

My Career Choice: Just Right or Rethink

The **BIG** Idea

- How do I know if I'm academically prepared for my career goal, and how can I overcome obstacles that may stand in my way?

AGENDA

- Approx. 45 minutes
- I. Warm Up: Career Research Reflection (5 minutes)
 - II. Parts of a Transcript (10 minutes)
 - III. Comparing Academic Performance with Career Requirements (10 minutes)
 - IV. Improvement Plan (15 minutes)
 - V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

MATERIALS

- PORTFOLIO PAGES:**
 - Portfolio page 1, Interest Profiler and Basic Skills Survey Results (from Careers 1)
 - Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices (from Careers 2)
 - Portfolio pages 4-5, Suggested High School Subjects (from Careers 2)
 - Portfolio page 6, Plan for Improvement
- STUDENT HANDBOOK PAGES:**
 - Student Handbook page 90, Career Research Reflection
- FACILITATOR PAGES:**
 - Facilitator Resource 1, Suggested Subjects for a Computer Programmer
 - Facilitator Resource 2, Academic Performance
 - Facilitator Resource 3, Sample Transcript
 - Facilitator Resource 4, SAMPLE Plan for Improvement
- Overhead projector
- Laptop
- LCD projector
- Student transcripts

OBJECTIVES

During this lesson, the student(s) will:

- Compare education requirements for career choice with current academic performance.
- Devise strategies to overcome career obstacles.

OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students continue to consider potential career goal obstacles and possible solutions. They examine their current academic performance to evaluate if they are on track to meet the education requirements for their top career choice. The lesson concludes with students sharing their academic obstacles and possible solutions with their classmates.

PREPARATION

- ❑ Meet with the school counselor(s) to obtain students' transcripts. Your counselor will need to explain what each part of the transcript means so that you can accurately address students' questions during the lesson. In addition, you will also need to obtain the district or state requirements for graduation. This includes specific courses needed along with the number of credit hours needed to graduate. Explain to the counselor(s) that in this lesson, students review their academic records to gauge their level of preparation for future careers. (NOTE: Transcripts are also requested in **Education After High School 1: Choosing Courses for Senior Year**, so students should save them in their Portfolios for future use.) If transcripts are unavailable, provide copies of **Facilitator Resource 2, Academic Performance**, so students can estimate their current academic performance (one copy per student). In addition, you may wish to ask the school counselor to serve as a co-facilitator of this lesson.
- ❑ List the day's **BIG IDEA** and activities on the board.
- ❑ Create a sample transcript that is based on your school's template. Make sure that the grades in your sample transcript match the ones listed on **Facilitator Resource 3, Sample Transcript**.
- ❑ The following handouts need to be made into overhead transparencies or copied onto chart paper:
 - **Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices**
 - **Portfolio page 6, Plan for Improvement**
 - **Facilitator Resource 1, Suggested Subjects for a Computer Programmer**
 - **Facilitator Resource 2, Academic Performance**
 - **Facilitator Resource 3, Sample Transcript** (If possible, replace this with a sample transcript from your school district, with all identifying student information removed.)
 - **Facilitator Resource 4, SAMPLE Plan for Improvement**

IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

DO NOW:

If you prefer, you may choose to use **Student Handbook page 90, Career Research Reflection** as a DO NOW. Once students complete the page, continue with the **Warm Up** discussion.

If time allows, you may choose to have some students investigate two top choice careers, rather than one. In this case, have students complete two evaluations, one for each career.

For **Activity III, Comparing Academic Performance with Career Requirements**, if transcripts are not available, allow time for students to use **Facilitator Resource 2, Academic Performance** to list the courses they are taking and their grade in each.

You may also wish to change the courses listed in **Facilitator Resource 4, SAMPLE Plan for Improvement** to reflect courses offered at your school.

ACTIVITY STEPS

I. WARM UP: Career Research Reflection (5 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Last week you took a look at your top career choice and thought about the ways in which it matched your interests and skills. You also considered obstacles you might face in reaching your goal, and explored ideas for getting around them. Today you are going to use the education research you did on RUPrepareND.com last week to consider whether you are academically prepared for your career's education requirements.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** First, I'd like you to reflect on your research from last week. Open to **Student Handbook page 90, Career Research Reflection**. Write the career at the top of the page. Then answer the questions below.
3. Give students three minutes to respond to the prompts.

II. Parts of a Transcript (10 minutes)

1. Display a copy of **Facilitator Resource 3, Sample Transcript** or the sample transcript you created (See **Preparation**) on chart paper or an overhead/LCD projector. Give each student a copy of this handout so everyone can follow along.
2. Walk the students through this sample transcript highlighting where students can find the GPA, class rank, number of credits this student earned along with any other important information. Note that high school transcripts are usually provided to a college as part of the application process.
3. Display a copy of the district/state requirements for graduation. Review the credits for each subject required by your district/state. Then, as a class, examine if this sample student is on track to meet these requirements.
4. Distribute students' transcripts. (If you were not able to access them, see **IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS**.) Give students a few minutes to look over their transcripts and answer any questions students may have about their transcripts. Then have them determine whether they are on track to graduate on time by calculating the number of credits earned so far.

III. Comparing Academic Performance with Career Requirements (10 minutes)

1. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Last week you found a list of suggested high school courses recommended for your career. You probably noticed trends in the courses recommended. How many people found their career suggested a lot of math and science courses? [Show of hands; then call on a few students to share what career they researched.] Who found that their career recommended a lot of English or writing courses? [Show of hands; then call on a few students to share what career they researched.]

In this activity, you will compare your transcript with the education requirements for your career to see how your academic preparation compares with the expectations of your top career choice.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Last week we looked at the education for a computer programmer as a class. Let's review the recommended subjects for this career.

Display a copy of **Facilitator Resource 1, Suggested Subjects for a Computer Programmer** using an overhead or LCD projector.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Some of the subjects suggested are requirements for graduating from high school and for admittance to college, such as English/language arts, math, and social studies. Remember, in addition to required courses, you should select other courses like career and technology education courses or academic electives that support your career goals.

To assist students in viewing a more specific program, tell them the names of classes offered at your school that support the career goal of becoming a computer programmer. You may choose to list these in the career and technology education row on **Facilitator Resource 1, Suggested Subjects for a Computer Programmer**.

One of the suggested high school subjects listed for all the grade levels is English or language arts. English must be important. Look at the sample transcript we looked at in the last activity. You can see the student failed English first semester of ninth grade, but his grades have improved over time. The student will want to make sure to stay on top of his English grade.

Computer programming involves lots of math; I see math is in the suggested subjects. This student did not do so well in algebra in ninth grade, but he's gotten As in math courses since then. He will need to stay on top of his math grades, and maybe get extra help in reviewing algebra.

2. Give students a few minutes to compare the suggested subject list for their top career choice with their transcripts.
3. Have students return to **Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices**.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Now that you have an idea of the education requirements for your career, answer the second question: “Am I academically prepared for the education I will need after high school?” If your answer is “Yes,” use the middle column to give evidence of your academic readiness. If your answer is “No,” use the middle column to explain why, or what the obstacle is. Then use the third column “Solutions” to provide possible ways to overcome this obstacle.

For example, the student in the sample transcript might say, “I need to bring up grades in my computer courses. In addition, I should also try to take more of these types of courses in the future.” I’ll be walking around the class while you are working, so raise your hand if you have any questions.

Give the students a few minutes to complete the last row in **Portfolio page 2, Evaluating Top Career Choices**.

IV. Plan for Improvement (15 minutes)

1. Draw students’ attention to **Portfolio page 6, Plan for Improvement** as you display **Facilitator Resource 4, SAMPLE Plan for Improvement** on the overhead project.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** When thinking about how to prepare yourself for college, or a job, it’s helpful to begin with the end in mind. Start with your big goal, then think of the smaller steps you need to take to get there. You all started by identifying what career you would like to pursue. Your next step was figuring out what postsecondary education, if any, you need.

Next, you’ll need to evaluate how you’re doing in each of your classes, so you’ll know where to focus your energy. If you’re not certain of your grade right now, think about the grade you got last semester, or on your last test. On the top of **Portfolio page 6, Plan for Improvement**, write in the two classes you feel need the most improvement. Next you will write in your current grades and then identify your desired grade for each course.

Give students two minutes to complete this top section of their portfolio page.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: The next step is to identify small, doable actions you can take right away that will help you raise your grades. By identifying these actions, and setting a date to each, you increase your chance of making your longer-term goals a reality. Before you create your own action plans, let's look back at our sample student. In this case, this student needs to raise his grade in computer science and chemistry. He currently has a B in chemistry and a C in computer science.

3. Direct students' attention to the "Part II: Creating an Action Plan" section on **Facilitator Resource 4, SAMPLE Plan for Improvement**. Make sure to cover up all of the English row. For the computer science row, only display the box titled "Reason for Low Performance."

Have a volunteer read the "Reason for Low Performance" in computer science. Then ask the class what desired goal this student should work for. After students respond, show the desired grade. Next ask the class what realistic actions this student should take to improve his C grade in computer science. Jot their ideas on chart paper. Make sure students are addressing the underlying problem. Simply saying, "I'll stop passing notes during class," may not be enough to raise this student's computer science grade.

Once you have heard from a few students, display the "Action Plan" for raising your computer science grade.

4. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Those of you who had Roads to Success in ninth grade may remember SMART goals. Today we are going to focus on the first three parts of SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, and Achievable.
5. Write the following questions below on chart paper, an overhead, or the board. Ask the students the following questions and write how the action plan for improving this sample student's computer science grade fits each of these criteria.
 - Is my goal Specific?
 - Is it Measurable?
 - Is it Achievable?
6. If your students are struggling to understand SMART goals, repeat the steps above for the science class. In addition, you may want to brainstorm as a class some solutions to address one or two students' reasons for low performance in a class. Make sure that students understand that they are personally responsible for improving their grades. For example, students should not blame a poor grade on a teacher they do not get along with. You can acknowledge that it can be difficult working with someone you

don't like, but that is bound to happen to them at some point in their life. Learning how to overcome those types of challenges will help them in the future.

Once you think your students are ready to make their own action plans, have them complete **Portfolio page 6, Plan for Improvement**. Instruct the students that they will have 10 minutes to complete these pages.

NOTE: It is important for students to understand that they should aim for the highest grades possible. If they are only aiming to pass their classes, they will not be ready for college work. This could result in the students needing to take "catch up" classes at their school or college. These courses cost money and don't count toward college credits.

V. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

1. Have a few volunteers share a course they need to improve in with the class. Students should read their reasons for low performance and read the action plan (Strategy to Raise My Grade). If time permits, ask the class whether the goal is specific, measurable, and achievable.
2. **SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** As you discovered today, your academic skills will influence your postsecondary plans. Strong academic skills reveal to a college or employer that you can succeed. So, set your goals, work hard, and you will be well prepared.
3. Wrap up class by reminding students that today's work is just one more step in the life-long process of finding satisfying work. Their career goals may be different tomorrow, next week, or next year. It's never too late to gather additional information and make a different choice.

SKILLS CHECKLIST

Direct students' attention to **Portfolio page 25, Grade 11 Skills Checklist**. Have students complete the skills checklist questions for careers skills only.

CAREERS

I can...

Identify careers that match my skills and interests.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
Compare my interests and academic skills to a career I'm interested in.	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well
Use career outlook information to decide if I need to consider a back-up plan (a career where more jobs are available).	<input type="checkbox"/> not at all	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> very well

Suggested Subjects for a Computer Programmer: Information Technology Cluster

	Sample High School Program of Study			
	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
	English/Language Arts			
Math	Algebra I * 1 credit(s) OR Geometry *1 credit(s)	Algebra II * 1 credit(s) OR Geometry *1 credit(s)	Algebra II *1 credit(s) OR Pre-Calculus *1 credit(s) OR Trigonometry *1 credit(s)	AP Calculus * 1 credit(s) OR Pre-Calculus *1 credit(s) OR Trigonometry *1 credit(s) OR AP Computer Science *1 credit(s)
Science	Earth Science * 1 credit(s) OR Life Science *1 credit(s) OR Physical Science *1 credit(s)	Biology * 1 credit(s)	Chemistry *1 credit(s)	Applied Physics * 1 credit(s)
English/Lan- guage Arts	English * 1 credit(s) OR Language Arts I * 1 credit(s)	English * 1 credit(s) OR Language Arts II * 1 credit(s)	English * 1 credit(s) OR Language Arts III * 1 credit(s)	English * 1 credit(s) OR Language Arts IV * 1 credit(s)
Social Studies	Civics * 1 credit(s) OR State History * 1 credit(s) OR World History *1 credit(s)		Economics *1 credit(s) OR Political Science *1 credit(s)	
Technology	Information Technol- ogy Applications *1 credit(s) OR Introduction to Infor- mation Technology *1 credit(s)	Fundamentals of Computer Systems *1 credit(s)	Fund. Of Program- ming and Software Development *1 credit(s)	Software Devel- opment Tools *1 credit(s)

Academic Performance

Directions: Add courses you are taking or that you took last semester to the list. Put a check mark if the class is required for education for your career. Record your grade for each course.

<i>Course</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Required for your career?</i>
Math		
English		
Social Studies		
Science		

Sample Transcript

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
 OFFICIAL HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

Sample Transcript

Grade 10

Locke Senior High
 325 East 111th St.
 Los Angeles, CA 90061
 (323)420-2100
 CEEB: 051523 06/06/07

Locke Hi Grade=09
 Term Ending 02/04/05

Class Title	Credits	Marks	WH	CO
ENGLISH 9A	0.0	Fail	S	S
CREAT WRITING	5.0	B	S	S
HEALTH SH	5.0	B	S	S
ALGEBRA 1A	5.0	C	S	E
SOFTBALL	5.0	C	S	S
BIOLOGY A	5.0	B	E	E

Locke Hi Grade=09
 Term Ending 06/27/05

Class Title	Credits	Marks	WH	CO
ENGLISH 9B	5.0	B	S	E
CREAT WRIT WK	5.0	B	E	E
ESSENTIAL MATH	5.0	A	E	E
SOCCER	5.0	B	E	E
BIOLOGY B	5.0	A	E	E
LIFE SKLS 21ST	5.0	A	S	E

Locke Hi Grade=10
 Term Ending 08/16/05

Class Title	Credits	Marks	WH	CO
PAINTING 1A	5.0	B	S	S
ENGLISH 9A	5.0	A	E	E

Locke Hi Grade=10
 Term Ending 02/03/06

Class Title	Credits	Marks	WH	CO
ENGLISH 10A	5.0	B	E	E
SPAN SP 1A	5.0	A	E	E
GEOMETRY A	5.0	A	S	S
AEROBICS	5.0	A	E	E
CHEMISTRY A	5.0	B	S	S
WHG: MOD WLD A	5.0	C	E	E
AVID 2A	5.0	A	E	E

CAHSEE ELA P 03/25/06 Math F 03/20/07

SAMPLE: Plan for Improvement

Part I: Identifying Areas in Need of Improvement

List two courses in which you need to improve your grade. Write the name of the course and your current grade. (If you are not certain of your exact grade, make your best guess.)

1. Computer Science - C
2. Chemistry - B

Part II: Creating an Action Plan

Course Name	Reason for low performance	Desired Grade	Action Plan (Strategy to Raise My Grade)
Computer Science	I sit next to my friend and all we do is pass notes during class. I don't pay attention, and then I am lost when it comes time to completing on our projects, because I haven't taken notes while the teacher was giving instructions.	B+	I need to start taking this class more seriously. I will start by telling my friend that I need to stop writing notes during class. This will help me pay attention so that I can take notes during class. If I am still having trouble in a week, I will ask my teacher if I can get extra help after school and even see if there is something I can work on at home.
Chemistry	I try really hard in this class. I always do my homework. I take notes in class and I even study at home before the tests. No matter what I do I still seem to make careless errors on the tests.	A	I need to ask my teacher when he holds morning or after school tutorials. I will attend at least one tutorial session a week and I will ask my teacher to help me make flashcards to study for our next test.

Adapted from the Fulfillment Fund: www.fulfillment.org

Career Research Reflection

Directions: Write the name of your top career choice. Then answer both questions below.

Career: _____

1. Did you find any obstacles to your career goal during last week's lesson? If so, explain the obstacle and one possible solution you came up with.

2. Last class you researched the education needed for your career goal. Do you think you are academically prepared for this education? Explain.

Plan for Improvement

Part I: Identifying Areas in Need of Improvement

List two courses in which you need to improve your grade. Write the name of the course and your current grade. (If you are not certain of your exact grade, make your best guess.)

1. _____

2. _____

Part II: Creating an Action Plan

Course Name	Reason for low performance	Desired Grade	Action Plan (Strategy to Raise My Grade)

Adapted from the Fulfillment Fund: www.fulfillment.org

