will be also a focus on answering this question:

Is a specific college major required for this career interest, or do I have flexibility with choice of a college major?

EXPLORING COMPUTER GAME DESIGNER THROUGH READING

To explore this career and answer the question, three strategies/resources were used.

1. The **Occupational Outlook Handbook** is a popular career exploration tool that offers a great starting place for exploring career interests. It’s sponsored by the United States Department of Labor and is available as a book from JIST Publishing. You can find the online version of the OOH at www.bls.gov/oco. A keyword search for Computer Game Designer led us to a number of related links. The first one offered a guide called “Working so others can play: Jobs in video game development.” This guide provided valuable information about careers in this field and also provided answers to the question about majors.

2. A second strategy focused on an **Internet-based keyword search**. You could try doing a keyword search just for the career title, but for this second strategy, the search we used was “computer game designer” + “career planning”. This search led to quite a bit of information on schools that offer degree programs related to this career field. This particular search did not prove to be all that helpful, however, in answering the question about majors.

3. A third strategy focused on a **keyword search for professional associations related to the career field**. So, in this case, the search was “computer game designer” + “association”. This search brought up a number of links, including one for the International Game Developers Association (www.igda.org). After digging around this site for resources for students, we found a career planning guide related to careers in games called “Breaking In.” This guide was quite valuable in getting answers to the question about majors.

So, what do you think this research revealed? Do you think there’s a required major for entrance into the computer game designer field, or do you think there’s flexibility? If you believe there’s a required major, what do you think it is?

The answer is that **there are NO specific college major requirements for work as a computer game designer**.

Research revealed that work in the computer game development industry can be broken down into a number of areas, including design, art, production, programming, and testing. Course recommendations vary for each of these areas. For the design area, profiles were offered for people currently working in game design. Here are the job titles and college degrees listed at the IGDA website for the designers that were profiled.

Job Title	College Major
Lead Game Designer	Graphic Design and Print Production
Lead Designer	Electronic Arts and Communications
Designer at Large	English (plus grad degree in Public Relations and Advertising)
Assistant Game Designer	Economics
Producer/Designer	History
Level Designer	English, with minors in Computer Science and Women’s Studies (plus grad degree in English)

This kind of research can be challenging, especially for those with non-traditional career interests. If you get stuck in your exploration and road testing efforts, seek support from career center staff (high school or college) or from others, including librarians.