



Module 7

Duration: 55 minutes

Using Guideposts to Direct Your Journey

This module helps middle school students understand that jobs have certain characteristics that influence the satisfaction level of the worker. High school students will become aware of some of these important work-related values, discuss the results of the Super's Work Values Inventory-revised, and use high-priority values as a framework for collecting occupational information and refining a list of occupational options.

Objectives

At the end of this module, middle school students will be able to:

- State three job characteristics that are important to them.
- Understand the relationship of job characteristics to job satisfaction.
- Understand changing roles.

At the end of this module, high school students will be able to:

- List and define 12 work-related values.
- List values that are of high importance to them in a career choice.
- State the titles of at least three occupations in which they may be able to obtain their most important values.

Module 7: Overview

Components: Middle School Students

- **Introduction and Activity: Traditional Job Roles**
20 minutes
- **Activity 17: Mapping Your Interests**
15 minutes
- **Activity 18: Visit the Library or Career Center**
120 minutes

Facilitator Preparation

1. Read the lesson plan and resource material.
2. Bring sheets of paper for the middle school activity on gender roles.
3. For middle school students, duplicate materials for Activity 17: Mapping Your Interests.
4. Make arrangements with either the library, career center, or counseling office so that middle school students can have a brief orientation about available career information.
5. Arrange to show the presentation. This presentation can be accessed in the Kuder Navigator® admin experience.

Homework Assignments

Have students talk with two adults who have full-time jobs – perhaps their parents or guardians – about their work. For each, find out what the job duties are each day, how much education was required, and how the job fits with the characteristics chosen in Activity 16: Your Dream Job, or in Activity 17: Mapping Your Interests.

National Career Development Guidelines Addressed

- Indicator CM3.A6: Make decisions for yourself about being employed in a nontraditional occupation.
- Indicator CM3.K5: Identify occupations that you might consider without regard to your gender, race, culture, or ability.
- Indicator PS1.K4: Identify your work values/needs.

ASCA National Standards for School Counseling Programs Addressed

- Indicator C:B1.6: Learn to use the Internet to access career planning information.
- Indicator PS:A1.2: Identify values, attitudes, and beliefs.

Module 7: Lesson Plan



Introduction and Activity: Traditional Job Roles (5 minutes) (Slides 1 and 2)

Start out your middle school students by leading them into a discussion surrounding Activity 16: Your Dream Job they completed as homework.

Share: Do you remember when we played *The Career Game* and you were assigned an occupation? Some of you liked the occupation given to you, and some of you thought you would really hate to have to go to work every day in that job. Yet, each day thousands of people do the jobs you were assigned. Like you, some like their jobs and some do not. Considering that you will be spending over a third of your week for 40 years or more working, it is very important that your job be satisfying to you.

Like people, jobs have characteristics. Some require workers to sit at a desk or work station all day. Others require workers to be outdoors in all kinds of weather. Some jobs require workers to come to a city building, while others may work from home or in a rural setting. The kind of work you choose will influence the lifestyle you lead – where you live, what you wear, what kind of transportation you use. Therefore, it is important to consider not only your interests, but also the job characteristics of the occupation you choose.

Engage students in discussion with questions and comments such as the following:

- What job characteristics were important to you in Activity 16: Your Dream Job?
- What would your life be like if you had that job?
- Think about the job you were assigned in *The Career Game*. What did you like or dislike about it?
- What would your life be like if you had that job?

After discussion, begin to engage students in an activity by splitting the students up into groups of four with an appointed leader.

Share: Some jobs are considered traditionally gender-specific jobs because the majority of workers in that occupation are of one gender. Can you think of a job that might be considered traditionally female? Male? I would now like for you to divide into groups of four and appoint a leader. I will give the leader two sheets of paper.

Please make two lists: traditional female jobs and traditional male jobs.

After 5 minutes, ask the groups to go back over the lists and cross out any jobs that could be done by the opposite gender. For example, if “construction worker” is on their traditional male list, ask if a female can be a construction worker. After a few minutes, ask each group to report on the occupations still on their lists. Have the class as a whole decide whether the occupations listed can be done by the opposite gender.

Summarize by saying the following: Most jobs can be done regardless of gender.

There is no reason why you cannot consider any kind of work that interests you and for which you have the skills. You will also want your job to have characteristics that relate to your interests and lifestyle. We will think about how jobs differ in their characteristics now.

Mini-Lecture on Work-Related Values

(20 minutes) (Slides 3-4)

Share: Values are different from interests and skills. Interests suggest what we might like to do. Skills indicate what we might have the knowledge to do. Values suggest what we think is important.

Interests are formed in childhood and adolescence as we have a wide variety of experiences, some of which we view as positive and others as negative. So, for most of you, the interests identified through the interest assessment you have taken are quite valid and stable. Skills are gained as we learn through experience and coursework. Work values are formed later than interests – usually in adolescence and throughout adulthood. Like interests, values may change, and as they do we may make changes in our life choices. You are probably just beginning to become aware of your values, and their development will go on throughout your life. They will serve as guideposts for many life decisions, screening some options out and leaving others.

A value is defined as something we believe in strongly enough that it affects our behavior. If you see a student making fun of another because he is disabled and you intervene and ask him to stop, your value of respect for others has caused you to take a difficult action – one that may cause others to taunt you. If you choose to become a teacher, knowing that you will make less income than if you were an accountant or computer programmer, because you place high value on helping others, your behavior has been affected by your values.

One purpose of this lesson is to make you aware of some of the values that should affect your choice of an occupation. What do you think some of those values are? Accept student suggestions, perhaps writing them on the board.

I am going to define 12 important work values for you, the ones you considered when you took Super's Work Values Inventory - revised. These definitions are also provided to you on [Handout 5: Work-Related Values](#).

- **Achievement:** Having a job that provides a feeling of success from having accomplished something.
- **Challenge:** Having a job that's not routine, tests what I know, and keeps me learning and mentally sharp.
- **Co-workers:** Having fellow employees that I enjoy working with because they are helpful and trustworthy; I could be friends with them outside work.
- **Creativity:** Having a job that calls on me to be resourceful, inventive, and come up with fresh ideas.
- **Income:** Having a job that pays a top wage, enabling me to live the way I want.
- **Independence:** Having a job where I might be my own boss, or where I am trusted to make decisions on my own without having to report to someone regularly.
- **Lifestyle:** Having a job that doesn't compete with my personal activities by allowing me ample time for family, friends, and vacation.
- **Prestige:** Having an important job where people respect me and look up to me in work and social settings.
- **Security:** Having a job at a stable company where I don't have to worry about getting laid off.
- **Supervision:** Having a fair supervisor who recognizes my value and is concerned about me, easy to talk to, and respects my opinions.
- **Variety:** Having a job that is not routine, with wide-ranging duties, allowing me to do many different things.
- **Workplace:** Having a job in a clean, safe, and comfortable setting.



Activity 17: Mapping Your Interests

(15 minutes) (Slide 5)

Distribute [Activity 17: Mapping Your Interests](#) to middle school students or high school students.

The things we have been discussing are called job characteristics, or work-related values. Each of you will have a unique profile of job characteristics that are important to you. To help you develop your profile, mark your preference for each pair of job characteristics on this worksheet.

After 5 minutes, involve students in discussion by using questions such as the following:

- What were the characteristics that you chose?
- Can anyone think of a job that has these characteristics?
- Are any of the characteristics you chose likely to conflict with each other? Which ones?

There are no right or wrong characteristics in jobs. The characteristics are just different from each other, and the satisfaction that we get from work relates to the ones that we think are important.



Activity 18: Visit the Library or Career Center

(20 minutes)

Since middle school students will research occupations in the next session using Navigator, it would be valuable for them to know what other types of resources exist in the school. If possible, take them to the school library, guidance counseling office, or career center to learn about printed material, videos, or other resources that they can use to get information about occupations on their list.

Homework Assignment (Slide 6)

Talk with two adults who have full-time jobs – perhaps your parents or guardians – about their work. For each, find out what the job duties are each day, how much education was required, and how the job fits with the characteristics that you chose in Activity 16: Your Dream Job or in [Activity 17: Mapping Your Interests](#).

Module 7: Resource Materials



Many factors need to be considered as one engages in the career decision-making process. For middle school students who are exploring many different options, one of the principal factors to consider is interests. This is an area that students at this level can easily understand and relate to. In fact, of all the factors, interests are the most stabilized by this age. That is why the Kuder Career Interests Assessment® can be especially helpful in narrowing the occupational areas to be considered. It should also be noted that interests can be satisfied outside the working role. For example, someone with artistic ability may paint as a hobby or for relaxation.

A second factor in career planning is ability, talent, or acquired skills. Most middle school students are already aware of special talents or abilities they have. For example, a student may have a knack toward scientific inquiry or artistic creation. Areas of ability or talent are usually easier for the student, and thus skills in these areas have become more highly developed. At this stage, skill development should be secondary to interests as motivation to obtain the appropriate education or training that will enable the student to learn the needed skills. For gifted students who may have abilities in many areas, interests play an even more important role in career decision-making.

A third factor to consider is the labor market, in other words, the kinds of jobs that are most likely to be available. The U.S. Department of Labor publishes a forecast that lists the fastest growing jobs by the anticipated number of workers needed and the percentage of anticipated growth in different geographic areas. This forecast is included in the Occupational Outlook Handbook and on its website (www.bls.gov/ooh) as well as in Navigator. At the middle school level, these statistics should be considered, but should not be the primary consideration in the exploration stage of decision-making.

In this module, students are asked to consider job characteristics that are closely related to work values.

Values give meaning to our lives and are often the deciding factor in what we will or will not do. Each of us has developed a unique system of values which determines how we feel about our work. If we pursue a career that is congruent with our work values, we will most likely be satisfied with the work. Middle school students are just beginning to develop values that may be a deciding factor in career choice at a later point. For example, most middle school students would probably choose monetary rewards over helping others as motivation for a career choice. However, as they mature, they may realize that helping others is important to them as they choose their life work. At this stage, we have chosen job characteristics that relate to personal preference, such as working indoors or outdoors, working alone or with others, etc., but do not ask students to make premature work value decisions. These are lifestyle issues that do make a difference in job satisfaction. For now, middle school students need to know that there are characteristics inherent in jobs that fulfill our desire to lead a satisfying life, and that these job satisfiers should be considered in career decision-making.

In this module, the lesson plan for middle school students also includes an activity on gender stereotyping in occupational choice. Traditional gender-specific jobs are those in which 75 percent or more of those employed in the field represent one gender. Although this may not be the inhibitor to career choice that it once was, it is still important to bring to the attention of middle school students that gender should not be a factor in career choice. This is especially important for girls because the traditional female jobs – such as an administrative assistant, teacher, or media specialist – have also been the lowest paying for the amount of education or training needed. Of course, these occupations should be options for all genders but should not be selected because of stereotypes.

Values and Occupations

When we help young people consider their career options, we typically address their interests, abilities or skills, and work-related values. The theories of career development (Super, 1957; Holland, 1997) propose that interests, skills, and work values are formed in the following sequence and way:

- The crystallization of interests begins in the middle school years, and these become increasingly more consistent and stable with age. This is not to say that the interests of individuals cannot change significantly because of having new influences and experiences, but typically they do not. Interests appear to be formed through the power of positive and negative reinforcement. It is useful to benchmark students' interests over time related to the occupational clusters described in Modules 5 and 6, and this is possible by viewing their electronic portfolios if they have taken the Career Interests Assessment more than once. For many students, the top one or two clusters identified by a high school interest inventory will remain dominant throughout life and serve as a framework in which school subjects, postsecondary majors, and occupations are selected. Two or more of these clusters were identified for students in this curriculum in Module 6.
- Young people are often motivated to gain knowledge and skill to support their interests, or they can be guided to do so. Ideally, the same clusters we used for occupations in Module 6 would be used to organize high school curricular choices and postsecondary majors. Such an approach will assist students to take courses that lay the foundation of knowledge and skills needed to support their interests. This skill development occurs through taking a supportive high school curriculum followed by postsecondary education at the technical, community college, or four-year college level.
- A third personal variable that should impact career choices is values. A value may be defined as a belief that is held strongly enough that it guides behavior. In this lesson, we will deal only with work-related values – that is, those that can be related directly to the choice or rejection of a given occupation or job. Using interests to identify possible occupations typically expands exploration while values serve as filters to screen occupations, facilitating a decision to either keep a specific occupation on the tentative list or to discard it. Values are typically crystallized later in the life cycle than interests or skills. Their beginning formation is evident in the high school years, but their formation continues throughout the adult years. As values change, individuals are likely to consider changing occupations or jobs.

Values and Life Roles

There is a relationship between life roles and all three of these major building blocks of career choice – interests, skills, and work values. For example, a person may have great skill in music but choose to use it in the role of citizen (community activities) because of the value of job security. Similarly, a person may have high value on helping others but choose to attain this value by volunteering time (citizen role) in hospice work or tutoring children with reading deficits because of a competing value of income.

For high school students, this lesson presents 12 work values of which students should become aware. Though the importance they give to each may be imprecise at this age, knowledge of them may enhance their development. The students' ratings of each are as follows:

1. **Not important at all.** Not a factor in my job selection.
2. **Somewhat important.** I would take this into account, but could do without it.
3. **Important.** I would like it, but other things are more important.
4. **Very important.** Need to have it, but not the most important.
5. **Crucial.** I would not consider a job without it.

These ratings can provide information for reducing the list of occupations being considered by high school students as they engage in occupational research in Module 8. They will be asked to consider each occupation within the context of their values ratings. The items on the values assessment measure the degree of importance that a person places on each of the following values:

- **Achievement:** Having a job that provides a feeling of success from having accomplished something.
- **Challenge:** Having a job that's not routine, tests what I know, and keeps me learning and mentally sharp.
- **Co-workers:** Having fellow employees that I enjoy working with because they are helpful and trustworthy; I could be friends with them outside work.
- **Creativity:** Having a job that calls on me to be resourceful, inventive, and come up with fresh ideas.
- **Income:** Having a job that pays a top wage, enabling me to live the way I want.
- **Independence:** Having a job where I might be my own boss, or where I am trusted to make decisions on my own without having to report to someone regularly.
- **Lifestyle:** Having a job that doesn't compete with my personal activities by allowing me ample time for family, friends, and vacation.
- **Prestige:** Having an important job where people respect me and look up to me in work and social settings.

- **Security:** Having a job at a stable company where I don't have to worry about getting laid off.
- **Supervision:** Having a fair supervisor who recognizes my value and is concerned about me, easy to talk to, and respects my opinions.
- **Variety:** Having a job that is not routine, with wide-ranging duties, allowing me to do many different things.
- **Workplace:** Having a job in a clean, safe, and comfortable setting.

This module concludes the inward analysis of interests, skills, and job characteristics or work-related values. The following modules will help students relate these factors to the other half of the career planning equation – the world of work.

References

Holland, J.L. (1997). Making Vocational Choices: a Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments (3rd ed.). Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

U.S. Department of Labor (2014). Occupational Outlook Handbook 2014-2015. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office.

Name _____

Date _____



Activity 17: Mapping Your Interests

For each pair of job characteristics, check the box next to the one you think you would prefer in your work.

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Need high school education only. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Need advanced education. |
| Work regular day hours. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work nights and weekends at times. |
| Work indoors. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work outdoors. |
| Be my own boss. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work for someone else. |
| Be in a traditional gender-specific job. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Be in a nontraditional job. |
| Do routine tasks each day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do a variety of tasks. |
| Be closely supervised. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work independently. |
| Work with machines. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work with people. |
| Work with others. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work alone. |
| Have a fast-paced job (pressure). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have a slow-paced job (low-key). |
| Earn an average salary. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Earn an above-average salary. |
| Travel a lot (away from home). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Travel little or not at all. |
| Have high-level responsibility
(make key decisions). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have low-level responsibility
(no critical decisions). |