

Unit 2: Assessments

Day 1: What Do You Enjoy?

Objective:

Students will be able to connect their interests to skills in the work place.



TEKS:

- Exploring Careers: 1.A
- Career Portals: 2.B

Materials:

- Handout: Self-Assessment
- Construction Paper
- Magazines
- Glue
- Scissors
- www.texascaresonline.com, Interest Profiler

Activities:

- Have students read handout: "Self-Assessment".
- Discuss the benefits of identifying interests and how they relate to future careers.
- Have each student create a collage illustrating their interest and talents using the magazines available.
- Show Students www.texascaresonline.com through the World of Work, click on Self Assessment and have the students take the Interest Profiler exercise. This will help them find occupations based on things they like to do.

Conclusion:

Allow students to share their collage with the class. Have students list on the back how they may transfer their interests into the work place. This will go into their Career Portfolio.

Additional enrichment activity:

The Be Real Game Unit 3, Session 2: Who Am I Really?

Self-Assessment

You have to know yourself to know the right career for you. If you don't, you may be very dissatisfied with how you spend the majority of your time, which is at work.

Even though job satisfaction is an individual thing, some jobs are better for those who like to work alone; other jobs require you to work well with others. Some people work best in a structured environment, others in a more creative one. Some people want work that supports a "fast-lane" lifestyle; others want a simple, quiet life. You'll find the most job satisfaction if your work and job setting match your interests, aptitudes and goals.

IDENTIFYING INTERESTS

To find an occupation or field of study in which you will be happy, productive and successful, you should identify and discuss with your parents, teachers and counselors your interests in work, personal values and leisure activities. The methods change as you mature.

1. Start Casually

To begin, identify your interests and preferences, discuss your:

- ♦ favorite and least favorite school subjects
- ♦ favorite activities and hobbies
- ♦ personal interests and goals, including causes s/he supports (even young kids today are vegetarians or perhaps politically conscious!)
- ♦ favorite types of work (e.g., working outdoors, working with your hands or using a computer).

Have your parents share their favorites as well. That turns the self assessment process into a conversation rather than a test or interrogation! It will also make you feel more comfortable opening up.

2. Move on to Informal Assessments

As you get into middle school, you should take some informal interest inventories, such as the one below. A good resource for such informal inventories is the *Texas Job Hunter's Guide*, available through LMCI. You might also try the Internet, including www.texascaresonline.com.



INSTANT INTEREST INVENTORY

Answer the following questions to get a clearer sense of the *type* of work that interests you. Do you like:

- ♦ building things?
- ♦ fixing things?
- ♦ helping people?
- ♦ being outdoors?
- ♦ selling things?
- ♦ solving problems?
- ♦ being creative?
- ♦ speaking in front of people?
- ♦ initiating projects yourself?
- ♦ working alone or with others?
- ♦ following the same daily routine?

Remember that the goal of these assessments is to tease out information that will help you choose an educational and eventual career path. Make no judgments or criticisms.

3. Arrange for Formal Assessments

Around ninth grade, you should see that you take formal interest and aptitude inventories and assessments on an annual basis. Consult the school counselor, who probably administers them.

At this point, you need to start making choices based on the information gathered in the inventories. Start comparing interests and aptitudes with actual careers and post-secondary schools to assess how well they match.

Your interests can make you explore careers from different angles—a process made especially easy using software such as *Texas CARES*. You might start with a school subject that you really enjoy and search for related careers. An interest in math, for example, would result in occupations ranging from cashier to engineer. Eventually, the level of math taken and aptitude for math will guide continued educational or career pursuits.

Another way to use interests and abilities to explore careers stems from knowing the specific types of work activity and conditions that you enjoy. If you like to speak publicly, what kinds of occupations allow or require that? Teachers, trainers, coaches and scientists leap to mind and there are many more. Again, software can help make the connection.

Finally, if you want very much to attend a particular college after high school, even this interest can lead to an occupation. Each school offers certain programs of studies or majors. Some schools are renowned for the excellence of certain programs. By researching the offerings of the school that interests you, you can then find the occupations that such programs of study lead to.



USING CAREER ASSESSMENTS

Career assessments include interest, personality, work values, abilities, aptitudes and achievement tests.

It's not hard to find tests, your guidance counselor has access to many different tests and knows how to help you go through this process and understand the results. Many community colleges also administer them for a small fee. Since many of these assessments can only be administered in group settings, check with your counselor to see which tests they administer and ask to receive an interpretation of the assessment results.

Your parents might remember their own experience with interest testing in high school. Tests have improved considerably in recent years. Still, always remember that they can point you in the right direction but they can't make decisions for you.

When you take career assessments, remember that there are no wrong or right answers. The results serve only to help investigate occupational and training options, not to force you to “pick a career.”

As you learn more about different occupations, take different subjects in school, gain experience through job shadowing or mentorships or expand horizons through part-time jobs, you may find certain jobs or training options more appealing. Some of these experiences will coincide with test results and others may be different. That’s “normal!”

IDENTIFYING APTITUDES/SKILLS

Aptitudes reflect what you are capable of. Some aptitudes can develop into skills with practice. Other qualities are innate and should be respected when making career choices.

Some people are verbal, for example, while others are mathematical. Some enjoy performing while others prefer to remain in the background. Selecting an occupation that matches your aptitudes is wise.

To help identify your aptitudes, ask yourself to list the:

- ♦ easiest and most difficult school subjects
- ♦ favorite and most effective ways to study
- ♦ style of working/studying (alone or with others)
- ♦ best time to work/think

When asking yourself about abilities and skills, don’t be surprised if you think to yourself, “nothing,” “none,” “everything,” “I don’t know.” Many kids really don’t know. One way to help recognize your strengths, skills, unique attributes and talents is to create a list together with your family. Sharing their observations with you may help you realize qualities in yourself you didn’t see before. See the sample list below.

PERSONAL STRENGTHS

- ♦ I am very well coordinated.
- ♦ I do my chores without supervision.
- ♦ I am good at verbal communication.
- ♦ I am good at drawing.
- ♦ I like working on a team.

The online software, *Texas CARES* is particularly helpful here. The Self Assessment found through the World of Work translates your hobbies, interests and activities into possible occupations.

Knowing what skills and abilities you bring to the table can help you appreciate that work isn’t just “putting in time” to get money; it’s about providing a service. Still, money—and the lifestyle it affords—is important and can help you focus on the types of careers you want.

